Infrastructures of solidarity: the spatial politics of the left in 1980s Scotland

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops as infrastructures of solidarity on the left in 1980s Scotland, with a particular focus on Glasgow and Edinburgh. I examine the construction, running, and closure of various spaces, demonstrating the ways in which the crafting of these infrastructures intimately shaped the spatial politics of solidarity produced within them. I propose that these are uniquely illuminating case studies through which to understand the myriad constitutions of the political left in 1980s Scotland. I build on Massey's key theorisations on space, as a product of social relations and as a domain of multiplicity, to interrogate the ways in which infrastructures of solidarity were shaped by various political and emotional trajectories (Massey, 2007). This thesis draws from a set of oral history interviews that I conducted between May 2021 and February 2022. Consequently, I argue that the historical emotional geographies of solidarity in 1980s Scotland are best emotively and reflectively explored through oral history interviews.

This thesis makes a number of central contributions. First, I contend that an analysis of solidarities that are built in particular spaces can reveal the inter-play of different subjectivities that shape relationships and acts of solidarity. The process(es) of crafting infrastructures of solidarity reveals how left-wing activists negotiated questions of space, funding, and labour in ways that did not always align exactly with the proposed aims of the centre or bookshop in question. The insights gleaned from these infrastructures of solidarity reinforce Doreen Massey's assertion that you cannot take any space as given along the lines of a predetermined location or subjectivity (Massey, 2005). As such, this thesis attends to an existing gap in historical and geographical literature regarding a detailed examination of spaces such as unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops. Second, I demonstrate the ways in which fluid conceptions of space, as spheres of multiplicity, can further strengthen theorisations of solidarity as a generative political relation often constructed between diverse political groups (Featherstone, 2012; Massey, 1999). I centre the interpersonal relationships built within and between particular spaces, arguing that accounting for these in an analysis of the coexistence of difference within these sites, allows for a nuanced and generative conception of solidarity. Thirdly, I demonstrate that engaging with the complex emotional reflections produced by solidarity when negotiated across diverse political groups should be central to our understandings of how solidarity is built and maintained over time. From this, I stress that care is an integral relation to factor into an analysis of these emotional relationships of solidarity. The empirical material I engage with throughout this chapter evidences the thoughtful care-full solidarities that sustained those organising within these infrastructures and ultimately the spaces themselves.

Finally, I make important methodological contributions in this thesis. By centring the inter-subjective relationship between the oral history interviewees and I, I develop a framework for a politically

grounded, collective research practice that captures the historical geographies of solidarity and struggle as we organise. I consider how the production of oral histories can enable those of us involved in political struggle to look both back *and* forward simultaneously. Doreen Massey (1999) proposed that engaging with the multiplicity of space insists on the genuine openness of the future (p.3). I write from these foundations, to assert the practical contributions of this thesis in the building and *doing* of solidarity.

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List of appendices

List of abbreviations and acronyms

- Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE)
- Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE)
- Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB)
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- Cooperative Development Agency (CDA)
- Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)
- Federation of Radical Booksellers (FRB)
- Gay Liberation Front (GLF)
- Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM)
- Manpower Services Commission (MSC)
- National Abortion Campaign (NAC)
- National Union of Students (NUS)
- Oral History Society (OHS)
- Partick Housing Association (PHA)
- Scottish Abortion Campaign (SAC)
- Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (SCRAM)
- Scottish Homosexual Rights Group (SHRG)
- Scottish Minorities Group (SMG)
- Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)
- Socialist Workers Party (SWP)
- Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM)
- Unemployed workers' centre (UWC)
- Union for Sexual Freedom in Ireland (USFI)
- Women's Liberation Movement (WLM)
- Young Communist League (YCL)

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Author's declaration

I declare that except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis 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.

Rosie Levine Hampton

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is an exploration of unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops as infrastructures of solidarity on the left in 1980s Scotland, with a particular focus on Glasgow and Edinburgh. I attend to the construction, running, and closure of various spaces, accounting for how the crafting of these infrastructures intimately shaped the spatial politics of solidarity produced within them, which rippled out to shape the social and political culture of the left more broadly. I therefore examine their role in how solidarity was built and sustained, across different and diverse political groups and social movements. It is a study of the everyday landscapes and solidarity networks of historical political organising, the Glasgow and Edinburgh left, and of the 1980s in Scotland. I use these sites as case studies through which to highlight the emotional contours of these relationships of solidarity, through the work and care that those involved carried out to sustain their existence during contested political times. Therefore, in this thesis I make key theoretical and empirical contributions unpacking the emotional historical geographies of solidarity in this period. These infrastructures, as spaces of multiplicity, complicate assertions that the 1980s was the decade in which the argument for socialism was lost (Davis and McWilliam, 2018, p.2). Furthermore, I make the case for more scrutiny of the emotional trajectories wrapped up within these spaces, which I contend are most fruitfully illuminated through the process and analysis of oral history interviews, capturing my central methodological intervention.

In the first section of this introduction, I establish the core research objectives of the thesis and how I intend to address them. I then provide a broad outline of the historical-geographical context(s) that unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops emerged in. I refer to the political shifts of the 1980s, before placing these spaces within the complicated and overlapping trajectories of left-wing resistances. The primary case studies of this thesis are spaces that were in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Therefore, I set out how this research enriches an understanding of left-wing, place-based politics using the central belt of Scotland as the empirical backdrop. The framing of my research necessitates a discussion of how I define "the left" throughout this thesis, which I then establish in the third section. In the next section, I engage with how these spaces have been written about in geography and other disciplines. I argue throughout this thesis that these sites are significantly underutilised in existing analyses of left-wing political activity and culture during this period. I contend that a more meaningful examination

of these material and emotional infrastructures enriches our understanding of how solidarity is spatially articulated across different and diverse political actors. In the concluding section, I outline the structure of the thesis, to assert exactly how I have attended to this gap in historical and geographical literature.

1.2 Research aims and objectives.

Over the course of this thesis, I attend to three primary research objectives regarding the exploration of unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops as infrastructures of solidarity in 1980s Scotland. In this section, I state out how I will address each one in turn. Collectively, these form the overarching aim of the thesis, which is to excavate the spatial politics of solidarity on the left in 1980s Scotland.

My first research objective is to assert the centrality of infrastructures of solidarity in understanding the historical geographies of left-wing organising in the 1980s in Scotland. I propose that unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops are uniquely illuminating case studies through which to understand the multiple forms of the political left in 1980s Scotland. I develop Massey's key theorisations on space, as a product of social relations and as a domain of multiplicity, to interrogate the ways in which infrastructures of solidarity were shaped by various political trajectories. This foregrounds the sites I explore in the thesis as crucial, and so far understudied, case studies for analyses of this historical-geographical period. Building from this assertion, I seek to excavate the spatial politics of these sites, considering the role of the state in a way that enriches accounts of "local socialism" in this period beyond looking through the lens of local government institutions.

Secondly, I aim to critically consider the emotional geographies of these sites, through an exploration of the relations of care that constituted and sustained the solidarities built within them. I engage with the complex emotions produced by the work of maintaining relationships of solidarity and the (emotional) labour of maintaining these infrastructures. I discuss the emotional trajectories of each site within the theoretical framework of this thesis, that emphasises the fluidity of space and therefore the multiplicity of emotions held concurrently within each space. I argue that this approach enhances ways of considering critical solidarities across difference. Understanding the emotionality of infrastructures of solidarity, necessitates exploring the relationships of care that produce these solidarities. I propose thinking through the relationships in this as *care*-full solidarities, centring care as a crucial relation through which to understand solidarity as a relation built over time.

Finally, I intend to produce a framework for deeper geographical engagements with oral history theory and practice. To achieve this, I centre the intersubjectivity of the research relationship, as a way to reveal the emotionality and intricate spatialities of historical narratives. In turn, I demonstrate that the historical geographical narratives produced by oral history interviews are inseparable from this collective intersubjectivity, crafted in both one-on-one and group oral history interviews. To demonstrate this, I reflect on the political relationships and work that made the oral history interviews I conducted for this research possible. The interview encounters were generative of new possibilities for solidarity, as they constituted a moment to look back critically and hopefully, before collectively looking forward. When enacted on these foundations, oral history interviews are reflective of the care-full and emotional politics that in this thesis I argue sustains the political work that we continue to build together.

To tackle the above research aims, I review three different types of spaces: unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops. Within these categories, I focus on particular sites as case studies in different parts of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The next section introduces these spaces within a broader discussion of the historical-geographical context from which they emerged.

1.3 Infrastructures of solidarity in 1980s Scotland: Introducing the core case studies.

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher was elected as Prime Minister, with the Conservative Party winning a parliamentary majority of 339 seats (Gamble, 1988, p. 96). During the election campaign, the idea of a "seventies crisis" under the governance of Labour was a powerful rhetorical tool that Thatcher was able to weaponize against the left (Saunders, 2012). The trade union movement was a key target. The range and frequency of industrial action taken over the course of 1978-1979, mythologised as the "Winter of Discontent", were regularly invoked as the basis for Thatcher's repression of trade unions and attacks on the Labour Party (Martin López and Rowbotham, 2014). Between 1980 and 1993, there were six Acts of Parliament that significantly hindered the ability of trade unions to undertake lawful industrial action. Across the acts, the terms on which workers in trade unions could demonstrate their industrial action was also targeted. For example, the 1980 Employment Act rendered secondary picketing unlawful and sought to broadly eliminate large scale picketing (Dorey, 2016). Upon Thatcher's election, the powerful spatiality of industrial action was identified as something to be repressed (Kelliher, 2021). The repression of trade unions under Thatcher had significant and destructive consequences. In 1979, 13.3 million people belonged to trade unions, meaning that 55.4% of the overall workforce in Britain were trade union members. Additionally, the impact of industry-level bargaining and wages councils meant that around 85% of the working population were covered by collective pay-setting mechanisms. By 2001, union

membership had declined by 40% and the number of workers protected the aforementioned collective pay-setting mechanisms was under 35% (Howell, 2005, p. 122).

This was coupled with a rapidly changing workforce composition. In Scotland, a number of key industrial employers closed their Scottish plants against concerted trade union resistance.[1] Deindustrialisation was a defining process of transformation for post-war Scotland, in economic, cultural, and political terms (Gibbs, 2021). Phillips et al. (2021) demonstrate in their account of the moral economies of deindustrialisation that the Thatcher years represent a distinct phase of this process, rather than the beginning, which can be traced back to the mid twentieth century. The geographical bases of political organising were changing at the national and local levels, in the face of new and renewed challenges. The women's movement and gay liberation faced similar repression and hostility under Thatcher's government. The pay differentials between men and women remained stark, with childcare, and maternity and paternity leave becoming increasingly inaccessible. Changes to unemployment benefit excluded women who could not prove that they had adequate childcare arranged if they were to be offered work. As a result, women entering the workforce in the 1980s largely did so as part-time workers, with lower pay and weaker access to benefits than men doing comparable jobs (Beers, 2012, p.118). Moreover, Thatcher's championing of "family values" against the politics of gay liberation and the women's liberation movement in the 1960s and 1970s, rhetorically paved the way for Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988) which prohibited local authorities from "intentionally promoting homosexuality" (see Durham, 1991). As a result, the geographies of 1980s Scotland that surrounded unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops, were produced in these preceding decades (Emery, 2019).

In his popular account of the decade, Andy Beckett charts some of the hopeful contours of politics in the 1970s, emphasising that it was "full of moments of possibility, as well as entropy" (Beckett, 2010, p. 5). These were found among the political, social, and economic shifts that characterised the period, which produced episodes of deep conflict and hopeful reconfiguration. Moving into the 1980s, those involved in left-wing political organising were reckoning with the fact that the workplace was not the only, or even one of the available spaces of politicisation. Consequently, the reorientation around new spaces is a crucial site of historical-geographical inquiry. I contend that, the emergence of unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops represent similar moments of possibility in the 1980s. Throughout the thesis, I examine the following spaces in the most empirical detail, as part of a broader theoretical analysis of unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops in Scotland:

[1] It is worth noting that this resistance was somewhat uneven – see Clark (2022).

My focus on these particular spaces was moulded both by my research objectives and through the subsequent oral history interviews. I chose to advertise some specific spaces on my call for oral history participants, whilst leaving room for potential interviewees to bring forward other sites that they had conducted political organising out of (see appendix 3). As a result, the above spaces emerged as the primary case studies that I have focussed on empirically in relation to a broader map of left-wing spaces to assert the core contributions of the thesis. I assert that by scrutinising the day-to-day working of these spaces, we can interrogate the emotional dynamics of more (or less) care-full solidarities across difference. This complements theorisations of solidarity that reckon with how it is sustained in the longer-term, revealing a simultaneous rootedness and translatability (Kelliher, 2018). I argue that accounting for the politics of care in these longer-term relationships and spaces of solidarity is essential. It draws attention to the emotional process of building solidarity over time, beyond conceptions of it as a merely transactional endeavour.

1.3.1 Unemployed workers' centres

Unemployed workers' centres initially emerged out of trade union movement initiatives to combat increasing unemployment. The first centre opened in Newcastle in 1978 and by the end of 1982 the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) had expanded the rollout nation-wide (Clark, 1987, p. 182; Griffin, 2021, p. 162). In Scotland, the unemployment rate averaged 6.3% between 1973 and 1979, whereas in England it averaged 4.8% during the same period (Stewart, 2009, p. 49). Industrial jobs in Scotland, in manufacturing, construction, and mining, among others, had been steadily declining since the 1950s – a trend that sharply accelerated in the early 1980s (Tomlinson, 2021). The Strathclyde region bore the brunt of job losses in these sectors.[2] The region lost 37% of its jobs in manufacturing industries within the decade 1971-1981, which represented 85% of the net fall in manufacturing employment in Scotland as a whole (Fraser and Sinfield, 1987, p. 148). Consequently, nine unemployed workers' centres were in Glasgow, representing the most rapid growth of centres across Scotland (Allison et al., 1986, p. 8). These were: Cambuslang, the Dougrie (Castlemilk), Drumchapel, Garthamlock, Gorbals, Govan, Milton, Ruchill, and Whitevale (Dennistoun).[3] By the end of the 1980s in Scotland, unemployed workers' centres had been shaped by a range of different political trajectories beyond what had been envisioned in the early STUC objectives. Therefore, this thesis draws on material from 3 unemployed workers' centres to capture a sense of this variability. Focussing on these sites

[2] Strathclyde was one of nine regions established in Scotland by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, which introduced a regional/district council model for the administration and planning of local authorities. The others were the Borders, Central, Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Grampian, the Highlands and Islands, Lothian, and Tayside. The Bill also provided for separate unitary authorities in Orkney, Shetland, and the Western Isles, combining the powers of a region and a district (see (Keating, 1975)).

[3] The names of each centre usually corresponded with the area in Scotland in which they were located. Where this is not the case, I have indicated their geographical area in brackets.

reveals the interplay between different segments of the labour movement and the political left and how this was negotiated in relation to conceptions of respectability politics around work-related organising.

1.3.2 Lesbian and gay bookshops

In 1967, the Sexual Offences Act legalised homosexual acts between two consenting males over the age of 21 in England and Wales. It would not be until 1980, with section 80 of the Criminal Offences Act, that the same would happen in Scotland. Davidson and Davis (2006) chart the ways in which the campaign for the rights of the 1967 Act to be extended to Scotland was shaped by legal and religious institutions in Scotland. Legally, relevant Scots Law was popularly imagined as unenforceable with regard to private homosexual acts, as Davidson and Davis refer to the assertions of the Scottish Office that there was "no issue" of homosexual prosecutions in Scotland and thus legislation in line with the English and Welsh equivalent was unnecessary – which groups such as the Scottish Minorities Group (SMG) were quick to challenge (p.538). Meek (2015) delves further into how this shaped Scottish homosexual subjectivity, on both individual terms and as a basis for collective organising. He argues that the unwillingness of political figures to accept that same-sex desire was a part of Scottish culture was enabled by the immediate detachment of Scotland from the recommendations of the Wolfenden report. Taking Wolfenden as a partial catalyst for the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and related groups in England, it would be a decade later before similar iterations emerged in Scotland (p.188).[4] Then, with the emergence of the SMG, the variation between the positions of religious institutions and local churches and religious groups were laid bare in this wave of Scottish gay political organising (Meek, 2015). The foundations of lesbian and gay bookselling in Scotland emerged in this context. Whilst opening a dedicated shop was part of the post-legalisation landscape, the practices of bookselling were a core tool of campaigning within lesbian and gay activism during the later 1970s. At first, this was to raise money for other issues. However, the move to open dedicated lesbian and gay bookshops in the 1980s in Scotland produced new centres of queer organising. Lavender Menace was therefore a central part of this progression.

The second iteration of the shop, West and Wilde, opened as repressive legislation was on the horizon from Thatcher's government. The introduction of Section 28 of the Local Government Act in 1988 prohibited local authorities from "intentionally promoting homosexuality…[or] the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" (UK Government, 1988). Whilst West and Wilde was a privately owned premises, and therefore not *directly* affected by the Act, the

[4] The Wolfenden Report, published in 1957, was the culmination of a multi-year public inquiry regarding the legality of homosexuality and prostitution. The report proposed that there "must remain a realm of private morality and immorality, which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law's business." It is often cited as part of the catalyst for organising around legal reform that culminated in the 1967 Sexual Offences Act – for an analysis of the process and testimonies of the Wolfenden Inquiry, see Lewis (2016).

repercussions of Section 28 were still deeply felt by those involved in the shop. One catalyst for Section 28 had been the moral panic produced by a Danish children's book, *Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin,* which was republished by Gay Men's Press in London in 1983. The book was found in a library of the Inner London Education Authority. Whilst access was restricted to the teachers' resource centre of the library and there was only one copy, one book was enough to stoke paranoia around what it meant for a book detailing alternative family structures to be in close proximity to children (Wilson et al, 2018). Aubrey Walters, one of the original members of the London GLF and founder of Gay Men's Press, reflected at the time that the book did cause Section 28 and that it must have been the "last straw" for someone in authority (Mars-Jones, 1988, p.27). Books and bookselling were therefore key conduits through which the government were able to police lesbian and gay activity and lesbian and gay bookshops often faced this through direct confrontation with the police. Consequently, Lavender Menace is a fruitful case study through which to explore this in the context of the Scottish left.

1.3.3 Women's centres

Women's centres were established as part of women's liberation movement (WLM) organising. They emerged in the early 1970s, with the first centre opening in Scotland in Glasgow in 1976 (Browne, 2016, p.51). They were usually attached to a local WLM group and established on a city-wide basis. The aims of a specific women's centre often reflected the specificities of the local chapter that had set it up. Consequently, Bruley (2016) proposes that they are an important avenue through which to assess the regional variations and priorities of WLM organising. By 1979, over 40 women's centres had been set up across Britain (Bruley, 2016, p.8). The WLM newsletter *Wires* featured regular reports on the progress of women's centres across the country. *Wires* was also where women could collect advice from other chapters on how to manage the practicalities of setting up and running a centre. They became core bases of WLM campaigning moving into the 1980s, which represented new configurations of women's movement activity. To establish a firm base for women to gather around WLM objectives appeared to be rhetorically and materially important for feminist organising. In *Grit and Diamonds*, an enlightening account of Scottish feminism in the 1980s, Henderson and Mackay (1990, p.vii) preface the collection by stating that "the heady days of the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s are long gone – now a great deal of energy is spent on desperately trying to hold onto what we've got." For the Glasgow chapter of the women's movement, to hold onto what they had also necessitated expanding the membership of the women's movement beyond who they were usually able to reach. As such, assessing the place of women's centres in relation to the broader landscape of the Scottish left reveals the ways in which feminist organising crossed over with other political movements at the everyday level.

Hay (2021)'s account of the Scottish Abortion Campaign (SAC) notes that campaign meetings often took place at the Glasgow women's centre. Notably, Hay traces the group's divergences from the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) as resistance to the acute inequalities of abortion provision in Scotland after the 1967 Abortion Act. In an assessment of her experience within the Glasgow women's centre, and in the Scottish women's movement more broadly, Breitenbach (1990) proposes that the women's movement in Scotland had a "distinctive Scottish identity and a distinctive Scottish dimension" (p.209). Morrison and Gibbs (2021) chart how this period of women's organising culminated in key feminist involvement in the architecture of devolution, as part of a wider narrative of feminism's "institutional turn" in the 1980s.

Unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops are just some of the spaces in 1980s Scotland and beyond that can be understood as infrastructures of solidarity. Those I interviewed often made references to other sites that were connected to spaces they organised out of, which emphasised their importance in the broader landscape of left-wing organising in 1980s Scotland. In the next section, I expand on the historical-geographical specifics of the Scottish left in the 1980s, referring to some of these related spaces.

1.4 Narrating left-wing historical geographies.

"The problems that stand in the way of getting socialist ideas rolling again…are profound. I think one has to confront them head on – but with a socialism which is without guarantees, that is to say, a socialism which does not believe the motor of history is inevitably on its side." - (Hall, 1988, p. 195)

The "left" referred to throughout this thesis is necessarily expansive and emergent, as representative of the interwoven political trajectories that shaped each of the spaces I examine. It refers to the interactions of different strands of socialist and feminist thought, threaded through an engagement with the diverse political subjectivities that created the infrastructures of solidarity explored in each chapter. It is based in a political understanding, informed through the positionality I set out in chapter three, and as cognisant of Hall's caution against understanding political transformation solely through the lens of the party-political sphere (Featherstone, 2021). As a result, I draw inspiration from accounts that analyse the overlaps and collectivity in the social movements and political groups that organised for change, approaching left-wing culture(s) "as a combination of theories and experiences, ideas and feelings, passions and utopias" (Traverso, 2016, p.xiii). This section sets out such a paradigm, providing an overview of some of the ties that loop their historical geographies together, through left-wing spaces such as unemployed workers' centres, lesbian and gay bookshops, and women's centres.

1.4.1 Left-wing culture(s) in 1980s Scotland

The landscape of the left in 1980s Scotland was inhabited by a rich plethora of political traditions, formed within and outside of political party activity. Alongside the Labour party as the majority left party at Westminster, many of the activists who were involved in unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops were also active in what Smith and Worley (2014) categorise as far-left political parties, such as the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), Trotskyist organisations such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), and anarchist groups.[5] The proposed road to socialism in Scotland was also negotiated through nationalist politics. Gibbs and Scothorne (2019) situate these mediations in a longer-term historicization of left-wing intellectualism and development of the extra-parliamentary new left. Alongside this, increasing anti-militarism and anti-nuclearism among segments of the Scottish left outside of the Labour party produced renewed critique of the British state as the route to socialism. Subsequently, party activity shaped and was shaped by ongoing involvement with and opposition from the labour movement, but also new social movements such as the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) that catered to these political interests. As outlined, women's liberation and lesbian and gay movements also formed a core part of what has broadly been termed the "New Left", encompassing the broad social movements that represented a reconfiguration of where left-wing organising was situated.

This context enveloped the infrastructures of solidarity discussed in this thesis. This is demonstrated in the oral history testimonies underpinning the research, as interviewees reflected on their involvement in particular campaigns and movements, alongside their shifting political party memberships and trade union commitments. George Kirkpatrick, the coordinator of the unemployed workers' centre in Drumchapel from 1986 to the early 1990s, was a member of the Young Communist League (YCL), before leaving to join the Labour Party, before then joining the CPGB after leaving the centre. Keith Stoddart, who was the coordinator of the Govan unemployed workers' centre from 1982-1986, was also a member of the CPBG. Gibbs (2020) notes that there was a long-term CPGB presence within the Scottish labour movement that was notably concentrated across Clydeside and in Fife, which represented some of their most significant strongholds across Britain. Gibbs further notes that centres of CPGB activity revolved around their "enduring strength within trade unionism and community activism" (p.1). This is evidenced through some of the other left-wing spaces in 1980s Scotland that existed alongside the ones I explore in the most depth during the thesis. The Star Club on Calton Place, Glasgow was a CPGB folk and social club that party members used, as well as hosting fundraisers for the Glasgow women's centre and a monthly lesbian disco night (Interview with Broadbent, 2021).

[5] Smith and Worley acknowledge that some may dispute their categorisation, reflecting that "many anarchists would argue that they share little with the communist/Leninist left" as an example (2014, p. 3).

This history and organising of Scottish communism were also powerful rhetorical devices for a number of community struggles into the late 1980s and 1990s. Gibbs (2016) argues that the imposition of the poll tax and the subsequent non-payment campaign often invoked images of the Red Clydeside, situating community mobilisations in a longer-term narrative of Scottish radicalism. This was crucial in the absence of top-down trade union involvement and even at times resistance to the non-payment campaign – the STUC for example opposed the tax, but also opposed the tactic of non-payment (Gibbs, 2014; Hannah, 2020). The organising in and around the spaces explored in this thesis represent a continuation of these same negotiations, at the tension and intersections of workplace and community organising in the central belt of Scotland.

1.4.2 Articulating local socialism outside local government.

Davis and McWilliam (2018) note that the 1980s was a "creative decade for the left" (p.2). They point to examples of "local socialism" that emerged over the 1980s, grounding core parts of left-wing activism within this project. "Local socialism" broadly refers to the creation of new sites of resistance within the state (or at least state-adjacent) to Thatcherism (Gyford, 1983). Two of its defining features revolved around aims to reckon with both class *and* identity politics, which could draw in old alliances as well as creating new ones; and its realisation through *local* councils, aiming to reflect the local priorities and geographical context of a specific area (Payling, 2019, p. 145). Beveridge and Cochrane (2023) suggest a generous framework for identifying strands of this work in practice. They propose that whilst these "new urban left or local socialist authorities" may not have had an explicitly shared programme, they were drawn together by questioning traditional approaches, seeking to challenge the policies of the ('new right') Thatcher government and to develop active policies focussed on the possibility of building socialist alternatives (p.794).

In this vein, some accounts consequently position some of the spaces examined in this thesis as examples of the spatial manifestation of local socialism. The Greater London Council (GLC) is one of the most thoroughly studied examples in this tradition. For example, the central London women's centre was established through the GLC Women's Committee, opening two weeks before the GLC itself was abolished (Beckett, 2015). Other local groups also collaborated with the GLC to carve out a range of spaces in 1980s London, such as centres for children, women, gay and lesbian people, pensioners, the unemployed, and ethnic minorities (Brooke, 2017). Schofield et al. (2021) argue that this represented a conviction on the part of some on the left "that the levers of state power were needed to achieve many of their goals [and so] from the late 1970s many radicals shaped by the New Left entered into the state and – as the central government began to defund local authorities – were on the frontline of a battle between central and local government that raged

throughout the 1980s" (p.206). This work was not without some internal conflict among those involved in this work. Reflecting on the early proposals for the eventual lesbian and gay centre in London, Otitoju (2010) remembers that it "called for a rethink of my position of no collusion with the establishment… [I resolved] to talk [about it] after the meeting, worrying only the tiniest bit about my credibility as a Black lesbian, almost separatist feminist" (p.137). Otitoju's testimony captures the negotiation between people organising within and across different social movements and the potentials of state engagement. This reckoning is an integral part of left-wing historiography of this period, mostly of the attempted reorientation of segments of the left against Thatcher in the 1980s. This thesis is a contribution to that same geographical historiography, by expanding the ways in which local socialism is articulated and historicised beyond the lens of local government institutions.

There have been less analyses of how manifestations of local socialism, or perceptions of it, may have translated to Scotland. Some contemporary writing from people working for Scottish district and regional councils cites the GLC as an example that they sought to follow. Kane (1990) worked for Stirling council and recalled that the council leader had "decided to follow the GLC example and took the potentially electorally unpopular risk of setting up the Women's Committee…twelve other Scottish Councils now have a formal committee structure to address women's needs" (p.18). I argue that whilst a sustained historical-geographical analysis of the perceptions of the local state in relation to left-wing organising in Scotland is still needed, it is also fruitful to interrogate the way "local socialism" might manifest beyond municipal authorities. Some of the spaces in this thesis engaged with and accessed funding through Strathclyde Regional Council. Established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act in 1973, it covered 19 districts in Scotland and had an annual budget "second only to the GLC" (Hebbert, 1997). Thus, this thesis builds on Beveridge and Cochrane's (2023) proposition that we should examine other examples beyond the Greater London Council. Payling (2014) provides an essential intervention here through her work on Sheffield City Council and South Yorkshire County Council. Though I seek to gently challenge her claim that the abolition of the GLC and metropolitan councils in 1986 brought the 'local socialism' project to an end across Britain, disrupting the negotiation between traditional and radical forms of politics and the building of new constituencies (p.624). Whilst not to downplay the significance of this destruction, a continued examination of the Scottish example beyond 1986 could be illuminating in how these negotiations may have continued into the early-mid 1990s – not least because the equivalent legislation for restructuring the boundaries and powers of councils in was not enacted until 1993 with the introduction of the Local Government (Scotland) Bill. The project of local socialism is an important way in which to encapsulate left-wing organising during this period and its legacies are evident throughout the findings of this thesis.

1.4.3 Oral histories of building beyond the fragments.

"We do not have such a close relation to a mass socialist party. On the contrary, we are now faced with creating a socialist organisation not primarily through debates, struggles, and splits within existing parties…but through the coming together of socialists based in the various 'sectoral' movements." (Rowbotham et al., 1980)

It is my contention that this "coming together" is best emotively and reflectively explored through oral history interviews. Oral history interviews provide important opportunities for researchers to reflect on how interviews might craft spatial and emotional narratives, in ways that cannot be replicated by solely using archival sources (Hampton, 2022, p.473). The use of oral history interviews is central to this thesis' examination of the emotional historical geographies of solidarity in 1980s Scotland. I therefore make a novel methodological contribution to ongoing geographical engagements with oral history theory and practice (Andrews et al., 2006; Riley and Harvey, 2007). The importance of engaging with the inter-subjective relationship, mutually created between interviewer and interviewees, is central to my methodological contribution. In the context of this thesis research, the inter-subjective relationships were firmly based in a shared political authority between the interviewees and I (Sitzia, 1999). This accounted for our shared political experiences across the left in Scotland, whilst also making space for my positionality as someone younger and comparatively newer to the political organising that the interviewees reflected on. This inter-generational transfer was an integral part of the interview processes, which I contend has important practical lessons for building solidarity today. In every interview, we took time to reflect on how the memories the interviewees drew upon might be relevant to our contemporary struggle, in a way that indicated a shared investment in a socialist future. In the conclusion of this thesis, I reflect on how I have endeavoured to continue practising solidarity in this same collective lineage.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

Chapter two establishes the conceptual framework and key theoretical contributions of this thesis. I engage with theorisations of space, emotion, and solidarity, producing a framework through which to define and discuss "infrastructures of solidarity." For this, I suggest that foregrounding the emotional trajectories circulating throughout these sites is integral to understanding the ways in which these infrastructures were built. As mentioned, one of this thesis' central arguments is that these spaces have been understudied in historical-geographical literature that examines the dynamics of solidarity during this period. Therefore, this chapter is a crucial intervention into existing historical-geographical literature on the matter. This is acute with regards to research that does examine the role of these sites, but that largely treats them as a passive outcome of the broader left-wing political culture, rather than as an active project that shaped the left, and the

ripples of which continue to do so today. I consolidate this latter point, by arguing that in attending to the emotional geographies produced by their construction, this research offers new insights as to how relationships of solidarity can continue to endure across diverse political groups and social movements. I assert that this is an important and hopeful intervention in understanding the transformation of left-wing political organising during this period.

In Chapter three I develop a methodology for exploring emotional historical geographies of solidarity, through conducting oral history interviews. I reflect on the impact of conducting research during the covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown. Whilst I engage with important archival sources, my primary methodological contributions are in relation to oral history theory and practice. I argue that oral history is uniquely well placed to capture both the emotionality and spatiality of historical narratives. I suggest some ways in which geographers can engage with oral history, as I argue its full potential as a research practice in geography could be captured more substantially. I also reflect on how my own subjectivity shaped the interviews that I conducted, as someone active in the tenant and trade union movement in Glasgow. Both the process and the resulting record of the oral history interviews I have conducted have been instrumental in how I have developed my theoretical understanding of solidarity, and how I practice it in contemporary political organising.

Chapter four focusses on the construction of these spaces. I examine the various ways that unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay centres were structured, funded, and staffed. The empirical chapters of this thesis thematically follow the 'lives' of these spaces. Consequently, this chapter explores the beginnings of different sites, tracing their early days and the spatial politics produced by the work of opening each space for the first time. This was a contested process and as a result, the negotiations over how to build various spaces intimately shaped the eventual spatial politics of each site, and how each space was perceived in the landscape of the left in 1980s Scotland. I argue that a more intricate examination of these spaces is necessary for fully understanding their role rooting the left in non-rigid ways (Kelliher, 2021a). I also draw out how examining their varying engagements with the local state enriches accounts of the various projects of "local socialism" during this period and their complicated state entanglements, particularly in a Scottish historical-geographical context.

Chapter five provides a more detailed account of the day-to-day running of these spaces, elaborating on the everyday activities and relationships of left-wing political organising. I explore how these spaces were situated in a variety of left-wing networks, facilitated by both the material and emotional infrastructures of these spaces. This reveals the ways in which solidarities were carried from space to space – in formal ways such as through membership organisations but also through informal channels vis-a-vis relationships between people in different spaces. This created

an expansive terrain of engagement, not without the complications of inter-personal connections. Therefore, I demonstrate that analysing these networks through spaces like unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and bookshops reveals how these tensions and solidarities could be, steadily or unsteadily, held together in space. As a result, I use this chapter to nuance existing historical-geographical literature regarding the left's engagement with different subjectivities, particularly around gender and sexuality.

In Chapter six I foreground the emotional historical geographies produced by the work of setting up and running unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops, as described in chapters four and five, particularly as many of these spaces closed. I argue that by centring emotion in my analysis of how solidarity was sustained through these spaces, this reveals the new ways that people fought for the spaces they had built as time went on. As those doing the work and using these centres and bookshops suffered the longer-term effects of some of the defeats of the left over the 1980s, coupled with broader political and economic structural changes, the role of these spaces as sites of care was enhanced. To demonstrate this, I assert the value of using oral history testimonies in this endeavour, as they reveal the complex emotional trajectories that shaped the lives of these spaces and of those involved in them.

I conclude the thesis with Chapter seven, which brings together the core findings of my research and considers how this work has made important contributions to historical and geographical scholarship. I suggest some future avenues for using and continuing this research, both in studying and in practising solidarity. The primary theoretical and empirical interventions of this research – the contested and generative labour of constructing spaces of solidarity, the emotional registers of such work, and the spatialities of solidarity across diverse political actors – resonate with contemporary geographical theorising and struggle. The question of finding space for left-wing political organising remains a relevant issue. Finally, I reflect on the methodological implications of this research. In developing a politically grounded, collaborative practice of oral history interviewing, I consider how we can best capture our historical geographies of solidarity as we organise today.

Chapter 2.

Emotion, care, and difference in infrastructures of solidarity

2.1 Introduction

Unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops in 1980s Scotland were shaped by flows of solidarity and care. The spaces that people built and organised out of informed how these relationships were practised. Reciprocally, the same was true for how these acts and bonds of careful solidarity moulded those same spaces. As such, the ways in which the physical and emotional infrastructures of unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops were produced and reproduced, initiated a spatiality that was firmly relational (Massey, 2004). This thesis examines these sites as three case studies through which to understand this relationality. Consequently, this chapter sets out a theoretical framework through which to examine each of these spaces in their specificity *and* as intimately connected to one another within the broader landscape of the left. Through an analysis of these spatial entanglements, I account for how solidarity was infrastructurally, emotionally, and care-fully built within particular groups, and between different political actors, to produce a distinctly spatial politics of solidarity.

This chapter establishes the conceptual framework and key contributions of the broader thesis. First, I outline how I and others understand the term "infrastructures of solidarity." For this, I draw together the rich and varied *processes* of crafting such infrastructures, rather than a definitive paradigm of what is and is not included within any narrow definition of the term. This is an important part of my approach to the spaces I research, particularly as I have used oral history interviews as my primary methodology. The reflective and emotional registers of how interviewees reflected upon how "successful" different spaces had been in facilitating the work of solidarity forms a significant part of each empirical chapter. Therefore, in this first section I develop a framework of "infrastructures of solidarity" that translates effectively across different iterations of political organising.

I then go onto engage with geographical work that theorises space as a product of social relations. For this, I draw extensively on the work of Doreen Massey, in order to pull each of the spaces I discuss into a relationship with one another. Massey's (1999, 1994) work is integral to my understanding of the spaces in this thesis - as open and able to hold different political trajectories and tensions as they coexist, unfixed, around and through a particular location. Therefore, I set

out how this underpins the way in which I examine each space and how this contextualises them as distinctive infrastructures of solidarity. In the second section, I delve into how historical geographers and others have previously engaged with each of these spaces, continuing this overview from chapter one. I reassert that these spaces have been understudied in historical-geographical literature that interrogates the dynamics of solidarity during this period. In particular, I query existing accounts that do examine the role of these sites, but that largely treat them as the passive backdrop to political activity, as a flat surface where politics otherwise plays out (Massey, 2007). I argue that these spaces shaped relationships of solidarity in the 1980s between diverse political actors, and these spaces were in turn shaped by these relations. Each space represented an infrastructure of convergence and solidarity, rather than mere end points unto themselves (Karaliotas, 2023).

The second section considers how the connections between these spaces facilitated a network of solidarity across a range of political groups and social movements. I build on existing literature that highlights the generative character of solidarity, emphasising how such a framework enables an understanding of how solidarity is built across between diverse political and social subjectivities. I argue here that using these sites as case studies illuminates how difference was negotiated spatially, in ways that were generative of new acts and relationships of solidarity. I build from work that takes on how solidarity is built and sustained across political difference, holding together the potentials of both political tension and transformation. This includes engaging with the work of those involved in these spaces to renegotiate what these spaces could or could not be (Bodden, 2022). In the third section I engage with the emotional politics of this work, and of building solidarity more broadly. I outline the value in articulating what emotional trajectories circulate through and between different spaces, which in turn shape the spatial politics of solidarity that are produced. From this, I argue that the acts and relationships of care also played a significant role in shaping articulations of solidarity within each of these spaces, and vice versa. This threads together the central theoretical concern of this thesis, which is how relational flows of solidarity, emotion, and care, interact together to produce particular spaces, and in turn how those spaces reciprocally shape those same relationships. From this, I lead into a methodological discussion, as I argue that using oral history uniquely captures these emotional spatialities.

2.2 Spatial politics and infrastructure

The spaces I examine in this thesis were shaped by a constellation of political trajectories. The spatialities of left-wing organising were writ large in unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops, as they represented a complex balancing act. They negotiated different left-wing visions of political alternatives, whilst simultaneously reckoning with

the external political, social, and economic contexts that constrained the left during the 1980s. Their role as infrastructures of solidarity, situated within broader left-wing networks, was constructed, and reconstructed through a multitude of flows – both synthesising and competing. As such, this section seeks to draw out relevant literature on space and infrastructure that grounds unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops in that lineage. First, I illustrate how I understand and define these spaces as infrastructural manifestations of solidarity, building on previous articulations of this concept. I then outline the theoretical underpinnings of this definition, foregrounding Doreen Massey's work on space, multiplicity, and the coexistence of difference. This in turn will ground my analysis of the (connected) specifics of the different sites on these foundations.

2.2.1 Articulating "infrastructures of solidarity"

Unemployed workers' centres, lesbian and gay bookshops, women's centres, among an array of other spaces used for left-wing political activity during the 1980s, can be understood as "infrastructures of solidarity" (Abou-El-Fadl, 2019; Kelliher, 2021a; McFarland, 2017). Framing spaces like unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops as infrastructures foregrounds the very making of their spatiality as a core component, or even as Butler (2015) suggests as a "collaborative actor" in the production of the politics within and beyond each site (p.127). The question of infrastructure is not just the "condition [ing of] the action but as part of the making of the space of politics (Butler, 2015, p.127). Arampatzi (2017) proposes that such urban "solidarity spaces" are crucial infrastructures through which to unpack bottom-up approaches to neoliberal crises. She convincingly argues that these sites are crucial vehicles through which to experiment with political alternatives, in ways that meaningfully counter the impacts of the austerity crisis at the everyday level. Importantly, Arampatzi's framework leaves room for the "spontaneity and informality" as characteristic of these potentially "messy" or "incomplete" solidarity spaces (p.2167). To interrogate these complexities avoids a simplistic romanticisation of any and all forms of contestation to crises but instead generates new political possibilities through a negotiation of the critical solidarities formed around and through infrastructures of solidarity (Karaliotas, 2023; Minuchin, 2016).

Kelliher (2021b) describes infrastructures of solidarity as material infrastructures that enabled solidarity to be organised (p.72). Writing instructively about the 1984-5 miners' strike, he notes the range of spaces, such as women's centres, bookshops, trade union resource centres, miners' welfare halls, and social clubs, that enabled a situated connectivity between the strike solidarity campaigns in London and the coalfields. The very physicality of these spaces was therefore instrumental in the maintenance of these networks, as people used them as a basis for day-to-day

political activity. They also enabled sustained encounters between otherwise geographically distant groups. Abou-El-Fadl (2019) contends that the work of building such infrastructures of solidarity, produces an "interconnectedness between different local places, across spatial scales, *simultaneously"* (p.162). The "fixity" of these sites "promoted mobility" among varied groups of activists, as they served a practical purpose in accommodating new and/or "visiting" political actors (ibid). A closer look at these mobilities can in turn reveal their past iterations, and how socially (un)just mobilities are wrapped up in those same historical geographies (Sheller, 2018, p. 18).

Different spaces' rootedness can therefore act as a resource in and of itself (Abou-El-Fadl, 2019). This was true for how such a rootedness enabled trans-local and trans-national connections, but it could also strengthen the perceived presence of left-wing activity within a particular locale. Left-wing spaces anchored their political organising to a centre, shop, club, or another place where, ideally, people would always know where to go to access movement resources and solidarity. McFarland (2017) describes union halls in this vein, naming them as the "nerve centres" of the unions' recreational and administrative activities. The perception that a space was permanent, or at least durable, often formed an important part of these spaces' political project (Teo, 2016). This was the proposed ideal of many of the spaces included in this research, as outlined in further detail in chapter four. Subsequently, I explore to what extent this was realised in chapter five of this thesis.

The rootedness of particular spaces, or quests for permanence, did not preclude political groups from using them to enable more transient acts of solidarity. Travelling expressions of solidarity still circulated between various spaces, or as Paul Griffin defines them, "solidarities on the move" (2023a, p. 3). Drawing on his research into the People's March for Jobs in 1981, Griffin stresses the importance of these spaces as a resource bases in sustaining the marchers. Whilst the marchers themselves were by definition not fixed to any one place, their progress was significantly enabled by the resources provided at each stop along the way. In turn, the marchers shaped the sites they visited, as they "drew upon the existing infrastructures within places, whilst also proving generative in reimagining unemployment within the spaces they passed through" (p.5). Griffin therefore usefully illustrates how we might consider the broader, reciprocal infrastructural networks behind even the more fleeting encounters of solidarity, and how these are constitutive of a broader presence of working-class organising (Crossan et al., 2016; Featherstone and Griffin, 2016).

Moreover, this articulation usefully draws out how such mobile solidarities were sustained by both "tangible and intangible" resources, distinguishing between material, infrastructural forms of solidarity, and the invocation of "imagined solidarities" (Bayat, 2005). It is important to note that the distinction between what is tangible and intangible in relation to solidarity is difficult to rigidly

delineate. The emotional experience of solidarity, and of political organising more broadly, consistently have profound material and experiential impacts (Proctor, 2024). For example, Griffin brings together oral history testimonies that equivalate the food, shelter, and other resources marchers received, to the social contact and arguably the emotional response of those in the towns that they visited. Marchers were both physically and emotionally refreshed by the stops along the march, which produced a sense of pride and imagined support they would be able to continuously draw from. Both forms, Griffin argues, mutually reinforced one another, complementing accounts of infrastructures of solidarity that position them as rooted in place, but not rigidly fixed there (Kelliher, 2021a). By setting out the connections between both the physical and emotional expressions of solidarity, they appear as co-constitutive of one another, at times inseparable. Thus, the affective registers of solidarity are also integral components of building infrastructures of solidarity, in the same way as material resources. Griffin notes that "these relations sustained the march, and, in some ways at least extended the reach beyond the month of marching through the lives of those involved" (p.2). Consequently, this reinforces that solidarity is infrastructurally created through both material and emotional labour and resources, with the latter especially important to sustaining the imagination of solidarity beyond the discrete temporalities and spatialities of particular disputes or campaigns. From this, we can imagine how hopeful and generative relations of solidarity can continue to shape and reshape infrastructures in places even with the deepest roots.

These accounts form part of a growing body of literature that highlights the different roles these kinds of spaces played in developing networks of solidarity around particular disputes or campaigns. For example, in Brown and Yaffe's (2017) work on the Non-Stop Picket Against Apartheid, they describe how activists produced briefings that listed how new people could take action against apartheid with and through the Non-Stop Picket in London – such as by placing posters about the Picket in radical bookshops and community centres in their local area (p.68). These spaces acted as connective points for people to come together to mobilise around particular campaigns or industrial disputes. In some instances, they also represented opportunities for political activity to continue on after the fight had "ended" elsewhere. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and Thomlinson (2023) examine the shifting work of coalfield women and other activists after the Miners' Strike ended in 1985. They highlight how women involved in local iterations of the National Women Against Pit Closures refocused their efforts on opening a women's centre. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and Thomlinson highlight the example of Castleford women's centre, which ran a range of educational sessions and provided a creche for women in the area (pp.200-202). Women's centres, alongside unemployed workers' centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops were key nodal points in networks of solidarity around particular moments, whilst also having core political functions outside of supporting strike action or discrete political campaigns. The multiplicity of these

spaces in their activities and purposes, formed a key tenet of their role as infrastructures of solidarity.

It is within this framework that I position the spaces I examine in this thesis as infrastructures of solidarity. Unemployed workers' centres, lesbian and gay bookshops, and women's centres provided various forms of material support to different groups of people, as the empirical material of this thesis will illustrate. Sometimes this would be to those who described themselves as explicitly involved in left-wing organising, who used them as meeting spaces to organise around campaigns, industrial disputes, and other related activities. Simultaneously, the core groups of people involved in some of the spaces also, to varying extents, sought to serve material support to the wider communities they envisioned themselves as part of. This meant providing food, a place to rest, welfare advice, or opportunities to take part in social and cultural activities. The material aspects of these infrastructures were rich and expansive – as were the social and emotional encounters that underpinned the work of their construction. The physical and emotional components of these spaces as infrastructures of solidarity were relationally constructed and ultimately inseparable from one another.

2.2.2 A relational and spatial politics of solidarity

The spaces I consider in this thesis had roots in particular places, whilst also anchored by links to wider left-wing political organising and to each other. To understand the relationship between this rootedness and their place within broader relevant networks, Massey (2007) outlines how the local and the national, the local and the global, are co-constitutive of each other. As she notes, "world cities, *as indeed all places,* also have lines that run out from them: trade routes, investments, political and cultural influences, the outward connections of the internal multiplicity itself: power relations of all sorts that run around the globe and that link the fate of other places to what is done [here]" (p.14). Whilst Massey here is talking about the city of London, her analysis translates across spaces and places at much smaller scales – such as women's centres, unemployed workers' centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops. The lines that run out from these sites are made visible by the political work and the lives of the people that used them. In very practical terms, centres and bookshops had noticeboards, newsletters, and flyers through which to explicitly encourage those who came to keep up with news and events happening within and beyond that one specific space. The existence of these spaces in relation to one another produced a paper trail, revealing the lines that connected them to one another. Concurrently, these connections were similarly reinscribed through the relationships that formed between people travelling across these different spaces, and the encounters that took place through this mobility. These acts were manifestations of the networks, or lines as Massey names them, through which people could reaffirm the inter-

connectedness of their spaces, and their struggles. Through each of the spaces I examine in this thesis, I highlight the ways in which these links were made explicit through particular acts of solidarity (Kelliher, 2019, 2021a).

To centre the day-to-day material and emotional labour of these networks of solidarity highlights a key tenet of Massey's framework. She urges us, both as researchers and as activists, to foreground the work that goes into building these links and sustaining this solidarity in our analysis of the importance of place. Massey continuously reaffirms that we should take no space as given or predetermined based on a rigid imaginary of what it means to exist in a particular location (Massey, 2007, 2005). This necessarily confronts what Massey identifies as the left's hesitancy to acknowledge local-global connections of power. Writing in *Catalyst,* she confronts the idea that to recognize such global networks of power reveals what *cannot* be changed. Instead, she sets out precisely why this should be a crucial project of the evolving left, challenging this sense of inevitability (Massey, 2022 [2000]). Her work crucially foregrounds an analysis of spatial relations in any constitution of the political, making explicit the geographical imaginations and those conceptualisations of space that inform dynamics of power. Arguing for a critical politics of location, Massey rejects spatial strategies that analysed different localities as in competition with one another (Massey, 2022b [1983]). Her analysis similarly rejects space as a flat surface on which politics is enacted on top of. It is a sphere of relations, ongoing and continuously under construction (Massey, 2005). This spatial framework is integral to the way I take forward an analysis of spaces on the left such as unemployed workers' centres, bookshops, and women's centres. Rather than taking these sites as the stage for political organising, a relational approach accounts for how their spatial politics were formative in crafting how such political activity was enacted. Her work is foundational in thinking through how to reconcile the complexities of crafting a progressive politics of place, whilst also maintaining a commitment to broader local, national, and global networks of solidarity (Massey, 1993; Routledge and Cumbers, 2009). Taking this approach reveals the ways in which different political spaces at a hyper-local level converge to shape the broader landscape of the left during a particular conjuncture. This moves beyond taking different sites as simply co-existing, but instead appreciates how their presence shapes one another, and consequently the political trajectories that circulate through them (Leitner et al., 2008).

Acknowledging the dynamism of space in this way is necessarily revealing of the potential for both the fruits and the tensions of building solidarity in the places I examine. Consequently, Massey's ideas on the "throwntogetherness" of space are pertinent here (1999, 2005). She proposes that space, made up of multiple trajectories of inter-relations, can never be finished or closed. It is ever shifting and even for those spaces that remain in the same place - that place can still always be different. This negotiation, as Massey articulates it, will always produce (and necessitate) an

invention. The same “rules” cannot just map exactly onto the new – the emergence of the unique, the contested, sets out a landscape of political opportunity (Massey, 2005, p. 162). Massey’s rejection of spatial analysis that takes spaces as naturally in competition with one another is therefore an important reminder of how to engage with space as encompassing of a multiplicity of trajectories. In addition, Kaplan (1994) convincingly argues that devising a critical politics of location can therefore do important work for engaging with how solidarity manifests across difference. She asserts that this work can carve out historically specific differences and similarities within diverse groups, and throughout asymmetrical relations of power – opening up possibilities for alternative histories, identities, and possibilities for alliances.

Massey ultimately cautions against codifying spatial politics in a way that dampens the expansiveness of what space can do (2005). Consequently, I have sought to maintain an expansiveness in articulating what constitutes “infrastructures of solidarity.” This resonates with other accounts that have produced broad definitions for spaces of resistance and political struggle. For example, in Kimberley Kinder’s *the Radical Bookstore,* she coins the term “counterspace” to describe the spatial infrastructures that “activists construct for themselves to accommodate contentious political practices operating in parallel with established norms and pushing towards alternative futures” (Kinder, 2021, p. 40). Kinder admits that this is an imperfect term, but one that enabled her to qualify which bookshops across the United States that she would examine in her book, and to draw out broader theorisations over what such space can do. This definition relies on some of the same grounds as what I have sketched out over this section. Kinder stresses that counterspaces are actively made, not passively found – aligning well with Massey’s approach to space as fluid and relationally produced.

It can be useful to find commonalities which allow these sites to be collectively identified. Simultaneously, as Kinder reckons with, this can be difficult. The specificities of each of the spaces I examine, as I have situated within their various movement contexts, with particular localities, often preclude a neat, translatable categorisation. In the next section, I outline how and why I have analysed them specifically *in relation to one another*, within the same landscape, as the way in which to tie them together under the framework of “infrastructures of solidarity.” From this, I refer to how unemployed workers’ centres, women’s centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops have been analysed in existing literature and highlight that they have predominantly been engaged with as separate from one another.

2.3 The landscape of the left in 1980s Scotland

Rather than examining just one of the following sites (i.e., women's centres, bookshops, or unemployed workers' centres), by taking forward Massey's theorisations on the multiplicities of space, I intend to analyse them relationally. I examine them as connective points in the fuller picture of the left during this time, whilst also engaging with their rich inner workings in their own right. The perceived importance of opening a space was shared by various political actors within the left during this period. This therefore made opening and sustaining spaces, such as unemployed workers' centres, bookshops, women's centres, a core part of a variety of political groups' attempts to craft a durable, and in some ways permanent, manifestation of solidarity. As such, in this section I map out how my theoretical framework, drawn from the first section, illuminates the spatial politics of the left in 1980s Scotland in particular. Generally, the role of specific spaces is somewhat underplayed in broader accounts of left-wing political activity during the 1980s. Whilst they are acknowledged as important, there are few accounts that fully interrogate their role in the transformation of left-wing politics over the course of this period. Consequently, this thesis also seeks to address this relative absence in historical-geographical literature. In doing so, it demonstrates that spaces like women's centres, bookshops, and unemployed workers' centres were a central part of new waves of politicisation and political organising that developed during the 1980s.

Historian Geoff Eley emphasises the importance of local institutions and spaces in the changing culture and modes of organising of the left during this period in Britain. They filled a lacuna where other political vehicles had fallen short. For example, he argues that traditional institutions of the left, such as the Labour Party, were largely unable to seize the opportunities that this transformation presented (Eley, 2002, pp. 461–9). As Stuart Hall reflected, "Neil Kinnock is solidly in touch with the well-springs of Labourist culture – and that is important. But he has no feel for the language and concerns of the new social movements – and that is dangerous…I make no prejudgements, but I offer a benchmark: no one who thinks feminism and the women's movement is a bit of a joke will lead Labour towards socialism in this country" (Hall, 1988, p. 198). Local, community manifestations of political activity, rooted in reconfigured political subjectivities, thus became crucial vehicles of activity on the left. Consequently, their proliferation onto the landscape of the left throughout this time is a useful lens through which to assess the politics of daily life throughout the period (Brooke, 2014, p. 21).

As introduced in chapter one, Payling (2014) proposes that how different places grappled with their own iterations of 'local socialism' reminds us of the different trajectories from this period that cannot be neatly codified within Thatcherism or New Labour. She further notes that understanding how these developed can further enhance our understanding of the left in Britain, beyond neat

narratives of success and failure. Payling uses Sheffield City Council as her primary case study, thus predominantly focussing on local socialism, through local government. Women's centres, unemployed workers' centres, and bookshops add a further dimension to this, offering new ways in which to understand the left in relation to, but not exclusively within the bounds of, the local state. This is particularly interesting in the instances where these sorts of spaces opened *after* Thatcher's project of centralisation (Parkinson, 1989). This narrative opens up a fruitful avenue for a deeper discussion of the transformation of the left during this period, particularly in terms of how it was spatially defined.

Brooke (2014) positions spaces such as women's centres, black women's centres, and lesbian and gay centres as part of the distinctiveness of the 1980s, describing them as "social democracy zones" (p.28).[6] In narrating them in this way, he drafts a framework for analysing these sites as ways to understand the competing trajectories of the 1980s through a locally rooted, but globally connected lens. Other examinations of spaces such as unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops, have analysed these sites from the view of a particular dispute or campaign. This can helpfully reveal their role in the production of everyday solidarities. Writing in the context of solidarity campaigns during the 1984-5 Miners' Strike, Kelliher (2021a) notes that during visits between London and the coalfields, offers of accommodation, sharing food, and socialising were important ways in which solidarity could be sustained. Trade union resource centres, bookshops, and women's centres were just some of the spaces that enclosed these practices. Importantly, this was regularly reciprocated between the coalfields and city-based solidarity campaigns. Similarly, McFarland (2017) documents how the use of union halls could locate the union's organisational role in the broader activities of members' everyday lives. They suggest that such spaces played an important role in filtering through the modes of workplace organising into a broader political consciousness of daily life. These accounts draw from the ethos that solidarity and political organising can be rooted, and place-based – but not place restricted (Routledge and Cumbers, 2009). The tangible aspects of these "infrastructures of solidarity" are made clear through these accounts, drawing out their role in establishing a firmly rooted, but relational, political presence (Featherstone and Griffin, 2016; Griffin, 2023b).

There have also been accounts of the role different centres and bookshops played with respect to broader political movements. This is perhaps variable within the specific movements each space may have been perceived as "attached" to. Bruley (2016), for example, argues that women's centres have been neglected in broader historiographies of the women's liberation movement. She

[6] Brooke uses this term as a comparator for "free enterprise zones", introduced by chancellor of the exchequer Geoffrey Howe in 1980, alongside Urban Development Corporations. They were established to attract private investment and despite being rhetorically presented as combative of state intervention, offered heavy state subsidies- see Anderson (1990).

suggests that the way in which the movement's history has traditionally been captured, largely through oral history, has been inadequate to discuss centres. I return to this latter point more extensively in chapter three as part of a wider discussion of the merits of oral history in discussing infrastructures of solidarity – but the broader point stands, in that there has been less discussion of women's centres than might be expected. White (2021) demonstrates (through using oral history testimonies) how examining black women's centres can provide fruitful insights into how local iterations of broader liberatory movements were shaped not only by their wider goals, but also by their relative regional context and communities. She argues that through an interrogation of these centres and their everyday practices, the importance of the local to liberatory politics becomes clear, particularly within Black British feminist organising.

Binard (2017) outlines the role of these centres more broadly, noting that women's liberation movement groups and workshops were often co-ordinated by local women's centres. In this text, Binard briefly touches on some of the tensions around the role of the state within centre organising. She cites the example of the Brighton women's centre, which was established out of an abandoned maternity hospital and given £6,000 for refurbishment. This prompted debates between the women involved about whether taking money from the state in this way was *such* a contentious issue. Yet the broader implications of this for organising in the space itself are left uninterrogated. In a contemporary evaluation of the organisational structure of women's centres, Brown (1986) draws out some intra-spatial conflicts as one women's centre was maligned in favour of opening a centre for the unemployed (pp.224-5). Though predominantly focussed on women's centres, Brown's bringing together of these brief vignettes begins to illustrate the ways in which different subjectivities were spatialised. It is my contention however, that a closer examination reveals that the everyday organising of these spaces was much less rigidly delineated. Chapter four of this thesis picks up this discussion, addressing the role of (state) funding in shaping the spatial politics of different left-wing sites in the 1980s.

Another examination of the role of particular sites within a broader movement is Delap's (2016) exploration of the proliferation of feminist bookshops during this period. Situating these within the broader trajectory of radical bookshops in Britain, she argues that they became distinctive, often undercapitalised, but politically important material sites. Delap's work provides a useful starting paradigm for examining these sites as part of political struggle during this period. She examines them as spaces of activism within their own right, with situated victories and tensions, produced by carrying out feminist political work in those bookshops in particular (Delap, 2021). Delap convincingly argues that using feminist bookshops as a lens counters previous framings of the women's movement as unstructured and ephemeral. Instead, in this framework, we can deduce that acts of solidarity within and around these spaces, produced new infrastructures with both

tangible and intangible forms. In a revealing quote from the women involved in Sisterwrite bookshop in London, they recalled that they “stocked any information leaflet or posters that were about feminist events or demonstrations…we set it up partly as a women’s centre in that sense” (p.7). Her account speaks to the different potentialities of feminist space through women’s centres, feminist bookshops, and even a book-bus, that translates well to a more malleable understanding of what did or did not constitute left-wing space. In turn, these acts grounded longer-term relationships of solidarity, solidifying longer-term activisms. Examining the ways in which these longer-term presences were produced, is key to historical understandings of solidarity. This is notable, as struggles to open spaces, and keep them open, often formed part of political struggle (Bogle, 1987). This is examined in detail in in chapter six of this thesis.

Simultaneously, these accounts of specific spaces can still reveal the mobilities of different groups, even if they were based at certain locations. This further enhances an understanding of space beyond it as an enclosure of social processes, as political actors move relationally, together, creating new assemblages along the way (Sheller, 2017). Delap's (2016) example of the Women’s Liberation Book Bus demonstrates how this can take hold. The Book Bus activists were usually not able to hire a dedicated vehicle as a result of financial constraints and therefore relied on hired vans or borrowed cars. There was no official Book Bus in any unitary form, but rather a series of “brief” and “experimental” occupations of existing public spaces – but as Delap points out, it remained an evocative concept through materials such as cartoons and banners, which constituted the presence of the movement in various ways (Crossan et al., 2023, 2016). Furthermore, activists also often brought representations of different spaces onto picket lines and demonstrations, through banners and placards, solidifying this mobile spatial presence. For example, in Paul Griffin’s work examining unemployed workers’ centres in the north-east of England, he refers to the Chesterfield unemployed workers’ centre supporting local worker picket lines and demonstrations (Griffin, 2021). Subsequently, he argues that they form part of an “unemployed presence”, in a way that facilitates more agentic understandings of unemployment (Griffin, 2023b). He argues that the combination of care, activities, and campaigning, alongside the links each centre fostered between communities and trade unionism, marks the centres’ work as distinctive. How the material aspects of these infrastructures of solidarity could be transported coalesced generatively alongside more intangible aspects of imagined solidarities, which were articulated in much more emotional terms (Griffin, 2023a).

A spatial analysis of coalition and solidarity work is also useful in the context of the variety of spaces on the left during the 1980s. For example, the WLM and the wider women’s movement faced similar challenges around how to approach separate spaces for women and men. Owen (2013, p.811) details the “most difficult” conversations around whether or not men should be

allowed into particular women's centres, though perhaps this is somewhat of a generalising statement. Indeed Hay's (2021) account provides a more fleshed out picture of these negotiations, in detailing the differences between the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) and the Scottish Abortion Campaign (SAC). She notes that there were some tensions regarding the role of men in the SAC, particularly as the SAC campaign primarily operated out of the Glasgow Women's Centre, which was women-only. However, Hay usefully illustrates the broader landscape in which the campaign, and incidentally the Glasgow women's centre, was operating in. Hay notes that the women were able to keep these issues to a minimum and cites the discos at the Communist Party's Star Club as one of the examples of how coalition solidarity existed alongside some separate spaces. Hay's work points to the importance of analysing the rich landscape of these spaces together, as a way to think through how solidarity across difference was negotiated at an everyday level across a range of different spaces. In the next section, I suggest a way to build on this thinking.

2.4 Solidarity and difference

Solidarity is regularly built between and negotiated across diverse groups of political actors. By extension, it is also performed within a diverse landscape of political spaces. Through examining different spaces in relation to one another, I suggest that this can be a fruitful way to engage with how solidarity is constructed and reconstructed between diverse groups. Pratt and Hanson (1994) usefully outline how difference can be negotiated spatially and what this can reveal of the construction of different political subjectivities and possibilities. They acknowledge that whilst difference can fracture, it is politically important to reimagine how difference and affinity can be held in place. Cautioning against the tendency to reinscribe differences as rigid and static, they propose a more relational understanding of how diverse subjectivities interact in particular places. Namely, that "one way of working against this rigidification is to explore the processes through which differences are created" (p.6). This fluidity is integral to my analysis of the different spaces I examine in this research, both in relation to one another, and in terms of the different subjectivities that were made and remade within them. Taking a geographical approach as central to the construction of difference, such as Pratt and Hanson propose, "opens avenues for building [such] affinities" (1994, p.6). Acts of solidarity frequently happened across difference in women's centres, unemployed workers' centres, and bookshops. These relationships and interactions could be as equally fruitful as they could be tense. To understand this simultaneity requires an understanding of space, solidarity, and difference as sometimes rooted, but never static. Those involved in these spaces invoked longer-term relationships of solidarity, whilst also holding the difficulties of these and reconfiguring them where necessary.

Therefore, in the first two sections of this chapter, I have sought to establish a framework that positions the spatial politics of women's centres, unemployed workers' centres, and bookshops as fluid and relational, coalescing through and around diverse socio-political trajectories. I understand solidarity on those same terms. As Featherstone (2012) outlines, solidarity is a relation forged through political struggle – one that is generative of new relationships and acts between diverse political actors. Featherstone proposes a solidarity without guarantees, articulating it as an open relation with the potential to be renegotiated and reconfigured. Consequently, this paves the way for asserting a "politics of solidarity" in that the construction and the *doing* of solidarity is politicised (Featherstone, 2012, p.246). As these acts of solidarity can intervene within existing, oppressive structures, they can also forge new ways to resist them. Ruth Wilson Gilmore suggests that in this sense, a shared opposition produces opportunities to create shared values, and to construct community solidarities (2007). Describing a moment of conflict within the group Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (ROC), Gilmore notes that the "crisis resolved into a truce for those who stayed, forcing the group to mature quickly into an organisation *for itself* despite substantial internal differences" (2007, p.209). By asserting the transformative character of solidarity, it reinforces the agency of the actors involved, in terms of how these moments and movements of solidarity play out. This approach helpfully counteracts assumptions that solidarity would be "given" between similar actors, or those with presumed similar political aspirations. The work of building solidarity itself thus becomes a key part of historical and geographical analysis, as well as the outcomes that solidarity produces or helps to produce.

Examining the *process* of building solidarity reveals the varying ways in which difference is negotiated. Importantly, within different political groups, there are always multiple trajectories and identities. "Across difference" does not mean examining how one linear subjectivity is negotiated with one other. Consequently, Kelliher (2021) suggests that intersectionality can illuminate how relationships of solidarity were constructed across difference, accounting for the varied ways in which different identities can be articulated. An intersectional approach therefore "emphasises how multiple forms of social differentiation shape each other" (p.14). In her foundational theorisation of the concept, Kimberlé Crenshaw demonstrates how oppression on the grounds of race and gender cannot be taken as two separate axes (Crenshaw, 1991). Rather, they are mutually constitutive of one another, intersecting and shaping a person's experience of oppression.

Articulating this can produce new, and renewed forms of political organisation, particularly to address previous failures to adequately oppose these intersecting oppressions. In the 1977 founding statement of the Combahee River Collective, a black feminist collective from the United States, they note that it is their particular task to fight against the "manifold and simultaneous" oppressions that synthesise "to form the basis of our lives" (Taylor, 2017, p. 21). Their statements

reference times when they had engaged with different groups and how these interactions had constructively informed their own political project. They also note what they had come to realise is *not* their task – namely, enhancing white feminists' understandings of race. Therefore, this was not something others could assume they would continue to engage in. Consequently, this account reveals the various labours that are negotiated when building solidarity across difference.

Such conceptions of solidarity helpfully and necessarily divert from readings of it as based merely on likeness, drawing attention to the work that goes into sustaining relationships based on solidarity. It also opens up avenues to examine the work involved in maintaining intersectional solidarities over time (Kelliher, 2018; Tormos, 2017). bell hooks has argued that solidarity across difference requires sustained, ongoing commitment (hooks, 1986). Outlining the weaknesses of the white feminist movement in the United States, she stresses that this is particularly important in the context of differences among feminists on the basis of race and class. Resting on the presumption of likeness along one axis of identity is not enough to build political relationships that will last and that will build capacity in the pursuit of shared political goals. She warns against superficial constructions of sisterhood that merely operate as another "shield against reality, another support system" (p.129).

Throughout her analysis, hooks asserts the difference between support and solidarity often. There is a suggestion that solidarity, particularly as interwoven with difference, sometimes necessitates discomfort. A reading of solidarity in this way necessitates a nuanced discussion of the complexities of how these differences are negotiated at an everyday level, and how this should inform how we might reflect on the construction of solidarity. This is also particularly helpful in thinking through how they might play out spatially. Notably, Bernice Johnson Reagon (2000) stressed that coalition work can be immensely difficult. Arguing in the context of the advent of black lesbian separatist politics in the United States, she notes that working together across difference is *necessarily* hard. It is work that is done "in the streets: rather than in the home and that this work cannot be assessed on the grounds of whether it "feels good…in a coalition you have to give, and it is different from your home. You can't stay there all the time. You go to the coalition for a few hours…and then you go back and coalesce some more" (p.361).

This balancing act of coalition work, or building solidarity across difference, is particularly interesting to think through spatially, as aligned with Mollett and Faria's (2018) proposition that intersectionality is a deeply spatial concept and set of processes. Reagon makes a clear distinction between the emotional registers of "coalition" spaces and "home" spaces, and the political implications of being involved in both. *Where* organising solidarity across difference happens is an important question in Reagon's liberatory project. This is equally important in this research,

especially as examined across different spaces such as unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and bookshops. The process of building solidarity across these sites is inseparable from the relationship between the spaces themselves. Whilst they might encapsulate different parts of the wider left, or represent coalition and home at different times, it is useful to imagine and analyse these sites *together,* within a broader landscape. This produces a rich picture of how solidarities are constructed across difference, and how these are emotively and materially held together in space.

2.5 Emotion and care

In this section, I examine how relationships of solidarity, forged across different and diverse groups of political actors, are productively examined in relation to their emotional (historical) geographies. I contend that the emotional work involved in building solidarity is an important site of study and struggle, in how infrastructures of solidarity are constructed and sustained (Copestake, 2023a). Subsequently, this section draws out literature across emotional geographies and solidarity in order to intervene in this conversation. From this, I contend that attending to the emotionality of solidarity necessitates foregrounding care as an integral relation to a lasting, generative political relationship. I therefore argue that bringing together a dialogue on the labours of care and acts of solidarity, enables a rich discussion of the relationship between emotion and solidarity.

Emotions are woven throughout solidarity both as a practice and as an object of research (Askins and Swanson, 2019; Knott, 2019). Building and sustaining solidarity involved (and involves) emotional work, which was and is not only intertwined with, but constitutive of the labour of maintaining the infrastructures of solidarity I explore in this thesis. In one sense, as the spaces were made and remade, so too were the emotions that shaped these processes. Additionally, the emotional labour and care work of crafting relationships of solidarity was an equally formative part of these sites as political infrastructures. Here, I build on Griffin's (2023) thoughts on the relationship between infrastructures of, and imagined, solidarities. He notes that "highlighting the significance of infrastructure also reveals the challenges in maintaining a community organising and trade union presence, both politically and financially, and what might be lost in their disappearance" (p.5). I contend that by analysing the historical emotionality of these infrastructures, we can examine the ways in which political actors kept these imagined solidarities alive over time, long after particular spaces had to close.

The pursuit of liberation, and the development of liberatory thinking, is often articulated in emotional terms. In Stuart Hall's assessment of the crisis and road to renewal of the left in the 1980s, he notes that "there is a problem about the resilience and buoyancy of socialist ideas in our time

because of the exhaustion which has overtaken the labour movement, especially under the management of Labour governments in the past two decades" (Hall, 1988, p. 185). The proposition of collective emotions that shape particular movements is broadly useful. This extends to the everyday interactions of solidarity. Copestake (2023b) argues that engaging the *shared* emotions of solidarity is especially useful in understanding particular disputes. Emotions can be sustaining, cited alongside the material resources that make solidarity possible. In Griffin's (2023) aforementioned exploration of the imaginaries and infrastructures that made up the 1981 People's March for Jobs, he highlights one oral history testimony that held "the [material] solidarity infrastructures directly alongside the imaginary support", rendering them "hard to disentangle" (p.10).

This framing also draws out the socially reproductive, and often invisibilised, work that is enabling of acts of solidarity, and how they inform a space's infrastructural politics (Bhattacharya, 2017; Fraser, 2017). Using social reproduction theory makes visible the constitutive care and emotional labour that underpins work valued in capital terms, and by extension the practices of resistance to such a system: As Tithi Bhattacharya (2017, pp. 1–2) outlines:

"If workers labour produces all the wealth in society, who then produces the worker? Put another way: what kinds of processes enable the worker to arrive at the doors of her place of work every day so that she can produce the wealth of society? What role did breakfast play in her work-readiness? What about a good night's sleep?

Social reproduction theory therefore "privileges process" (Bhattacharya, 2017, pp.1-2). It reveals the often maligned, hidden labour that produces what we might initially view as "a visible, finished entity." This emphasis on process is crucial. Kapsali (2020) sets out how "infrastructures of care" in this regard embody both sites of struggle and act as stages for the collectivisation of care. Interrogating these sites within this framework can reveal the socially uneven labours of care that facilitate and constitute solidarity work. As such, feminist work on democratic principles of care proves useful in potentially further understanding how infrastructures of solidarity are constituted by caring acts and encounters (Tronto, 2015; Fisher and Tronto, 1990). Alam and Houston (2020) helpfully situate educational materials and practices as part of "intellectual care" (using one example of street libraries/bookshops) and emphasise that this care is freely available. They also highlight that opportunities for people to feel like they are able to participate reciprocally are crucial, as this produces a more agentic, mutual conception of caring relations. Therefore, in the same way that the previous section discusses how political trajectories flow through these sites, I turn now to consider how to account for the emotional trajectories of different subjectivities also shaped these spaces. Brown and Pickerill (2009) argue that in order to better understand the complexities of the

relationship between emotion and activism, we need to pay better attention to the *spaces* of activism.

Emotion, or particular emotions, can be articulated as a mobilising force for social change (Jasper, 1998; Eslen-Ziya et al., 2019). Brown and Pickerill (2009) acknowledge the ways in which this is enacted, whilst cautioning a simple linear reading of how these emotions translate – in that what emotion is mobilised, might not end up being the one that is eventually, collectively produced and felt. They argue this is important to reflect on, particularly in the social movement contexts where particular emotions are fostered as fuels for activism. Considering the ways in which activism must be sustained, they suggest that emotional sustainability is something of an "ongoing balancing act" in relation to the work of social movements, particularly over the longer term (p.34). This sense of a continuing negotiation is a useful framework through which to think through historical geographies of emotion and solidarity. Kelliher (2018) illustrates how taking a historical approach to the geographies of solidarity illuminates how relationships of solidarity are built and maintained over time. This complements an examination of the ways in which emotions are worked through and infused through acts of solidarity, over similarly longer-term periods. In the spaces I examine in this thesis, those who used them articulated their experiences of fighting to maintain their existence over a number of years in profoundly emotional terms. The emotional work of sustaining these spaces could indeed be a "balancing act" alongside that of the day-to-day political activities of each space. Importantly, all of it was part of maintaining the political purpose of each space, within broader projects of solidarity. The emotional balancing act between sustaining space, and one another, and any other politically activist work, could not be abstracted from one another. As Brown and Pickerill (2009) begin to set out, the emotionally reflexive work involved in accounting for this relationship is crucial for deepening our understanding of solidarity, particularly as it develops over time. This approach necessitates a broad reading of the role of emotion. In the same way that we should take no space, or no labour of solidarity, as given based on preconceptions of what it means to exist or act within a particular location, the same should be enacted for emotion. For example, Horton and Kraftl (2009) caution against solely viewing emotions as fuel for political mobilisation. Instead, they argue that expanding a view of emotions *beyond* merely being resources for activism, draws in more expansive models of what is political work, and who are political subjects. They suggest that this approach reveals the myriad, rich, and messy potential trajectories people might take from their daily lives to political activity.

Examining the contextual production of emotions as mobilising forces does however open up useful conversation on the politics behind expressions of specific emotions. Different social groups are perceived to be more likely, or even merely able to express different emotions. Petrini and Wettergren (2022) note in their research on emotions and collective identity formation within labour

organising, that the different emotions produced between groups of workers mirrored differences in their material conditions. Their motivations for action, as articulated emotionally, varied between outsourced and inhouse workers – which in turn were categories that were often racialised. Consequently, any analysis of how different emotions are articulated must take seriously the social and spatial relations that have produced them. This acts as a point of caution and against any hierarchical positioning of not only thought and reason above emotion generally, but also between different emotions themselves (Askins, 2009). Depending on how they are mobilised, emotions can reinscribe lines of inclusion and exclusion. In her research on relationships of solidarity during the Liverpool dock dispute from 1995-98, Emma Copestake provides an example of how this can happen along gendered lines. Varying projections of pride and fear, positioned as masculine and feminine respectively, had rhetorical implications for who was included and excluded within expressions of solidarity (2023b, p. 102).

Drawing together this analysis disrupts what could be a more rigid discussion of how emotions could act as resources for political action. For example, it counters approaches where some emotions are elevated as signs of cultivation (relating to the emotions as fuel model), and where others are categorised as signs of resignation. This highlights the importance of framing any analysis of emotions as well embedded in political trajectories, rather than analysed outwith those discussions (Wright, 2010). Furthermore, an appeal to solidarity grounded in a supposedly homogenous emotional sentiment risks masking the uneven political subjectivities that should make up meaningful solidarities (hooks, 1986). This highlights the importance of synthesising discussions on building solidarity across difference, and literatures on emotional geographies of solidarity. To reinforce solidarity as a generative relation, means analysing emotional solidarities as also forged through political struggle. How emotions are formed and articulated in relation to the work of solidarity is no more fixed than the spaces they are formed within, as set out in this thesis.

To think through this process critically and spatially, Ahmed's (2014) work on the political "stickiness" and relationality of emotions is valuable in understanding how particular emotions become attached to particular objects. Ahmed suggests that both the spatiality and the temporality of emotions is crucial. Emotions are repeatedly performed over time, through individual expression, then mirrored, produced, or rejected by the production of cultural norms and discourses. Using the example of "disgust", Ahmed notes that the performativity of this feeling produces almost a border – between us and the "disgusting" object (p.86). Not only does the object itself become one to reflexively jerk away from, the representational "borders" are consumed into the performance of disgust – all of which are inextricable from gendered, racialised and classed markers of what is "repulsive." Moreover, these repeated performances render them as accumulative and thus are

what makes them “stick” to certain bodies, and thinking geographically, to certain spaces (Massey, 1994).

By using the example of disgust, Ahmed interrogates how this stickiness might be problematically or oppressively deployed. However, there are perhaps ways to imagine this accumulation of emotion as generative, particularly alongside how emotional solidarities are built and embodied over time. The embodiment of emotion can be difficult to read within research subjects, albeit this is an issue that is necessary to tackle (Hume, 2007). Pratt (2008) explores the complex emotionality of witnessing violence, through interviews with participants in her research project on the experiences of Canadian grassroots organisations undertaking “fact-finding missions” to the Philippines in 2006, during a period of extra-judicial killings by the Philippine military. The violence witnessed by Pratt and those on the mission meant that the entangled solidarities between people in both the Canadian and Filipino organisations were transported from place to place, stuck in the embodied memories of what they had seen. This connects to how we might interrogate how the emotional registers of solidarity are maintained long after political actors leave the spaces in which they were organising. By extension, this reaffirms how infrastructures of solidarity can also be sustained in some form, even after the physical premises have to close.

Throughout this chapter, I have sought to make the case that capturing the emotionality of building infrastructures and relationships of solidarity is crucial. It illuminates the relationship between the material and the ephemeral qualities of solidarity, whilst also deepening an understanding of how solidarity is built and sustained over time. This also is important for assessing how solidarity sustains over longer-term periods, enhancing our historical-geographical assessments of solidarity beyond static, goal-based narratives. However, this necessitates a methodological discussion, over *how* we might strive to capture these emotional registers, in amongst more immediately tangible remnants of solidarity. Consequently, I make the argument in chapter three, that conducting and using oral histories should be a crucial part of any research on the emotional historical geographies of solidarity. In the final section of this literature review, I draw together some of oral history’s own history, to set out why it is a politically and emotionally rich methodology to use in this field of research.

2.6 Trajectories of oral history

“On the left and in the labour movement, we have lost our sense of history: when something…blows up, history belongs to the right” (Hall, 1988, p. 192)

Throughout this chapter, I have emphasised the need to attend to the points of connections between different spaces, through foregrounding the *process* of building infrastructures. To effectively build from this in my methodology, in this section I outline some of the temporal connections that situate oral history's origins as a research practice are woven throughout the histories of political organising and social movements throughout the 1970s. The founding of the Oral History Society (OHS) in 1971 formed around both academic and community historians, with many crossovers between those involved in collectives writing history from below also being involved in the establishing the OHS. Writing in the context of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM), Sheila Rowbotham posited that using oral history had the potential to recover "hidden histories" (1992). Rowbotham's remarks here are contextualised by her work organising and writing "history from below." "History from Below" has encapsulated various collectives of historians, from the Annales School to the Communist Party Historians Group, to the History Workshop Collective, that study history from the bottom up. As E.P. Thompson asserts in his seminal *The Making of the English Working Class*, history from below foregrounds the ways in which working people have consciously contributed to the making of history (Thompson, 1991). This approach was a key tenet of the History Workshop group, in which Raphael Samuel pointed out that "hidden histories" were not that simply because there was no documentary evidence available to study them – rather, that their narratives and stories had been at odds with dominant modes of historical production and research (Samuel, 1980). History from below reasserts the agency of ordinary people, against simplistic narratives of winners and losers. Whether historians might judge in hindsight that their ideals may have been "fantasies" or their insurrectionary conspiracies "foolhardy", Thompson notes that "they lived through these times of acute social disturbance, and we did not" (1991, p.13).

Iles and Roberts (2012) in their useful survey of the historical trajectories of history from below, note that there can be variations in how the term is deployed. Some use it to indicate that they are writing specifically "radical history", whilst others use the approach as a way to centre unheard voices and experiences. Whilst far from mutually exclusive, both of these lenses can prompt different questions and different debates. Therefore, in the context of my research, there are three key facets of history from below that ground the way in which I have conducted oral history interviews and analysed them in my research. Firstly, that the use of everyday subjective experiences and social relationships throughout history can be used to understand broader structural conditions and transform our understanding of both past *and* present phenomena (Samuel, 1980). Grele and Terkel (1991) suggest that it functions as a democratising act, as it opens up ways to fill gaps within the historical record. This draws out one of the primary ways in which researchers have understood the role of oral history, and this is often how the methodology is translated across disciplines. For example, in their study of food sector workers, Rogaly and

Qureshi (2017) convincingly demonstrate that oral histories enable geographers to flesh out broader geographical and political relationships. Generally, oral history was taken up within the fields of labour geography and labour history as a way to bring out multiplicity within studies of workers and capital, sometimes beyond more traditional institutions through which those narratives may have been otherwise articulated (Halpern, 1998).

The *process* of oral history work was also a point of inquiry as the discipline progressed over the later twentieth century. Bornat (1989) reflects on how she began to engage in oral history research as a biographer working across social movements in the 1970s and 1980s. She remembers the search for oral histories as a lively and emotive experience, as she noted how the interviewees' reaction as a reminder of the joy in engaging in a collaborative pursuit of history. The distance between generations, whilst sometimes painful from one side, also represented an opportunity to Bornat, to understand and search for continuities across time. This drive to counter this pain, to look for ways of facilitating inter-generational transfer in a way that enables these histories to survive, was a key drive for those involved in political struggles against oppression. Over its emergence, there developed a strong sense that oral histories produce more than a set of transcripts. The process represented a way of fostering historical consciousness and social awareness (Thomson, 1998).

However, in mapping out the terrain of the discipline, it is important to question for *who* it was producing consciousness and awareness. Mahuika's (2019) important intervention points out that in oral history work within Indigenous Māori communities, community narratives continue to be othered as lesser forms of historical knowledge production. Mahuika draws on a wide range of Maori historians, many of whom criticise narrow or rigid definitions of what form oral histories should take, or who they should be for. The question there is not merely to fill out pre-existing narratives with indigenous experiences, but instead to ensure the survival of their own histories on their own terms. This highlights that, whilst ensuring that historical narratives account for a variety of subjectivities, as is made possible through oral histories, there are other political concerns at stake. As oral history continues to be rightly legitimised as a method of research within academic institutions, a new set of questions arises around power and ownership. Bryan et al. (2018), in their account of being involved in the Black women's movement in Britain, argue that continuing the work of oral histories and traditions within their communities falls within a long trajectory of pursuits for self-preservation and cultural self-determination – confirming their "will to survive." These collective acts were drawn out of a need to safeguard community narratives from the grassroots, in lieu of any existing efforts to do so – or in defence against structures of oppression seeking to erase them. It is important to consider how the practice of oral histories should adequately honour these traditions, especially during the present political conjuncture (Freund, 2015b). This is not to

police what is or is not, what should or should not constitute oral history going forward. Rather, it is to open up a dialogue on how oral historians should adequately deal with these questions, of survival and power – in a way that properly recognises the grassroots, political, and collective origins of oral history research. The question of this works in practise and how I have approached it in my research is the focus of the next chapter.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have set out the conceptual framework and central theoretical arguments of this thesis. My core engagement has been with the ways in which we might understand the spatial and emotional politics of solidarity. I contend that an analysis of solidarities that are built in particular spaces can reveal the inter-play of different subjectivities that shape relationships and acts of solidarity. This complements accounts that emphasise the ways in which solidarity is (necessarily) built across diverse political actors and can be generative of new relationships between people and places (Featherstone, 2012; Griffin, 2023a; Kelliher, 2021a).

Firstly, I have set out the ways in which researchers can recognise “infrastructures of solidarity” by accounting for how these spaces are materially and emotionally built. I emphasise that this means articulating the process of crafting space, rather than codifying particular sites within rigid definitions of left-wing spaces. This enables an infrastructural framework to also account for the mobilities of particular solidarities, and how spaces with deep roots can still facilitate networks of trans-local and trans-national solidarities (Kelliher, 2021a; Routledge and Cumbers, 2009, 2013). Secondly, I have built on Doreen Massey’s conceptualisation of the coexistence of difference, to draw out how the spaces I examine are theoretically valuable in examining how solidarity is built across diverse subjectivities. I suggest that engaging with solidarities in tandem with an analysis of their spatial politics, produces a fluid and generative way of organising across difference. It enables us to hold the potential tensions of this work in the same theorisation of solidarity that celebrates its generative character. Thirdly, this contributes to literature in geography and other fields related to the emotional politics of solidarity. I align with and build on accounts that suggest the emotionality of political organising is an essential area of inquiry if we are to understand how solidarity is sustained, both over time and across diverse disputes (Askins and Swanson, 2019; Copestake, 2023b; Eslen-Ziya et al., 2019). In the next chapter, I make key methodological recommendations for how to capture this in historical geographical research – namely, by using oral history interviews.

Chapter 3.

Collective oral historical geographies of left-wing organising

3.1 Introduction

"Obviously now, was it 35 years ago I can't believe it. But it's a long time ago and, no, nobody's really interested in old guys' stories. So, you don't often get the opportunity like this to talk and reflect on what you did." (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

The above excerpt encapsulates why I chose to use oral history interviews as the primary methodology in my research. The interview transcripts, and the excerpts I have selected for analysis throughout this thesis, demonstrate the richness of using oral histories to examine the emotional moments and relationships embedded within infrastructures of political organising in 1980s Scotland. Both the process and the outcome of the oral history interviews I have conducted have been generative of new historical and geographical directions, and in practical terms with reference to building solidarity in contemporary political organising. I contend that oral history is a uniquely well-placed research methodology to grapple with these questions and to locate these emotional historical geographies of solidarity. Simultaneously, as Kearns (2007) suggests, these historical theories and episodes use an understanding of the past to raise questions about the present (p.9). I consequently argue that the *process* of carrying out oral history interviews embeds this practice into political organising, in ways that are generative and hopeful.

As such, in the first section I examine literature across emotional geographies and oral history theory. I explore how geographers have used oral histories previously, drawing out their use for geography more generally. I place this methodological intervention in the lineage of using oral history that I outlined at the end of the previous chapter, building on this throughout each section of this chapter. Since the roots of oral history are as a research method embedded in social movements, it translates well across to exploring the geographies of solidarity with interviewees who were formerly and presently involved in those same political spaces. Building on this work, I suggest some ways in which geographers might locate emotion within narrators' oral historical geographies of solidarity (Hampton, 2022). I contend that oral histories present a unique opportunity to attend to the affective markers present in interviews, such as tone of voice, body language, facial expressions, revealing important emotional layers to an interviewee's narrative. This is particularly relevant in exploring the complicated emotional components of the relationships of solidarity built and sustained in left-wing spaces during the 1980s in Scotland.

Importantly, these layers are also intimately shaped by the inter-subjective relationship(s) produced in the interview moment. In the second section, I outline how I as the interviewer, with the interviewees, crafted this shared political authority with the people I interviewed. This collaboration was shaped by my own political trajectory, as someone involved in the trade union movement and tenant union organising in Scotland. In many of the interviews, this was foundational in building rapport and trust with participants (Murphy, 2020). Latterly, it would also provide new avenues for recruiting interviewees. I contend that the inter-generational political transfer that took place during the interviews enabled a shared authority that was specific to an interviewer and narrator(s) invested in a liberatory, left-wing political project. This was later complemented by a small number of group interviews with participants who had been involved in the same political spaces together. These group interviews also took place in-person, in new socio-political spaces that consequently shaped the historical geographical narratives produced.

To what extent the interviewees were still involved in the same sort of political organising varied. Some participants are still active members of the groups, unions, and/or political parties they recounted in their interviews. On some occasions, this has meant that our engagement has continued long after the interview – by seeing them on picket lines, at rallies, at trade union congresses. Consequently, in the third section I reflect on how I address(ed) potential ethical issues in my research. Taking care with oral history testimonies is always crucial. For this project it felt pronounced, given how many people interviewed knew each other, or at the very least knew of each other. Balancing those inter-personal relationships alongside the considerations around anonymity and confidentiality could sometimes be difficult. Therefore, I use this section to think through how this shaped the research process, and what the implications of this are for capturing ongoing historical geographies of left-wing political organising. I contend it offers a dynamic way to record histories as we go, embedding this process into the ways in which we enact solidarity now.

In the final section of this chapter, I consider where to go from here for those of us interested in historically and geographically capturing our political struggle as it progresses. The process of carrying out this research has deepened my own practical understanding of solidarity as I try and enact it in day-to-day spaces of organising. There have been challenges, undoubtedly in ways that have been sometimes emotionally difficult. As such, this last section acts as a space to reflect on some points of learning for future research and practice. However, even in more complicated moments, these oral history interviews were incredibly generative – of new relationships of solidarity, of new ways of articulating it, and new ideas for what we need to do.

3.2 Oral history, emotion, and geography

Oral history interviews reveal emotionally complex historical-geographical narratives. To apply a geographical lens to oral history interviews is to acknowledge that what memories are discussed, how narrators discuss them, and why they select particular moments over others, often have distinctive spatialities (Cole, 2015). Additionally, oral history interviews can be illuminating in unpacking how conceptions of space shift over time, through examining how interviewees reflect on their attachment to places past and present (Andrews et al., 2006). Previous reviews of oral history methodology in geographical research have brought oral history in geography, and geographical approaches to oral history, into conversation, in an attempt to produce a "mutually beneficial" research agenda for both disciplines (Riley and Harvey, 2007). In this section, I argue that oral history interviews are a distinctly well-suited methodology for unpacking both the emotionality and spatiality of historical narratives. As I reflect on how I carried out the research for this thesis, I make the case that the material produced in the oral history interviews demonstrates their immense value in capturing the nuances of the historical geographies of solidarity I explore in this thesis.

This chapter's first section sets out my key methodological contributions, establishing what it is exactly about oral history practice that makes it well suited to critically engaging with the intricacies of emotion, and subsequently emotional historical geographies of solidarity. Widdowfield (2000) notes that such research requires a careful engagement, acknowledging the complexity of the subject matter. Therefore, I strive not to empty emotion of its political power or importance, taking certain emotions not as definitively attached to particular contexts and bodies, but as the inter-connections between social beings; (re)made and (re)negotiated throughout the interview (Bondi, 2005; Sharp, 2009). By aligning work in feminist research methods on emotion with oral history's own trajectories as a politicised practice emerging from particular social movements, I hope to illuminate how these literatures synthesise to create the most productive framework for considering emotional oral historical geographies.

Oral history interviews bring important perspectives to established historical and geographical narratives. Thus, McDonagh (2018) suggests that oral history is an important methodology for feminist historical geographers, as we seek to work with research participants in recentring their stories. This collaboration is crucial, as the narrator and researcher work together to explore how particular historical narratives have shaped our contemporary geographical context (Freund, 2019; Grele and Terkel, 1991). This may unsettle hegemonic conceptions of both the present and the past or otherwise represent an important opportunity to question their ubiquity.

Oral historical geographies also “flesh out” these broader narratives through the narrators’ pursuit for composure in the interview. This is the process through which the interviewee draws on particular memories and historical discourses, in order to craft their own version of events – one which their sense of self is comfortable residing in, and that they are willing to share with the researcher (Dawson, 1994; Summerfield, 2000). Therefore, how oral history interviewees construct their retellings is simultaneously revealing of how they construct their sense of self. Consequently, research such as Rogaly and Qureshi's (2017) work on food sector workers in Peterborough demonstrates the value in utilising oral history testimonies. Their analysis of the multifaceted contexts, emotions, and life trajectories of their interviewees enriches how one might understand the wider geographies of the relationship between labour and capital, whilst simultaneously reasserting the importance of the lives and agency of the workers at the centre of these relations. The use of oral history interviews in this case helped reveal how the impact of particular labour struggles had rippled out even beyond the spatial and temporal boundaries of discretely contained disputes or events (Castree, 2007; Featherstone and Griffin, 2016).

However, the potential to unsettle dominant historical narratives is not given merely by virtue of oral history methodology alone. Craggs' (2018) use of oral history testimonies demonstrates that whilst there is value in using the method to enrich understandings of geopolitical relations, interviewing senior political figures deviates from oral history’s traditions as a practice of history from below. Undoubtedly, there is not only one way that researchers should utilise oral history. This point is to stress that simply using oral history is not enough to position the research within the political traditions outlined above. Crafting oral historical geographies that “share authority” with those whose stories have previously been marginalised is an active process, which does not start and finish with the beginning and end of the recording (Sitzia, 1999). I found this to be to be a key feature of my thesis research. As I discuss in later sections, the interactions I have had with the participants in this project have fruitfully continued beyond the interview setting.

Often both the researcher and the participant embark on oral history work with “sharing authority” in mind, particularly as a way to recover “hidden histories” (Rowbotham, 1973), as discussed at the end of chapter two. This approach in itself has the potential to impact the production of the resulting historical source. Robinson-Rhodes (2021) usefully reflects on this in her research on the relationship between bisexuality and bisexual discourse and conceptions of “radical” politics within the British Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in the 1970s. When interviewing certain members of the GLF, Robinson-Rhodes noted that their desire for composure in recounting histories they felt had previously been ignored, may have affected how critical they were prepared to be of how the GLF handled multiple-sex attraction (2021, p.131). Robinson-Rhodes’ reflections reveal the potential subjectivity of oral history interviews, but vitally she does not suggest that this is problematic – a

key characteristic of thinking within oral history. In fact, in his seminal text *What Makes Oral History Different*, Portelli refutes criticism that such subjectivities make oral history testimony "unreliable" – rather that subjectivity is the business of history, and why narrators hold particular narratives to be true is as much psychological truth as the "facts" of the event (1991, p.50).

Understanding the why of oral historical geographies is therefore as important as understanding how the events unfolded. Consequently, Cole (2015) suggests that oral historians also address the *where* of oral history sources. This lens adds another emotional layer to the interview, as interviewees "re-place the past" (Cole, 2015, p.35). He argues that where narrators both temporally and spatially place themselves in relation to historical events, particularly traumatic ones, is indicative of the emotion wrapped up in the historical geographies themselves. Narrators may want to create distance between themselves and certain events, which is revealingly articulated through this re-placing. Crucially, discussions of what emotional geographies are produced by oral histories cannot and do not exist in a political vacuum (Wright, 2010). Oral history interviews provide unique opportunities for researchers to reflect on how interviewees craft spatial and emotional narratives, in ways that are difficult to replicate through purely written sources. From this, I contend that strengthening the relationship between emotional historical geographical research and oral history theory is an important task for scholars working within and across both fields – igniting a dialogue around the necessary tools for a careful and generous engagement with emotional historical geographies in particular.

This dialogue and subsequent "re-placing" are inextricable from the inter-subjective relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. Therefore, the questions around power and subjectivity set out thus far are crucial to revealing the reasons why particular emotional historical geographies are produced from particular oral history interviews. Feminist oral history theory and research methods have demonstrated that the positionality and emotions of both interviewee and interviewer, and their subsequent inter-subjective relationship, cannot be separated from the source created (Abrams, 2016; McDowell, 1992; Sangster, 1994). Young's (2007) work on shifting masculinities in Glasgow is particularly useful here, as it provides a framework for identifying where in the transcript researchers might witness the tangible impact of the intersubjective relationship. Young noted that to the older couples she interviewed, her subjectivity represented modern gender roles and consequently she was perceived to be potentially judgemental of how the interviewees composed their own masculinities. At points, where participants drew on what seemed like notably "traditional" gender roles, they switched from using the first person to the third person. In doing this, they created an "authorial voice", hoping to partially separate them from their own narratives (p.78).

This illustrates the integral nature of the intersubjective relationship to the interview, as Young's positionality was reflected in the shifting voices her narrators crafted at different points in the interview. My own experience was similar in the interviews I conducted. As such, my analysis of the emotional historical geographies that emerged from them centres the importance of the inter-subjective relationship. In the next section, I consider various parts of the intersubjective relationship that emerged between the interviewees and myself, and how this has shaped the consequent thesis.

3.3 Subjectivity and inter-subjectivity

"Without a movement as a reference point, without the ideas expressed in that movement, and without the constant support and help of the women I know in women's liberation, I would never have written more than a fragment of this. Women's liberation brings to all of us a strength and audacity we have never before known." (Rowbotham, 1992, p.12)

Abrams (2016) defines subjectivity in the context of oral history as "the constituents of an individual's sense of self, [their] identity informed and shaped by experience, perception, language and culture – in other words an individual's emotional baggage" (p.54). By extension, intersubjectivity refers to the relationship between the interviewee and interviewer – the interpersonal dynamics through which the participant cooperates to create a shared narrative. She suggests that different interviewers have the ability to solicit different words, or even a different story or version of it, from the same narrators. Therefore, the different subjectivities at work within the interview setting must be carefully examined. In this section I set out my own subjectivity and how this was present in each intersubjective relationship during the interviews.

The inter-subjective relationship of an oral history interview is moulded by different parts of the interviewer's and the interviewee(s)'s subjectivity, as listed in Abrams' account. This interaction is relationally shaped through an ongoing set of interactions, that likely begin with the interview preparation and ends long after the interview itself has concluded. Crucially, the inter-subjective relationship is not pre-determined or fixed and can be continually renegotiated as the interview progresses. Murphy (2020) usefully reflects on how she manoeuvred this process, as she navigated "insider" interviewing across a set of oral history interviews. In a series of conversations with lesbian women born before 1955, she describes the "small acts of reciprocity" that were shared between the participants and her as the researcher (p.37). Murphy shared some of her own experiences with the women she spoke to, drawing attention to her identity as a lesbian woman and those shared subjectivities. The inter-subjective relationship that Murphy and the interviewees created was facilitated by the presumption of shared experience and understanding. She also

reflects on how to navigate the constraints of insider interviewing, such as where interviewers presume knowledge and therefore neglect to explain key narrative points – that a future listener might not be able to understand. Additionally, Murphy recognises that as subjectivities are constructed intersectionally across multiple different axes, there will always be moments of distance in the interview even within research conducted between members of the same community. Assuming the role of an insider interviewer is not an immutable positionality.

This was true for my participation in the interviews, as someone involved in left-wing political organising in Glasgow, to varying extents at different points of my research. In March 2020, as lockdown restrictions were announced, I joined Living Rent, Scotland's tenants' union. I spent most of the first and second lockdowns meeting fellow members in Zoom meetings, attending online training, and taking part in e-actions to pressure the Scottish Government into introducing more robust protection for renters during COVID-19 – culminating in their introduction of a winter eviction ban in December of that year (The Scottish Government, 2020). I met some Living Rent comrades in person for the first time as lockdown temporarily eased in the summer, before getting involved in launching a neighbourhood branch in my local area, Partick in the west end of Glasgow. After three months of phone-banking, flyering at Partick station and in Mansfield Park, putting posters up in flat closes, and holding online meetings, we launched the branch on December 8th, 2020 (Living Rent, 2020). I have been on the branch committee ever since, most recently as the branch chair.

I have also been active within the trade union movement over the past four years. In June 2021, I joined the UCU Glasgow branch committee as the Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) representative. I served two terms, stepping down from the post in June 2023. During my second term, I also served as the vice chair of the Scottish Trades Union Congress' (STUC) youth committee for one year. I was invested in organising for better terms and conditions for casualised workers within higher education and connecting us to other precarious workers across the trade union movement. I have remained within this network in my new workplace, where I am currently a Unite shop steward. Through the experiences of organising within the labour movement and tenant union organising, I have explored what it means to try and build a vision of something better. The conditions produced by the housing crisis and the crisis of higher education have been ruthless. The interactions across different meetings, spaces, congresses, and other moments have (for the most part) inspired hope that things might be different. Situating this in the lineage of the spaces and moments I have researched through this thesis has strengthened my resolve that both in history and the future, we can find new visions that liberate us – as tenants, workers, and community members in struggle.

This political subjectivity was present throughout all of the interviews I conducted. It has shaped the enthusiasm I have for this project, and it has shaped my organising practices. It was part of the preparatory thinking that happened before every interview. I often thought about the spaces the interviewees were involved in in direct comparison to what I was thinking about with Living Rent or trade unionism that week. This was acute in the first tranche of interviews I carried out. While these were happening, the political groups I was involved in were negotiating how to start meeting in person again. I was often thinking about past and present political organising in conversation with one another, reflecting on how these historical geographies might inform our political interventions in the present (Awcock, 2020). I was hopeful that this would be something I could explore collectively in the interviews, learning from the experiences of more experienced organisers and activists. Whilst I wanted to demonstrate to participants that I was committed to the labour of organising, I often stressed that I had much to learn, and I was hoping to do so through oral history interviews. Routledge and Derickson (2015) consider how, in the pursuit of what they term 'situated solidarities' through scholar activism, knowledge produced through research might be of use to multiple others and actively tied to a material politics of social change that works in the 'interest of the disadvantaged' (p.393). I align my work with Santamarina Guerrero's (2023) critique of this positioning of the researcher as the arbiter of intellectual labour within the scholar-activist relationship, drawing from her rich account of how to learn *with* political movements. Though I was not, at the time of conducting my initial fieldwork, involved in any of the same groups as the participants in the way that Santamarina was, the interview moment produced opportunities for translation - of contemporary and historical activist practices, transversing across different spatialities and temporalities. This discursive and pedagogical reciprocity, rooted in a shared political inter-subjectivity, was one of the most rewarding parts of doing oral history interviews.

There were a number of moments when this enriching dynamic was made explicit during the oral history interviews. In July of 2021, I interviewed Bob Goupillot, who had been involved in the Edinburgh unemployed workers' centre in the 1980s. Bob and I met on Zoom after connecting on Facebook, after some mutual friends shared my call for participants. We had a few minutes of un-taped chat to settle ourselves into the rhythm of the interview. As soon as the recording started, Bob was ahead of me and asked me to tell him about myself and why I was interested in conducting research into unemployed workers' centres. I listed off the reasons I was interested in these spaces from an academic perspective – their place in the broader landscape of the left, that I was examining them in conjunction with other spaces such as bookshops and women's centres, the way I had found myself with this PhD research topic. Bob listened to this, before asking, "So how would you describe your own politics then Rosie?" (Interview with Goupillot, 2021). It was a question that I had been asked in a few of the interviews I had conducted so far, but previously it had emerged after at least an hour of conversation, and I had felt more prepared to answer. I was

conscious of my desire to build rapport with interviewees in a way that was genuine, without risking their composure or the potential intersubjective relationship. There was also an added dimension to this as I endeavoured to build our rapport around common experiences of political organising. I wanted to assure him of my legitimacy as someone involved in left-wing politics, that I was someone who put in the work with political organising. Consequently, I immediately felt anxious to answer Bob's question "correctly." I clunkily told him that I was "very left-wing" before saying that I spent the majority of my time organising with Living Rent. I also mentioned that I was "not a happy" member of the Labour Party, which as a former member, Bob was able to empathise with. He told me he was a big supporter of the work Living Rent had been doing and drew out some of their origins in Edinburgh based organising that he was still involved in.[7] I was glad to have been able to frame our conversation on shared political terms and I commented to Bob that I was grateful to be doing this research from both an academic *and* a political perspective – to which he replied, "that's partially why I'm interested in being interviewed Rosie, so I can pass on some experiences good and bad" (Interview with Goupillot, 2021)

Bob gently set out the terms on which he was keen to be interviewed. It was important for him to feel as though there would be an additional, practical purpose to him sharing his stories, that fit in with his involvement in left-wing organising. Starecheski (2018) notes that activist oral history, "and oral history more generally, have roots in feminist consciousness-raising practices and popular education methods, which sought to develop collective political analyses through personal narrative and group listening" (p.239). I was more than willing to be the captive audience for an interview on these terms, not just with Bob's, but with all of the interviewees. I was keen to listen, as well as offering my own perspectives and interventions (Gilmore, 2005). Sitzia (1999) richly reflects on this dynamic in writing about her experiences interviewing Arthur Thicket, her friend, comrade, and activist who had had a decorated and varied life of left-wing political activity. She describes that her interest in communism and shared general political beliefs with Arthur were significant in shaping the inter-subjective relationship between the two of them in their interviews and broader research (see also, Abrams, 2016, p.58). Sitzia develops Michael Frisch's concept of shared authority to think through how she and Arthur collaborated to produce a narrative of his life history (Frisch, 1990). Sharing authority in an oral history interview means critically reflecting on our own subjectivity and motivations for the interviewer as the research, whilst drawing these into a relational dialogue with those of the narrator. As Sitzia elaborates, Arthur had strong feelings as to how his story should be developed, and how the two of them might collaborate to produce his

[7] Living Rent originally formed to campaign around a consultation for the Scottish Government's Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Bill, introduced in 2015 and passed in March 2016. The original set of people involved in the campaign were involved in a range of groups, such as Edinburgh Private Tenants Action Group, NUS student activists, and ACORN Scotland. For an account of Living Rent's early days as a campaign group before voting to form a tenants union, see (Living Rent et al., 2018).

oral history. She ultimately describes a delicate but worthwhile balancing act. Whilst we want to avoid “over-analysing our own involvement”, and even how our own life stories are implicated over the course of the interview, researchers must also be honest regarding our motivations and needs for pursuing oral history (p.65). I felt, and continue to feel, the impacts of this balancing act across the interviews I conducted.

In the next section, I elaborate on how I approached the practicalities of the research project. These reflections attend to the *how* of the methodology in more detail. I set out how I recruited oral history participants and set up interviews. I also establish the ways in which I handled the archival research I conducted for this thesis, laying out how I envision the relationship between the oral histories and archival material I used in my work. I then return to how I examined the differences between the individual and group oral history interviews I carried out, concluding with some further reflections on the process of oral history interviewing as a crucial tenet of my methodology.

3.4 The research project – oral histories and archival research

I carried out 17 interviews with 19 participants over the months of May 2021 to February 2022. Initially, I advertised my call for oral history participants solely online. I posted the information tweet on X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and Facebook in April 2021, while Glasgow was still in stage 2 of leaving COVID lockdown. Scotland had had some iteration of coronavirus restrictions since March 2020, which was 2 months after I started the PhD. Notwithstanding some pandemic accommodations to research culture that translate well to our current context (for example, improved digital access to conferences, seminars, etc.), my experience resonates with accounts that suggest the impact of COVID-19 on PhD research was strongly detrimental, in terms of research design and emotional difficulties (Kee, 2021; Pyhältö et al., 2023). At the time, I had very little to compare my pandemic infused PhD experience to, having only started the PhD two months before lockdown restrictions began. Consequently, I made all of my fieldwork plans in the context of pandemic restrictions – accounting for later access to archives, searching for online archival material, and planning for online oral history interviews.

3.4.1 Archival work

As mentioned, whilst my primary methodology was oral history interviews, I also visited archives as part of my empirical research. I started planning this work in the spring of 2021. As this stage, the majority of the archives I intended to visit remained closed to researchers. I was able to access some collections online, such as the Gales’ Archive of Gender and Sexuality, which held substantial material regarding the Scottish Minorities Group/Scottish Homosexual Rights Group. I mostly went to archives later in the summer of 2021 (See appendix 1). In some instances, the material that I

looked at in the archive had been deposited by someone who I later went onto interview. For example, Bob Orr had donated a number of his personal papers related to the setting up of Lavender Menace and West and Wilde to the National Library of Scotland. I also looked at a report and directory of all unemployed workers' centres in Scotland that Hugh Maguiness had been part of the research team for. At our first meeting in person in October 2021, he loaned me his own copy of the report for ease of access.

This was one of many opportunities I had to look at archival material that participants brought to interviews. Carol Thomson, who was involved in the Glasgow women's centre, had a number of different centre newsletters and issues of the local women's liberation newspaper, *MsPrint,* which she gave me permission to photograph for research purposes. Similarly, some of the interviewees shared photos via email, and where we were able to meet in person, brought photos along with them. The archival work was threaded throughout the interviews, enmeshed with the stories that were crafted during the interview encounter. Photos, pamphlets, and other material punctuated our conversations in ways that were not always easily predictable.

I undertook this work to supplement the oral history interviews to further understand the layers of (inter)subjectivity at work in the interview setting. I consulted this material at a range of points both before and after particular interviews, or as stated above even during the conversations. Where I engaged with archival material after the conversation had finished, the purpose of visiting archives was not to 'verify' what the interviewees had said against a written source. Asserting oral history interviews as the primary methodology of this thesis means refuting perceived notions of objective 'truthfulness' of written sources in comparison to the unwieldy subjectivity of oral sources. This was stark in the empirical research for this thesis, notably in the instances where the written sources I had access to were created by the same narrators I would then orally interview. I read the context(s) and subjectivities of those written sources in relation to those of the oral history interviews, adopting a relational approach rather than a straightforward comparative one.

3.4.2 Participant recruitment

The thesis research started as a Scotland-wide project. Through an iterative process of oral history recruitment, I decided to focus on spaces and therefore interviewees from predominantly Glasgow and Edinburgh. This enabled a closer reading of the overlapping geographies of the left in both cities, whilst holding space for the distinct characteristics of organising in different spaces across different sites in different places. The perceived closeness of Glasgow and Edinburgh among some interviewees was also a fruitful topic of conversation, as interviewees were able to make explicit

some of the ways in which networks of solidarity were built between two cities in emotionally tangible ways.

Throughout the early stages of the PhD, I had wondered how to name and categorise the spaces I was researching. Overall, I generally described each of them as "left-wing" spaces to easily indicate the type of material I would be looking to cover in oral history interviews. In my call for participants, I asked if potential interviewees had been involved in political organising on the left in Scotland in the 1970s and 1980s (see Appendix 3). I then asked if they had been involved in the following spaces:

- "LGBT bookshops – particularly **Lavender Menace Bookshop** (Edinburgh, 1982-1986)
- Women's centres – affiliated with the Women's Liberation Movement – particularly, **Glasgow Women's Centre** (1976-1988)
- Unemployed workers' centres – particularly, **Edinburgh Unemployed Workers' centre** (1981-1994)

  Or was there another space that you frequently conducted political organising out of?"

I had purposely decided to use the term LGBT on my call for participants in order to make explicit reference to all different types of organising across potential spaces. Whilst I had identified Lavender Menace as a space of key interest, as with the other two spaces indicated in bold on the call for participants, I did not want to exclude discussions regarding other potential sites during the same time. Since one of the main empirical aims of this thesis is to examine the interplay of different spaces on the left at that time, any space that might have been brought up by the interviewees would have been relevant to discuss. Consequently, I mentioned these specific spaces to indicate where my *initial* research focus lay, but I intentionally flagged that participants might want to discuss other spaces too. This was successful. The first few people who responded to the call for participants were involved in related but different spaces to the ones that I had specified on my request for interviewees. One response mentioned having been involved in trade union resource centres, and another (who later ended up being my first interviewee) spoke of being involved in the First of May bookshop in Edinburgh – a particularly interesting interview in terms of how the narrator reflected on my desire to include Lavender Menace in a call for "left-wing" spaces, as is reflected on in chapter four.

As the interviews progressed, I spoke to people involved in lesbian and gay centres, social clubs, and student unions, expanding, and enhancing the original scope of the call for interviewees. I felt comfortable with the way I had framed the initial research purpose. However, one online response stuck with me:

"Lavender Menace was a Lesbian and Gay bookstore and not as you have on your notice LGBT. I'm a pedant and it annoys me when I see that its name being promulgated as the first LGBT bookstore." (X (formerly known as Twitter) user, 2021)[8]

At the time of posting, the account username included #WomenWontWheesht, which is the name of a group based in Scotland that "campaigns against the erosion of women's sex-based rights" (WomenWontWheesht, 2024). This was the only critical response I received in relation to my call for participants. It was also enhanced by the context of a deeply transphobic group, who organise around the exclusion of trans women in "women-only spaces." It brought home an additional political urgency that currently runs throughout historical research on women's liberatory, feminist, and queer organising amongst the rise of state-led, institutional, and left-wing transphobia. Hayward (2016) considers the choice of claiming (or reclaiming) a past on one's own terms, among questions of "accuracy" in representing an often-marginalised history. An attempt at a good-faith assessment of this response to the above tweet, did prompt me to consider the questions of accuracy and being a "pedant" in the context of such questions. Yet my resolution was to continue shifting language as was contextually appropriate. Where documents refer to the spaces I research as lesbian and gay, as opposed to more commonly used contemporary acronyms such as LGBTQ+, I quote them directly. However, I was not as strict with this in the flow of the conversations with the oral history interviewees – which I argue is methodologically reflective of the fluid boundaries between space and identity that were negotiated at the time (as I explore in chapter five) and are reflexively considered in the oral history encounter. As Moulton (2023, p.3) helpfully sets out in their conceptualisation of a "non-binary methodology", it is useful to:

"embrace simultaneous multiplicity in all senses…a non-binary historical methodology is also one that emphasises the simultaneous presence of both past and contemporary ways of knowing within any project of historical interpretation…I adopt the language of a non-binary methodology in order to suggest that we do not need to choose between past and present, but instead that we can hold our own categories more lightly, leaving space for a fuller recognition of past (and future) ways of being"

3.4.3 The modes of interviewing – online and in-person, individual and in groups

The first wave of participant recruitment was solely digital. Initially, I was concerned that this would limit the pool of interviewees that I would be able to reach. I had some preconceptions regarding

[8] I have anonymised the username of the account in line with internal university guidance on using the social media handles of 'everyday users' in research. See Townsend and Wallace (2016).

how online my potential participants were likely to be, given their probable ages. This also merged with my fears that it would be difficult to build rapport across a Zoom call – that I was ultimately looking for participants to take part in something awkward and laborious. However, I gratefully soon realised that generally, I need not have worried. Within the first week of posting the call, I had organised a number of interviews with enthusiastic contributors, including those involved in each of the spaces I specified on my call for participants. Those first participants who responded to the online call were also integral in connecting me to others who would be interested in my project. In her interviews with former miners, Peirson-Webber (2021) found that the pandemic context meant many of the interviewees she spoke to were already well comfortable with Zoom, as they had learned to use it to keep in touch with friends and family during lockdown. Additionally, both Peirson-Webber (2021) and Waugh (2023) point out that there is a comfort where interviewees can tell their stories from the comfort of their homes without the physical presence of an interviewer. This chimed with what I experienced in some of the group interviews. Tea breaks appeared more common, and some of the interviewees told me mid-way through the interview that they were referring to some notes they had written down off camera. The ability to shape their side of the interview to their comfort was important. There is much that should continue to be translated from online conversations into in-person interviews.

There were other points however where I missed the togetherness of in-person oral history interviewing, especially as it related to the exploration of emotional historical geographies. Ratnam (2019) suggests that a crucial part of using “listening” as methodology in geographical research is examining the embodiment of emotion in the interview, through non-verbal cues such as body language, coupled with how this relates to where the interview was taking place. Additionally, acknowledging not only the relationship, but the tension between the words of an interviewee and their body language is often equally revealing as to the emotional gravity of the interview topic. Hume (2007) notes in her work on researching violence in El Salvador that, whilst one interviewee responded that violence was not used against her, her shifting body language perhaps indicated differently (p.153). This reiterates that how interviewees craft the historical geographies of their lives, either consciously or subconsciously, is not done solely verbally. The interview privileges the researcher with access to important embodiments of emotion that may reveal the complicated disparity between what is said and what is felt. Therefore, the potential to get it wrong in online interview sessions felt bigger, risking that I as the researcher might unintentionally privilege my own reading of the emotions produced by not being physically together in the interview moment (Holmes, 2017).

I also felt some sadness for not being able to meet people in the political spaces I had become part of, especially given the nature of the project. Reading about the unemployed workers’ centres,

women's centres, and bookshops of the 1980s was a stark reminder of how different it was to be politically organising on Zoom. This is not to say that nothing happened during the pandemic – far from it – but the landscape of organising was undoubtedly different. I attended my first in-person action with Living Rent in August 2020, a march on a letting agent that was seeking to evict a fellow member and intimidate him out of the property for daring to ask for essential repairs to be completed on time. Masked up and two metres apart, we stood outside the letting agents' office and waited with our placards whilst the negotiating team handed a letter to the staff inside. The action was successful, and the member's eviction was resisted. We had a quick debrief outdoors on a patch of grass nearby before dispersing. I was meeting everyone there for the first time and across the spread of households that were there, we had little time to spare before having to go home to discuss the next steps on Zoom at a later date.

One year later as I began the oral history interviews, this episode was still a key point of reference. As the interviewees and I discussed the potential for what could have been with the spaces they had been involved in, there was also some discussion of what might be in the future. The political context that enveloped the interviews shaped the conversations I had with participants. There were tangible parts of the interview setting that we were able to grab onto, that anchored us in that particular political moment. For example, the very fact of the first tranche of interviews being on Zoom, prompted some small talk around how we were fairing with lockdown. As the interviews were conducted from May 2021 to February 2022, we usually discussed how we were feeling about the world 'opening up' again, or how we felt that process was going. This was infused with conversations, both off and on record, regarding how the left would begin to respond to this new landscape of political challenges and opportunities. Consequently, the immediate and longer-term futures were a prominent imaginary throughout the interviews. Sarah-Marie Hall usefully reflects on how she has engaged with participants' thoughts of the future in her oral history interviews:

"My Oral Histories and Futures approach was designed to access these imaginaries of the past and present, alongside thoughts, hopes, dreams, desires, and possibilities. The purpose was to understand how the space-times of personal lives are shaped by experiences, memories, and imaginaries; of the people, things, and experiences we might want to be, have, and feel in the future; and how these shape, and are shaped by, crises." (Hall, 2023, p.5)

Hall's framework for how the future is imagined in oral history interviews was an instructive account in my understanding of how this played out in the interviews I conducted. Where this came into sharp focus in particular, was through the group interviews I conducted after we were able to resume in-person fieldwork. The collective vision, the possible futures that could have been, were more prominent in the oral history testimonies that emerged from collective interviews.

3.4.4 Progressing to in-person – the potential and process of group interviews.

On two occasions, I interviewed participants in groups. Both of these took place after it was possible to hold the interviews in person, once COVID-19 restrictions had eased. Theoretically, we could have conducted them online, but in both cases the interviewees expressed a preference for waiting until we could all be together in person. The first group interview was with Bob Orr, Sigrid Nielsen, and Raymond Rose, who had each been involved in running Lavender Menace. In this case, this was the first and only interview I did with any of the three interviewees. They had suggested we do the interview as a group, and I agreed. Bob proposed we meet at the Regent Bar in Edinburgh, a gay-owned bar that had a reasonably quiet lounge space. We met at 2pm and talked there for the best part of three hours. The other group interview was with George Kirkpatrick, Hugh Maguiness, and Keith Stoddart, who had each been involved in various unemployed workers' centres in Glasgow. I interviewed Keith first after he responded to my call for participants, and he passed on George and Hugh's contact details. Keith originally asked if it would be easier to speak to all of them at once, or if I needed to speak to them individually - I replied saying it would be great to do both, if they had the time. Consequently, I spoke to the three of them individually on Zoom in the summer of 2021 before joining them at the Unity Books on Waterloo Street, Glasgow in October 2021.[9] Again, I spent around three hours with the three of them, having some recorded conversation and some not.

Often, oral history theory positions group interviews as an intermediary stage. Yow (2015) notes in her guide to oral history for social scientists that focussed interviews with pairs or groups can help build rapport, and therefore gain access to the privileged in-depth, individual interview. To Yow, the "intensely personal, reflective nature" of the in-depth interview necessitates one on one interaction (p.1). This desire for supposedly better access to the interviewees' narrative through the passing place of the group interview is often balanced with the desire to be an accommodating interviewer. Oral historians often want to relieve the potential unease or awkwardness of the interview encounter. Group interviews, where interviewees are familiar with one another, are sometimes positioned as a good way to build comfort within the oral history interview encounter. Sayigh (1997) notes that her decision to record life story interviews with Palestinian women in groups of families and neighbours was a conscious choice to naturalise the interview by reproducing settings wherein the women may have heard and discussed their histories previously.

Each time, it was the participants who were the ones to suggest doing a group interview, either as their preferred way to speak to me, or as an additional conversation after they had taken part in an

[9] Unity Books has subsequently moved from Waterloo Street to Dixon Road in Govanhill, Glasgow.

interview one-on-one. This was promising, as I had always hoped to conduct some group oral history interviews as part of my empirical research. I was interested in how interviewees would reflect on their previous political projects if they were doing so alongside others who had been involved in the same spaces. It seemed that the interviewees were also interested in how their accounts might have differed from one another. In our first interview, Keith mentioned other people he thought I might like to speak to – especially those who might have had a "very different experience" and he subsequently wondered if "maybe [he was] just…looking through rose-tinted nostalgia glasses or something, that it was better than what it was" (Interview with Stoddart, 2021). All of the interviewees made some reference to the idea that their recollections might be different from one another. This was either pre-empted in the individual interviews as with Keith or emerged within the collective interviews. For example, in my interview with the co-founders of Lavender Menace, as Sigrid was discussing her beginnings in the Open Gaze collective, she notes that "there's a certain dispute about when that actually happened because, I think it happened much earlier than Bob thinks it happened…" (Interview with Nielsen, 2021).

This variability forms part of the reason why group interviews occupy an intriguing place within oral history practice - particularly as they relate to researchers' attempts to engage with the "collective memory" of historical episodes. The concept of collective memory was initially developed by Maurice Halbwachs, who contested the idea of an isolated individual memory, emphasising the influence of broader social and cultural narratives on what and how we remember specific events. He suggested that it is collective experiences that shape the meaning of individual memories, and that no memory can be constructed purely within the bounds of one solitary mind (Halbwachs, 1992 [1950]). The idea that we should consider the wider discursive context of interviewees' lives, and how their memories are constructed within a particular conjuncture, has been an integral development of oral history research and analysis. Yet as oral historians seek to unpack collective memories through individual remembrances, some theorists have argued there is a danger that we might lose sight of the role of individual reflexivity. Green (2004, 2012) cautions against the erasure of the agency of individual oral history narrators, and how they can reflexively respond to the construction of collective narratives and how they relate to them. She notes that previous theorisations of collective memory over-rely on the idea that researchers can escape the multiple truths and memories that exist about the past. Thus, she calls for oral historians to reassert the value of individual remembering, and the reflective selves that are revealed in honouring this.

Consequently, oral historians might consider that the *exchange* between this individual reflexivity, and broader social and cultural discourses, is what is most revealing within the interview. Coupland (2015) builds on this assertion in her account of carrying out a group interview with former miners who had worked at the "Big Pit" in Blaenavon in Wales. She suggests that it is not even merely the

exchange between individual and collective memory that is revealed in group interviewing – rather, that it further illuminates the fluid spaces *between* these poles, even deconstructing them as rigid notions in themselves. Throughout her interviews, the miners flitted between discussing their own experiences of working at Big Pit, the public-facing heritage of the site, and group narratives of mining – crafting a collective story, even when they had not worked together at the same time. Her final suggestion is that it is the very *process* of this group remembering that is illuminating in accessing these malleable, in-between moments.

This ongoing negotiation is an interesting reckoning with how composure within the interview setting is crafted and unsettled as narratives progress. Therefore, how oral history interviewees construct their retellings is simultaneously revealing of how they construct their sense of self. By extension, in group interviews, narrators are also composing a sense of themselves that they are comfortable constructing in the presence of the others in that setting. These selves can even be constructed *together*, enhancing the collectivity of the interview setting. Both group interviews revealed useful insights about how their shared narratives and memories of each space coalesced and diverged. Some stories were enhanced by the collective setting, whereas others seemed to be comparatively more muted – especially when, in the case of the second group interview, I had heard a fuller version of events in the one-on-one interviews with George, Hugh, and Keith.

However, this familiarity can produce additional concerns. Group oral history interviews often feature rapid conversation between different narrators, that means it is more difficult to capture their narratives in their totality. It often feels simply more awkward to interrupt, to redirect the conversation back to the proscribed research agenda. The flow of the group interviews was undoubtedly different to those I conducted one on one. As members of the group spoke to one another, interjected with a different point, or asked for clarification, stories were interwoven and deconstructed regularly. Smith (2015) highlights this as a key feature of group oral history interviews, and importantly as a humbling reminder to interviewers that “memories do not simply rattle around inside the heads of atomised individuals awaiting the arrival of oral historians armed with memory extraction toolboxes” (p.227). The experience of conducting interviews in groups is worth the practical methodological and interpretive challenges (Coupland, 2015).

Ultimately, group interviews can also act as an important reminder that the interview setting should be a collaborative act, even when interviews are conducted one on one. As he concludes his account of interviewing women’s experiences of relationships during wartime Dundee, Smith (2015, p.228) resolves:

"Group interviewing is worth doing even if it acts as a reminder that the one-to-one interview is a rather odd social arrangement…this includes researchers unthinkingly setting interview agendas and insisting on turn taking. Such practices may simply encourage interviewees to suppress memories that do not fit their perceptions of established ways of recalling the past. Moving power away from the researcher/interviewer, even if it is only once in a while, can open up new topics and yet further improve understandings of remembering and memories."

This excerpt surmises one of the key dynamics within collective interviewing that I was keen to capture, as reflective of the research topic that was being discussed. I had wanted to do group interviews with those people who had been involved in particular spaces, or even the same sorts of spaces across the left, with the intention of capturing some of the dynamics that could have had some historical parallels to what had shaped these sites at the time. The importance of the group interviews was thus, overall, about the *process* of conducting them (Coupland, 2015, p.297). The shared pursuits, the gentle, or even not so gentle, challenges around how something happened, provided some connection to how ideas about organising, and space, were hashed out at the time. It would absolutely be naïve to assume that the setting of the interview could be neatly mapped onto how these conversations played out during the time, and also within the spaces being talked about. The reflexivity inherent and celebrated in oral history interviews can enable a completely different production of memories and justification for why particular historical events happened in the way that they did. However, the case I make in this thesis is that these spaces were equally dynamic and fluid, precisely because of the *same relationality* that is at work during the contemporary group oral history interviews. The way in which the narrators reviewed the day-to-day activities of the spaces they were involved in, whilst relating them to broader political projects, was as malleable as the ways in which they (re)negotiated the boundaries and pursuits of the spaces while they were organising in them. There is a danger in critiquing group oral history interviews, or even oral history itself, that we presume the ways in which interviewees conceptualised of events at the time of their happening was in any way fixed or static from one day to another.

3.5 Oral historical geographies in the landscape of the left, past and present

3.5.1 The scale of the left – different interviewers, the same narrator, and multiple interviews

One participant agreed to send some reflections via email, rather than commit to a full oral history interview. Esther Breitenbach had been involved in Glasgow Women's Centre from 1976 to 1980. She was someone who had been interviewed a number of times before, whilst also having written a number of crucial contemporary accounts of Scottish political life during the period I was researching (Breitenbach, 1990, 1981). Over the course of the interviews, I ended up speaking to

some of participants who had done oral history interviews before for various research projects. Consequently, there was a range of experience among those I interviewed. Some interviewees had taken part in oral history projects before or had even conducted interviews themselves. Whereas for others, they reflected on the interview being a unique opportunity to reflect on their time organising in the spaces I explore in this thesis, as evidenced by the excerpt from George that opens this chapter. Therefore, whether an interviewee has been interviewed before is worth reflecting on in relation to the production of the intersubjective relationship.

Chand (2021) notes that repeat interviews with the same interviewees, but different interviewers, can provide useful insights into how intersubjectivity moulds the interview. Chand interviewed two of the same people as her then PhD supervisor, Arthur McIvor, had previously. Unlike Chand, I have no access to those original transcripts, nor any understanding of the previous interviewer(s') subjectivity via which to analyse the differences in the intersubjective relationship(s). I knew that Esther had been interviewed previously, through my own reading of the outputs that she was quoted in, and through her own reference to those interviews. However, I have no relationship with the person(s) who had interviewed her previously. Instead, what was notable about my new engagement, was the following reflection from Esther on how her previous interview had been interpreted:

"Sarah [Browne] writes that such a space was established 'of necessity' as groups were getting larger. I don't recall if I used this phrase to Sarah [when I was being interviewed], but if I did, I would like to rephrase this somewhat." (Breitenbach, 2021)[10]

Oral historians often worry if they have misinterpreted interviewees in their analysis and eventual outputs related to their oral history testimonies. If this then becomes apparent to the interviewee, this interpretive conflict can understandably lead to emotional discomfort (Borland, 1991). Thus, when interviewees might look to "re-place themselves" in the narrative, researchers must be aware that at points, they may seek to re-place themselves away from us, defending the characters in their narratives from the researcher's potential "skeletal representations" of them (Borland, 2018, p.35). From a brief written exchange, it is difficult to ascertain how Esther felt about her change of opinion, and to what extent this could have been inferred in previous research. But even a brief opportunity to revise and reflect on previous comments could be an interesting way to keep this process of historical dialogue alive, particularly with the interviewees themselves.

[10] Esther was referring to the time where she was an oral history interviewee for the book, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland* (Browne, 2016)

3.5.2 Anonymity and confidentiality in oral history research

As part of the interviewee information sheet and consent form, I asked the participants if they would like to be named, or whether they would prefer to be anonymous. Each participant ticked that they were happy to have their name attributed to their interview testimony, and the majority were also happy to have their interview deposited in an archive, as I explained I hoped to do. Anonymity is generally rare in oral history interviewing, unlike interviewing in other social science research contexts. Martin Hobbs (2021) uses an incidence where she was advised to retrospectively go back and anonymise all of her testimonies after having presented some preliminary findings at an academic conference. This was despite the fact that all of the interviewees in her research had been given the option of anonymity and had chosen to remain named. She argues that being advised to anonymise her interviews, especially after they had already taken place, failed to recognise why the interviewees may have chosen to take part in research in the first place. It is widely found that oral history narrators want to be named, and have their historical contributions recorded (Thomson, 2007).

Since I was hoping to speak to some participants in groups, I knew I would be speaking to groups who knew each other, or had known each other, fairly well. The group interviews came together organically, co-arranged by one participant who was still in regular contact with the other interviewees. In the instance where I carried out one-to-one interviews before conducting one together, I suggested (or the interviewee did) the idea of a group interview early on in the preparation for our conversation, so it would be clear that we might be speaking all together at a later date. There were some instances, however, where interviewees referenced each other, without speaking to one another in a later group interview setting. At times, participants offered a critical perspective regarding what others had been involved in, and how successful they had been in their endeavours to organise in particular spaces. Sometimes this was mirrored in how other participants then offered the same critiques back – but at other points, this was contrasted by different stories, that painted those more critical narratives in a different light. Some interviewees spoke in vague terms, some named people directly. Some of the criticisms were linked to the space, whereas others spoke about the conduct of particular individuals.

I have endeavoured to handle these exchanges ethically, balancing my own projections on what I would not want to know of what someone else thought of my organising efforts, with the need to preserve the dignity of all participants that took part in the project. One of the core contentions of this research is that the relationality of these spaces is what makes them an important vehicle through which to analyse day to day political organising on the left during this period. The different encounters, relationships, and tensions shaped bookshops, unemployed workers' centres, and women's centres in dynamic ways. Knowing what different narrators thought of other spaces

across this landscape was an important research aim. Navigating the emotional dynamics of this, particularly as the project progresses into written record through this thesis, has been a difficult personal dilemma to sit with. Freund (2015), in his reflections on what narrators keep “off the record”, muses that oral history interviewers “go into oral history interviews knowing we will not get the complete story. Yet, throughout our interviews, we hope and attempt to get, if not the whole story, at least a fully self-contained story” (p.273). As much as I might feel some discomfort with how interviewees reference one another, and as much as we have talked about our shared lineage, I was not present for the events they describe in relation to one another. Their comradely criticisms are theirs and perhaps, if I were to draw parallels, some of the most familiar parts to me in my own experiences of contemporary left-wing organising.

3.6 Where are we now and where are we going.

Whilst the primary methodological contribution of this thesis revolves around my use of oral history interviews, as discussed so far, the storage of the oral history interviews represents an important future for the project. Similarly, as another important part of the research, I also carried out archival research. The processes of visiting archives to examine historical material, and of listening to oral history testimonies, were deeply intertwined. I assert this with an expansive definition of what archival research is and what constitutes an archive. Freeland and Hodenberg's (2023) survey of archival practise in feminist historical research purposefully includes a range of sites that go “beyond institutionalised repositories run by states and authorities… [drawing on] counter-archives of activists and NGOs, on media debates, items kept in domestic settings, interviews, text messages, questionnaires collected by social science projects, and digital objects and sites” (p.1). Overall, I visited archives in universities and national libraries, whilst also seizing the opportunity when offered to look at the personal collections of some of the oral history interviewees I spoke to. I consider these visits in relation to one another in these methodological reflections (Griffin, 2018).

Over the course of the archival research period, I visited a range of archives. During this process, the oral history interviews I had conducted, or was still to carry out, were never far from my mind. Embracing the subjectivity of oral history requires a generous interest in how the interview testimony might differ from what is written in the archival record. Not so much as to look for the “truth”, but to reflect on the crafting of the interview and how this has changes what may have been conveyed in previous articulations of historical narratives. This requires a dislodging of archives as complete holders of singular historical truths. In her thoughtful exploration of how to make use of archives in researching radical and revolutionary movements and moments, Ghosh (2023) proposes that engaging with archives in ways that embrace dissensus and disagreement, “instead of aiming for a comprehensive historical narrative[.] I hope that when we produce historical

arguments and narratives, we acknowledge that archives exist in order to keep historical criticism and debate alive" (p.2).

I have also briefly spoken to Keith about doing more oral history interviews in the future, with the intention of creating an accessible repository of oral histories. The idea was created after I bumped into him while he was on a stall for Unite in the Community in Queen's Park in Govanhill, Glasgow. We got to chatting about our experience of doing the oral history interviews and he mentioned some other friends he had that I had not spoken to. He had also recently been at the funeral of a friend who had been part of the same political scene during the period we had spoken about. Keith commented on how he wasn't sure where the stories of his friends would be held, and this was brought to the forefront when they passed away. We discussed the urgency of facilitating some way to record their stories, and he suggested that at some point we should book a room somewhere over a weekend and do some more individual and group oral history interviewing. We agreed that that would be a good thing to do, as he turned to me and said he thought I'd quite enjoyed that time we'd got together at Unity Books to do it previously. I agreed that I had, and whilst I did not say it at the time, and nor did he, I had some suspicion that the feeling was mutual.

As mentioned, Keith is one of the interviewees I still see mostly regularly outside of the interview context. Consequently, he semi-regularly asked how the research was progressing, and if "I'd published yet?" I usually made a joke about how that was still a long way off, as was the thesis submission. He joked "you'll be dedicating the thesis to us in memoriam at this rate!" Consequently, I have considered as the thesis research has concluded how some of these methodological reflections might be built into my future historical and political organising practices – with some urgency, as prompted by Keith. Often, oral historians endeavour to make interviews generative encounters, and to embrace this means thinking of what happens beyond the interview encounter (Starecheski, 2018). With this, I draw on Tubridy's (2023) instructive account, as someone also involved in tenant union organising and academic research. The project he outlines set out to leverage the history of the rent strikes to engage people and involve them in the contemporary housing movement, by providing an example of the power of collective action and building connections between different phases of the housing struggle. The process of research, in the spaces of the union, became a form of organising as well as producing the tools of knowledge collected and created. As we collect oral history interviews, we collect our memories of the past, and our tools of future organising. This is far from contested terrain. Yet, whilst the sources may lead to no neat answers, the process of oral history interviewing in this context is generative of new political and historical geographies, that represent an important opportunity to reimagine collective futures.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I propose that oral history interviews provide unique opportunities for researchers to reflect on how interviews might craft spatial and emotional narratives (Hampton, 2022, p.473). I assert the importance of engaging with the inter-subjective relationship, mutually created between interviewer and interviewees. In the context of this thesis research, the inter-subjective relationships were firmly based in a shared political authority between the interviewees and I (Sitzia, 1999). Our rapport was an interweaving of mutual experiences, but also an emphasis on my position as someone younger and comparatively newer to the movements that the interviewees had been involved in for decades. This inter-generational learning was a formative part of the interview processes. In every interview, we took time to reflect on how the memories the interviewees drew upon might be relevant to our contemporary struggle. In my own political organising, I constantly draw on those insights.

Over the next three empirical chapters, oral history excerpts feature heavily. The methodology I have set out in this chapter was instrumental in gleaning a wealth of insights from each interviewee, in a way that was collaborative and generative. As I move into the empirical discussion of the thesis, I imbue this methodological approach throughout all of my analysis. In the final annexes of this chapter, I provide an overview of both the spaces and the people that are the core of the thesis. These vignettes are intended to scaffold and contextualise the arguments I make, fleshing out the oral history excerpts I have highlighted throughout the empirical chapters.

3.8 Annex 1: Space profiles and biographies.

3.8.1 Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre

Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre opened at 5 Hecla Place in Drumchapel, in the north-west of Glasgow (Allison et al., 1986, p. 112). Drumchapel was one of Glasgow's four peripheral housing estates, established as part of a broader post-war "slum clearance" programme that sought to relocate people from inner-city Glasgow to new homes in less densely populated areas (Damer, 2018). This was part of a broader transformation, as Gibbs and Scothorne (2020) describe how the 1960s saw the emergence of a widely recognised 'new Scotland.' The burgeoning development of, and migration to, new towns; the development of peripheral housing schemes, the emerging welfare state, and transitioning industrial sectors produced a new topography in which Scottish political culture and organising was constructed. Deindustrialisation affected Drumchapel acutely. The closure of the Singer factory in Clydebank in 1980 was one of several large site closures in close proximity to the housing scheme that removed a key source of employment from the nearby area (Domosh, 2008). Consequently, the establishment of an unemployed workers' centre in the area was a reckoning with this context of job loss.

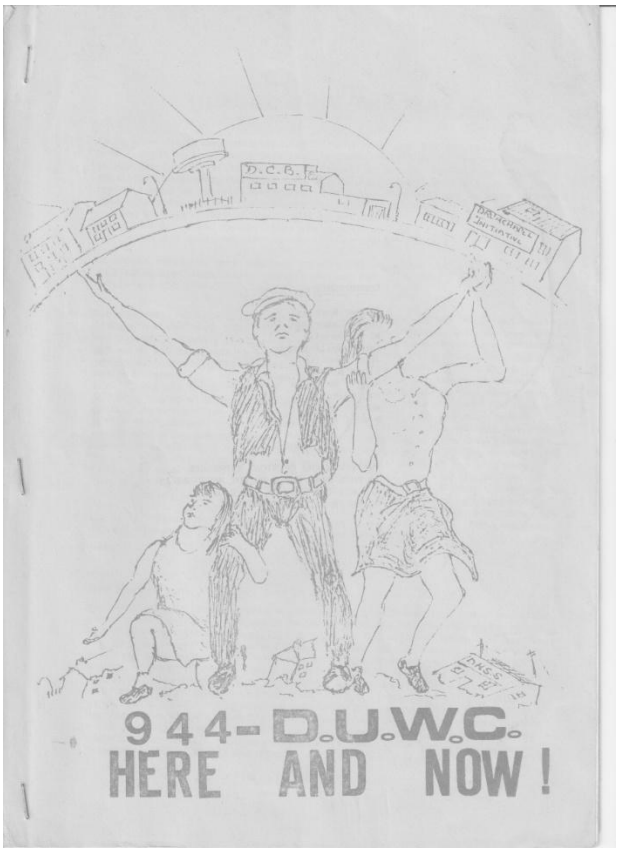


Figure 1: Image of a newsletter produced by Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre members, including a drawing of the area in which the centre was based (Image provided by interviewee George Kirkpatrick, 2021)

It was close to the shopping centre in the area, in the complex of the District Council offices. Inside it had a “general activity area”, a café, three offices, and a counselling room (Allison et al., 1986, p. 112). The centre was open from 9am-4.45pm from Monday to Thursday and from 9am-3.55pm on a Friday. Depending on who the coordinator was, there were stipulations on how the space was organised. As I go onto discuss in chapter six, when George was the coordinator, he was adamant that the general activity area would not include a pool table (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021). He was firm that the space should be accessible and approachable to all and he went to great lengths to avoid the centre being associated solely with perceived “masculine” activities.

3.8.2 Edinburgh unemployed workers’ centre

Edinburgh unemployed workers’ centre opened in 1981 at the bottom of the trades council building on Picardy Place, in the centre of the city. It was open Monday to Friday from 10am-4pm (Allison et al., 1986, pp. 72–3). Similarly to the Glasgow centres, users could access advice on their welfare rights alongside a range of social and cultural activities. It was situated in the trades council building in Picardy Place until 1985, when it moved to the premises of a disused church on Cranston Street until 1989. Then, the centre moved to its final location on Broughton Street, a three-storey disused school, where it was then often referred to as the Broughton Street unemployed workers centre. The Edinburgh centre also had a strong anarchist tradition, members of which fought hard against an eviction order issued by the Labour-controlled Lothian Regional Council in 1991 (The Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh, 2015). The resolution of this dispute produced the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE) which is ongoing and is home to the archive Scotland’s Radical Library.

A key feature of the centre(s) was that they had printing and video-making equipment that enabled the production of the centre magazine. Bob Goupillot told me that they “had a process camera, a printing press, Macintosh computers, which [were] new, very new” which were important during otherwise poor times (Interview with Goupillot, 2021). The image of the centre varied across the three different locations, but the function of the centre and what its facilities enabled loomed large in the accounts of those I interviewed.

Figure 2: Edinburgh unemployed workers' centre users reclaim the space at 103 Broughton Street in 1991 (Libcom.org, 2021)

3.8.3 Glasgow Women's Centre

Glasgow women's centre first opened in 1976 at 57 Miller Street, just five minutes walk from Glasgow Central train station. The centre received a grant from the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and another from the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) job creation scheme, that enabled the creation of two paid positions from 1978 until 1989 (Interview with Breitenbach, 2021). During that time, the centre had a sort of "re-opening" in 1984, where it moved to 48 Miller Street. In both iterations, the centre was set up with a drop-in model with the aim to encourage a range of women to visit and find out more about the women's liberation movement (WLM) at their own leisure. The centre was open for drop-ins on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 11am-3pm and then on a Saturday from 1pm-5pm (Glasgow Women's Centre Newsletter Collective, 1984, p.1). The centre produced a newsletter, *Hen's Own,* that advertised the various activities that women could take part in. This ranged from film screenings and book clubs to self-organised workshops on employment, housing, and welfare rights advice.

The space itself was described to me as "one big room" up a set of fairly treacherous sounding tenement stairs (Interview with Thomson, 2021). Luc Broadbent, who visited the women's centre regularly, described them as more of a "ladder" that took you up to the third floor where the room was (Interview with Broadbent, 2021). The meeting space was the selling point of the centre, though there was one side office where members of the collective could operate a phone line. Luc told me as she tried to picture the space, she could "sort of see [herself] on the typewriter" (Interview with Broadbent, 2021). In an early issue of *Hen's Own*, the collective detail the running costs of the centre, noting that the space "could probably do with buying…some heaters" (Glasgow Women's Centre Newsletter Collective, 1984, p.9).

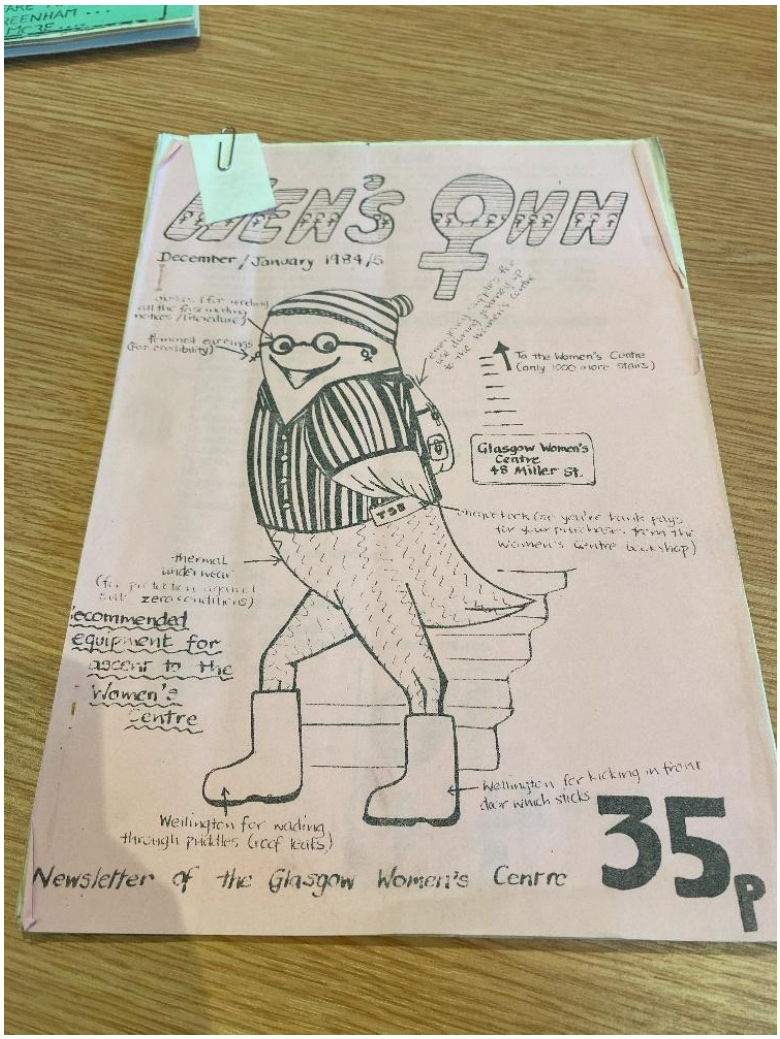


Figure 3: Front cover of the first issue of *Hen's Own*, the Glasgow Women's Centre newsletter. Published in 1984 (Image taken by author)

This is further illustrated by the tongue-in-cheek front cover of the first issue of *Hen's Own* in Figure 3, detailing the "equipment" needed for an "ascent to the Glasgow Women's Centre." The collective members admit the temperature of the centre was less than comfortable, advising that visitors don their thermal underwear to prepare. The women's centre attire including a pair of wellington boots also aligned with what some collective members recalled in our interviews. Some were as blunt to say that the space was simply a bit "dirty and grotty" (Interview with Broadbent, 2021). Yet this was not perceived to be an important aspect of the centre itself. It was something to joke about, but it was generally not perceived as a hinderance to the important work that took place at the centre. This attitude has parallels across different women's spaces in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In one oral history interview about Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre, Aileen Christianson was critical of those who *did* place undue importance on the aesthetics of the spaces they were organising in:

"[Naomi Wolf] was terribly upset because we didn't have flowers in the women's centre, it wasn't beautiful – we had no fucking money and we were getting it painted at the time, and she's completely twisted it, so Naomi Wolf, her name is dirt [laughing]." (Maitland, 2009, p.179).

This parallels those I interviewed, who were repeatedly keen to stress what the centre enabled them to *do* rather than what it looked like.

3.8.4 Govan unemployed workers' centre

Govan unemployed workers' centre was based in the Pearce Institute, before opening a second premises on Rathlin Street in Govan, in the south-west of Glasgow. The centre was open from 9am-9pm Monday to Thursday and from 9.30am-5pm on Fridays, with evening and weekend opening hours for meetings and group activities. Centre users could seek welfare rights advice, support for housing problems, alongside accessing a range of educational and leisure activities. The centre had a community café and once the premises expanded, a food cooperative was established. Like Drumchapel, Govan had been a key centre of Scotland's industrial capacity. The Fairfields shipyard, for example, was a key site of the UCS work-in (Phillips et al., 2020).

Figure 4: The outside of Govan unemployed workers' centre (Image provided by interviewee Keith Stoddart, 2021)

The centre served a multitude of functions, with volunteers having a notable degree of autonomy to put on what they wanted. The centre hosted kids clubs and tuck shops, and anything that could offer an alternative space to what Keith described would otherwise be kids coming home to a "room and kitchen…out the pissing rain" (Interview with Stoddart, 2021).

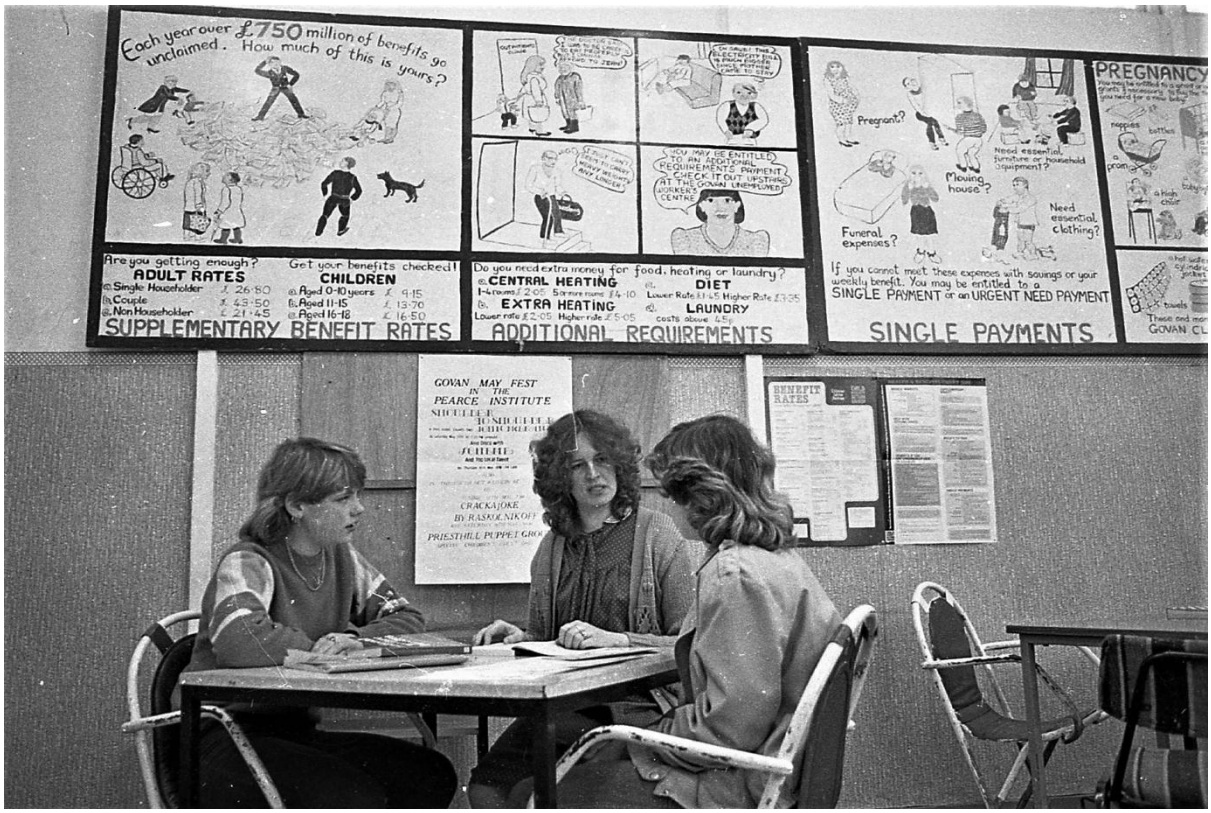


Figure 5: The inside of Govan unemployed workers' centre (Image provided by interviewee Keith Stoddart, 2021)

3.8.5 Lavender Menace

Lavender Menace was opened by Bob Orr and Sigrid Nielsen in 1982 as Scotland's first lesbian and gay bookshop. The pair sublet a room from the Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace, on Forth Street in Edinburgh. Bob and Sigrid had been members of the Open Gaze Collective, a group working within the Scottish Minorities Group (SMG)/Scottish Homosexual Rights Group (SHRG). Lavender Menace started as a bookstall in the Fire Island Disco before Bob and Sigrid set up the shop in 1982. They stocked a range of lesbian and gay literature, collecting any text that might fall into that category. Bob and Sigrid's connections to the SMG/SHRG and later to the Federation of Radical Booksellers (FRB) meant they were also linked up with publishers and book distributors beyond Scotland. They often imported international lesbian and gay titles, which formed a core part of Lavender Menace's library. The shop was open until 1986 before they reopened in a different premises as West and Wilde with the involvement of Bob's partner, Raymond Rose.

The shop was filled to the brim with books, sourced from national and international publishers. Bob and Sigrid described how they were only a short walk from Northern Books Distribution, so they were able to easily receive stock to Lavender Menace. The shop also hosted readings, author talks, and book launches in what was a small but well utilised space. The lavender sign at street

level directed passers-by to the bookshop in the basement, attracting visitors who knew where to look and those who just happened upon the shop.

Figure 6: Image of the original Lavender Menace sign (Museums and Galleries Edinburgh, 2025)

3.9 Annex 1: Interviewee biographies.

The interviewees featured in this thesis have a broad range of backgrounds and life experiences. Their political trajectories shared core commonalities, though each with their own geographical and cultural specificities. Some drew inspiration from the activities of their parents whereas others were politicised through their workplaces or places of education. In this annex, I offer some brief vignettes into the biographies of each of the participants who agreed to speak to me for my thesis research.

Greg Michaelson – Interviewed on Zoom, 14th May 2021

Greg was born in Shepherds Bush in London, in September 1953. His family moved to Edinburgh when he was nine. He studied in Essex, before undertaking a postgraduate course at the University of St Andrews. He told me he was never a member of anything, always on the edge of various left groups – but "naturally of a left milieu" (Interview with Michealson, 2021). He started volunteering in the First of May bookshop in1978 and remained involved in some way throughout its existence. He also helped set up Lavender Menace in 1982 by doing the electrical wiring for the shop. He remains in touch with friends who he met through being involved in radical bookselling, supporting initiatives such as Left on the Shelf, an online bookshop dedicated to the continuation and commemoration of left-wing bookselling and booksellers.

Keith Stoddart – Interviewed on Zoom, 28th June 2021; Interviewed in person, 15th October 2021

Keith was born in Renfrew on the 13th of January 1953. He left school at 15 to become an apprentice electrician and then later began working across the third sector and local authorities in homelessness and housing related projects, before qualifying as a community worker. He described growing up in a small town, surrounded by big industrial employers such as Babcock's and Rolls Royce. From 1971-74 he was in Ireland engaging in cross-community work outside of Derry. He was the project coordinator of Govan unemployed workers' centre from 1981-1986. He has been a trade unionist all his life, remaining active in his branch of Unite Community. He is a member of the Communist Party of Britain and acts as the Scottish committee chairman. He regularly writes for the Morning Star, the daily newspaper of the Party.

Bob Goupillot – Interviewed on Zoom, 8th July 2021 and 22nd July 2021

Bob was born on the 16th of September 1955, in Middlesbrough. He moved to Edinburgh in 1981 and has lived there ever since. He was an active rank-and-file member of the Labour Party, before leaving over what he called their "betrayal" over the miners' strike in 1984. Bob was involved in the Edinburgh Miners Support Group, based at the Edinburgh Trades Council, which also housed the Edinburgh unemployed workers' centre at that time. He then described himself as a "full time

activist paid for by the state" while he was involved in anarchist organising around the centre. He remains politically active, specifically with the Edinburgh Radical Independence Campaign.

George Kirkpatrick – Interviewed on Zoom, morning of 15th July 2021; Interviewed in person at Unity Books, 15th October 2021

George was born in Glasgow on the 13th of August 1956, the second child of five. In 1972, he began an apprenticeship as an engineer in Weir Pumps in Cathcart. He joined the workers' committee representing apprentices and became the shop steward for apprentices at Weirs in 1973. Shortly after, he joined the Young Communist League. He was made redundant in 1979 and had a period of unemployment before finding work again with John Brown Engineering. Within the year, redundancies were announced and by the time he was 23 he had been made redundant twice. He started doing youth work in Drumchapel and eventually became the coordinator of Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre in 1984. He left the Young Communist League to join the Labour Party in 1979, before leaving again in 1985 after the miners' strike. At the time of interview, he was chair of Clydebank Trades Council, a member of the Communist Party of Britain, and actively involved in the Clydebank community food share project.

Hugh Maguiness – Interviewed on Zoom, afternoon of 15th July 2021; Interviewed in person at Unity Books, 15th October 2021

Hugh was born in Glasgow on the 30th of March 1948. His father was a bricklayer, and his mother was a homeworker, with some periods as a seamstress and demonstrator for Singer's. He originally studied an HND to be an engineer, working as an apprentice for a time at James Howden and Company. Whilst his career path changed, he told me that this time was a good political education, as "was every heavy engineering and shipbuilding yard on [the] Clydeside" (Interview with Maguiness, 2021). He then became a researcher with Paisley College (now the University of the West of Scotland) on a project that looked at different unemployed workers' centres. He has stayed in Clydebank for most of his life, remaining active in the Trades Council alongside George.

Jennifer Marchbank – Interviewed on Zoom, 19th July 2021

Jen was born on the 18th of July 1964 in Dumfries. She moved to Glasgow in 1992 to study at Strathclyde University, initially for a Food Science degree before switching to joint honours Economic and Social History and Political Science. During her time at Strathclyde, she was actively involved in student politics, campaigning around a range of issues related to anti-apartheid, support for the miners' strike, the campaign for nuclear disarmament and others. Later, she was involved in Gay Scotland magazine, which brought her into contact with Lavender Menace. She now lives in Surrey, British Columbia and is a Professor of Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University.

Colin Hampton – Interviewed on Zoom, 21st July 2021

Colin born on the 28th of February 1958 in Ilkeston, Derbyshire. His mum was one of 13 children, and his dad was one of 9. He left school to study sociology, politics and economics at college, before studying a degree in politics at Leicester University. After university, he was in and out of labouring jobs while living in Chesterfield. It was at this time that he joined the Labour Party, as an active participant in the campaign to get Tony Benn elected. At the end of 1984, he became the coordinator of Derby unemployed workers' centre, where he still works to this day.

Jan Macleod – Interviewed on Zoom, 9th August 2021

Jan was born in Inverness on the 24th of June 1958. She was brought up on a croft and lived in Sullivan until she was 18, before moving to Glasgow for university. During her time in Glasgow, she started volunteering for a rape crisis centre, which began her involvement in feminist political organising. She studied sociology and philosophy and university before undertaking a community development postgraduate qualification. Through her involvement in the Scottish Women's Liberation Movement, she was often in and out of Glasgow Women's Centre. She was involved in organising the Scottish Women's Liberation Movement conference at Cardonald College. She later went onto work for the Women's Support Project, where she still works at present.

Jackie Baillie – Interviewed on Zoom, 20th September 2021

Jackie was born in Hong Kong on the 15th of January 1964. Her parents met in Hong Kong, her mother a Scottish primary school teacher, and her father a Portuguese policeman. She attended boarding school in England and at the age of 18 joined the Labour Party. She cited her political beginnings as a "reaction to what I saw Thatcher doing, so it was a moral sense of outrage" (Interview with Baillie, 2021). She first got a job working for Ruchill unemployed workers' centre before moving across to the Gorbals unemployed workers' centre. She is the current deputy leader of the Scottish Labour Party.

Sigrid Nielsen – Interviewed in person at the Regent Bar, Edinburgh, 29th September 2021

Sigrid was born in Olympia, Washington, on the 9th of March 1948. Her father taught American history at university, and she described having grown up "all over California" (Interview with Nielsen, 2021). She moved to New Mexico for university, working in various different jobs alongside her studies. Her political trajectory took her back and forth to Edinburgh from Santa Fe, before settling permanently in the former in the early 1980s. She joined the women's group at the Gay Information Centre in Edinburgh, then the Open Gaze bookselling collective after meeting Bob. After the Open Gaze collective left the centre, Sigrid and Bob took to setting up Lavender Menace. Whilst both Lavender Menace and its successor West and Wilde are no longer open, Sigrid is still

heavily involved in archiving and capturing the histories of queer bookselling in Scotland, through the Lavender Menace Queer Books Archive project.

Bob Orr – Interviewed in person at the Regent Bar, Edinburgh, 29th September 2021

Bob was born on the 29th of March 1950, in Montreal, before his family moved back to Glasgow in 1959. He left school having "flunked" before joining the air force in 1968. He left three years later, stating that he "came out so [he] could come out" (Interview with Orr, 2021). He then got a place on a university access course, going on to study sociology at the University of Edinburgh. His first experiences of organising were with the Scottish Minorities Group, and then Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, primarily tasked with setting up the bookstall in Edinburgh's Gay Information Centre in 1976. From this, he and others formed the Open Gaze Collective, formalising their bookselling efforts. The collective also ran a bookstall at Fire Island Disco, a nightclub in Edinburgh, where Bob and Raymond first met. After the collective left the Gay Information Centre, Bob and Sigrid began focusing their efforts on opening Lavender Menace. Bob is also involved in archiving and capturing the histories of queer bookselling in Scotland, continuing to work with Sigrid through the Lavender Menace Queer Books Archive project.

Raymond Rose – Interviewed in person at the Regent Bar, Edinburgh, 29th September 2021

Raymond was born on the 9th of December 1958, in Aberdeen, Scotland. He moved through to Edinburgh when he was sixteen, "the first day I could" (Interview with Rose, 2021). He and Bob met at Fire Island Disco, a nightclub in Edinburgh, where Bob was working on the Open Gaze collective bookstall. He helped with the practical steps of opening Lavender Menace, later becoming a formal partner in its successor, West and Wilde. In the 1980s, he was also involved in Scottish Aids Monitor, an organisation established to raise awareness of AIDs. They initially worked with gay men, but they soon expanded their activities to support all groups disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDs at the time, such as intravenous drug users, people in prison, and sex workers.

Lucinda Broadbent – Interviewed on Zoom, 8th October 2021

Luc was born in London in 1958, moving to Edinburgh after she graduated from university in Oxford. She had first joined a women's group at university, which she described as "classic 70s feminism" (Interview with Broadbent, 2021). Upon moving to Edinburgh, she volunteered at the First of May bookshop. She later started going to the Edinburgh unemployed workers' centre, becoming their representative delegate to the Edinburgh Trades Council – which she described as "quite wacky, that it would be a middle-class, English gay feminist" (Interview with Broadbent, 2021). She also regularly visited Glasgow Women's Centre through her feminist organising, which included her visits and connections to Greenham Common. She is a founder member and director

of media co-op, a workers cooperative that creates short form films and animations, primarily for different campaigning and social justice organisations.

Linda Biggerstaff – Interviewed in person at her home, 13th October 2021

Linda was born in Glasgow on the 7th of October 1956. She grew up in Maryhill and attended Jordanhill College to study a diploma in Youth and Community Studies. She worked in youth centres in Drumchapel before working in adult education and became a shop steward across different workplaces. It was through this work that she was regularly based in Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre. She organised different educational classes across both centres in Drumchapel. She was also centrally involved in coordinating and planning the original Glasgow May Fest. She remains politically active and at the time of the interview, she was the chair of the women's centre in Maryhill.

Bob Thomson – Interviewed in person at his home, 27th October 2021

Bob was born in Wishaw in 1943. He was one of twelve children in a "big, working-class family" (Interview with Thomson, 2021). He left school to start an engineering apprenticeship at a firm called Anderston Boys in Motherwell. From there, he became a mechanical engineer and a draughtsman. He was involved in his trade union, the Draughtsman's and Allied Technician's Association (DATA), becoming the national youth secretary for the whole of the UK. He later worked for the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE), moving up through the ranks from local organiser, to Scottish organiser, to Scottish Secretary. He told me that his sexuality meant it "took [him] probably about five years longer than it should have to become the Scottish Secretary" (Interview with Thomson, 2021). He remains an active trade unionist and was formerly involved with the Scottish Left Review.

Esther Breitenbach – Comments via email, 17th November 2021

Esther was born on the 2nd of May 1950. She was the first paid worker involved in Glasgow Women's Centre, a post which was funded by grants from the Manpower Services Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission. She was centrally involved in the Scottish Women's Liberation Movement and has written extensively on her political experiences. She is an Honorary Fellow in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh.

Carol Thomson – Interviewed in person, 6th December 2021

Carol was born in Old Kilpatrick, on the 7th of December 1949. Her father was a crane driver in John Brown's shipyard from Old Kilpatrick and her mother was a telephone operator from Liverpool, before having to give up work when she got married. She told me her mother was the politically active one out of her parents, bringing her up to believe that there was "nothing [women] were incapable of" (Interview with Thomson, 2021). Carol worked in the civil service from 1969 until her

retirement and was actively involved in her trade union “before [she] was active in anything else” (Interview with Thomson, 2021). After Margaret Thatcher’s election and the ascent of the Corrie Bill, Carol was heavily involved in the Scottish Abortion Campaign, which meant she was regularly in and out of the Glasgow Women’s Centre. She remains in touch with some of the people she organised with and maintains a personal archive of various Scottish Women’s Liberation Movement press, such as *MsPrint.*

Kate Fearnley – Interviewed on Zoom, 24th January 2022

Kate was born in London on the 1st of December 1960. She grew up in and went to school in Northeast London before moving to Edinburgh for university. She cited her first connection with the queer world as joining the university’s gay society, being “the only woman there” (Interview with Fearnley, 2022). Alongside some friends, she joined the Communist Party of Great Britain’s Euro Communist branch. volunteered in Lavender Menace. She worked at the council for a short while as an analyst, before moving back to London to start a PhD. She remained “very attached to [her partner] and to Edinburgh” and regularly commuted back and forth to Edinburgh every few weeks. She joined Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners in London and the London Bisexual Group, which prompted her to start an Edinburgh Bisexual Group.

Goretti Horgan – Interviewed on Zoom, 6th February 2022

Goretti was born in Cork on the 5th of July 1955. She was born into a working-class family, where her mother narrowly avoided having to move to a mother and baby home, as her own parents relented on letting her marry her boyfriend at the age of 19. Goretti was centrally involved in the National Abortion Campaign and then became involved in the first Women’s Right to Choose Group in Dublin. She later organised alongside the unemployed workers’ group in Derry, as a number of groups moved into the same space. She remains a socialist and politically activist and is currently a Senior Lecturer in Social Policy at Ulster University.

Chapter 4.

Naming and claiming space

4.1 Introduction

Opening a space produced different practical considerations. There was the question of *where* the space should be, both in terms of its geographical location and what sort of building would be required. This usually meant sourcing funds for rent or mortgage costs, raising the issue of what ownership meant across different sites (Bresnihan and Byrne, 2015). Then, opening these spaces needed people to do the work of physically setting them up – prompting questions over whether this would be paid or voluntary labour. How these decisions were made varied across, and even within, different left-wing groups. In some cases, it was a question of necessity. For example, if some funding was more easily accessible than other means of financially sustaining the space, decisions might be made within these terms. In other instances, group members espoused a particular political vision for a space and sought to craft the physical infrastructure and labour of the site exclusively within that framework. Across the bookshops, unemployed workers' centres, and women's centres I explore in this chapter, those involved often negotiated these considerations simultaneously. This produced complex discussions over what it meant or should mean for left-wing groups to have a physical space at all. I argue that these decisions, and the conversations that produced them, intimately shaped the eventual spatial politics of each site, and the role of each space in crafting the political and social landscape of the left in 1980s Scotland. How this was negotiated produced unique and fluid processes of political subjectification, integral to the making of these spaces as infrastructures of solidarity. Consequently, this chapter is structured around a thematic analysis of space, funding, and labour. I endeavour to situate this within what has been identified by scholars as a long, if sometimes uneasy history of how radical action has interwoven forms of community, activism, and the local state. For example, Beveridge and Cochrane (2023) argue that there is a tendency to seek clear positions (or a combination, e.g. "in-against-beyond") vis-à-vis the state, and that it might be more useful to *unsettle* the notion of distinct boundaries between state and societal forces. My aim is to use these spaces as a means to action such an unsettling.

Thus, the first section explores how groups acquired their physical premises, and how they paid the rent and the running costs of each space. Often, there were a variety of sources of income that groups sought out to fund their respective spaces. These varied from state-based or institutional sources to more ad-hoc contributions. One women's centre was listed in *Wires,* a newsletter

produced by the Women's Liberation Movement, as "renting 3 small rooms for £10 a week, hopefully financed by donations, jumble sales, benefits & collections at meetings" (The WIRES Collective, 1975). In other instances, groups had access to existing infrastructure that enabled acquiring a premises to appear relatively straightforward, or at least one that was not remembered clearly by collective members. Carol Thomson, who had been involved in the Glasgow Women's Centre, told me that the centre "was just like, one big room. And I think it's the council that gave us the premises or something like that. And I don't know how long it had been there" (Interview with Thomson, 2021). For others, such as those involved in opening left-wing bookshops, questions of ownership and a space's operational structure were more pressing (Hogan, 2016, pp. 33–67). As such, the first section focusses heavily on the Lavender Menace bookshop in Edinburgh as a case study that draws some of these threads together.

The next section focuses on how these spaces were financed. Each space needed money to continue their work and this could be acquired in a variety of different ways, such as state funding or through fundraising. Bookshops, as expected, sold books and other related memorabilia to be able to invest money back into the shop. To what extent these bookshops were able, or desired to make a profit varied from shop to shop. This was also sometimes a point of contention between shops, which was coupled with how each group decided to organizationally structure their space. Bookshop collectives often had to make decisions on whether to operate as a cooperative, or a more standard business partnership – which in turn shaped how those organising in different bookshops might perceive one another. Money and funding were also key concerns for those involved in unemployed workers' centres and women's centres. Particularly in unemployed workers' centres, some of the interviewees I spoke to remembered vividly how they had to negotiate the constraints of government funding at an everyday level. This shaped their activities, but throughout this section I suggest that this was not necessarily always in a way that was constraining.

The final section focuses on questions of staffing and labour. Groups had to decide if they were going to create paid roles, how these would be funded, and who they would be allocated to. This prompted reflections within particular spaces over what it meant for them to hire and pay people for their time. The extent of this varied. Decision-making around what labour should be compensated, if any, held more political weight in some spaces than others. These discussions intersected with how those involved in unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops engaged with the role of the state, and my discussion of this builds on literature that captures this contested subjectivity (Joubert, 2023). Examining these infrastructures of solidarity reinforces Doreen Massey's assertion that you cannot take any space as given along the lines of a predetermined location or subjectivity (Massey, 2005). As such, I argue that interrogating

these sites is integral to any comprehensive study of the historical geographies of solidarity in 1980s Scotland.

4.2 Space

To form a space, groups needed to find a physical premises within which to set themselves up. This could mean opening an entire centre, with jurisdiction over a whole building, or it could mean renting out a room or two within a larger premises. The quest to find an appropriate location drew out different considerations across the Scottish left, depending on to what extent activists had access to existing physical infrastructure. Consequently, this section explores the work involved in sourcing the spaces of the left outlined in this thesis, and how this shaped their spatial politics.

Of the three case studies I examine, radical and lesbian and gay bookshops were the least likely to be able to access their premises through the arms of the local state. Consequently, there were more frequent discussions regarding the ownership of the spaces that bookshops were run out of. For example, formal lesbian and gay bookselling in Scotland in the 1970s and 1980s largely operated within existing networks of lesbian and gay organisations, who sought to open not only lesbian and gay centres, but also bookshops. In order to contextualise the work of opening these spaces, examining these broader networks is usefully revealing of their eventual infrastructural politics. Lavender Menace is an apt case study through which to examine these questions. The shop was opened by Sigrid Nielsen and Bob Orr in 1982, on Forth Street in Edinburgh (Interview with Orr, 2021). Bob and Sigrid had met through their involvement in the Open Gaze Collective, which was a sub-group of the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group (SHRG). The two left the collective in order to begin the project of Lavender Menace, first as a bookstall in the Edinburgh nightclub Fire Island, before later opening the shop itself.

Their departure from the SHRG was a combination of political disagreement and a desire for new beginnings. This can be contextualised within longer-term narratives of the progression of the SHRG's organising from their inception in 1969. A decade later, the Open Gaze collective was formally ratified as part of the SHRG on October 22nd, 1979, and their stated objectives were:

- *"To collectively run a bookshop owned by members of the Edinburgh Branch of the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group within the Gay Centre.*
- *To order, receive, sell, and account for various types of non-sexist gay and feminist literature and any other items which may be of interest to users of the Centre.*
- *To send out books etc to other organisations on an agreed basis.*

- *The proceeds of the operation of the bookshop will go to the running of the Centre as a whole."* (Open Gaze Collective, 1979)

Open Gaze had initially been established as a way to raise more money for the Edinburgh Gay Information Centre. The centre was part of a network of gay centres that were run and funded by SHRG members. The annual reports of the SHRG place a strong emphasis on the importance of securing premises. By the early 1980s, the group had established branches in Aberdeen, "Central Scotland", Cumbria and the Borders, Dundee, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, and Paisley (Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, 1980). In each branch report, members would comment on their progress towards setting up a gay centre in their respective localities. This desire is also present in their earlier papers, when they were previously named the Scottish Minorities Group (SMG). For example, the SMG 1977 Annual Report stated that, "Ever since the Glasgow branch has been in existence, the main ambition of the members has been to acquire premises" (Scottish Minorities Group, 1977a).

The group's primary source of funding was membership subscription fees. When local branches were looking to set up gay centres, they initiated local fundraising campaigns to supplement this. These were generally a successful way to generate income – in the July 1977 issue of SMG News, the collective thanked their 30 "sponsors" that had cumulatively raised £343 to date for the premises appeal, with one notable singular donation of £60 (Scottish Minorities Group, 1977b). Importantly, these local premises appeals were also necessitated by the group's national decision-making. At their 1976 AGM, the SMG had voted not to increase the membership fees. Instead, they would make cuts to local grants given to branches and replace these with fundraising socials or similar (Scottish Minorities Group, 1977a). This led to the aforementioned premises appeals that appeared throughout SMG News and similar during the late 1970s. However, the emergence of the Open Gaze collective suggests that perhaps this was not enough. The 1979 annual report showed that the group's annual surplus was only £13, on top of a deficit of £43 the previous year (Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, 1979). This was compared with their 1976/7 surplus of £198 (Scottish Minorities Group, 1977a). To balance the needs of local groups of the SMG/SHRG, along with its broader priorities, they needed to diversify their sources of income. This contextualises some of the initial planning behind the emergence of bookselling at the Edinburgh centre.

Alongside a drive to open lesbian and gay centres, on a national scale across Scotland, after the first SMG meeting in in 1969, the group's primary focus had been legal reform. The Sexual Offences Act (1967), which had decriminalised consensual homosexual acts in private between two men over the age of 21, had only applied in England and Wales. Consequently, some of the early members in the SMG articulated that this legal gap had been the catalyst for their entrance

into campaigning around gay rights. Ian Dunn, one of SMG/SHRG's active members noted that the 1967 Act "stung him" into action (Dunn, 2010, p,23). It would be 13 years until the same victory was achieved in Scotland, with the Criminal Justice Scotland Act, 1980. In both the 1967 Act and the 1980 Act, the crucial specification was that homosexual acts between two consenting men over the age of 21 would no longer be an offence when carried out *in private.* Both sets of legislation also stipulated that if three or more persons took part or were present; or if the act took place within a public toilet to which the broader public had access, they would no longer be considered private acts. Consequently, there were more convictions of homosexual men *after* the passing of the 1967 Act, due to the increased policing and surveillance of homosexual men in public space (Bengry, 2022, p.216; Kelliher, 2014).[11] Between 1966 and 1974, the number of prosecutions for "homosexual offences" (indecency, buggery, and attempted buggery) had increased by 55% (Cocks, 2016, p.279). Whilst the legal gap between England and Scotland spurred some like Ian Dunn into action, other gay men south of the border felt the legislation had little positive impact (Joyce, 2022, pp. 273–325).

Throughout this period, SMG/SHRG were broadly regarded as a middle-class, reformist organisation (Meek, 2015). Their legal reform efforts were closely intertwined with the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) in England and the Union for Sexual Freedom in Ireland (USFI) (Davidson and Davis, 2006). The CHE were a reformist organisation, often compared against their radical comparator, the Gay Liberation Front (Power, 1995). The differences between the two groups were visible, in terms of tactics, presentation, and modes of organising. But as Robinson (2011) helpfully points out, the dividing lines between them could be fairly arbitrary. Whilst the divergences in style did distinguish the CHE and GLF from one another, there were points of connection that activists with both organisations made use of. CHE were willing to publicise various GLF actions (even if they did not officially lend support) that meant members across both organisations could be involved in both groups (pp.79-80). Whilst undoubtedly some activists felt strongly that they were part of one and not the other, examining the day-to-day organising reveals a spatial fluidity between the two groups that reveals a critical solidarity (Massey, 1999, 2005).

Davidson (2004) notes that the 1957 Wolfenden Report, which included the recommendations that shaped the 1967 act, did not have the same effect on Scottish society at the time. Before 1974, SMG's focus was to lobby for an extension of the 1967 act to Scotland. However, from the mid-1970s onwards they moved on from an exclusively Scottish bill to campaigning more widely for an entirely new, more radical UK wide bill. Whilst this was initially in collaboration with the CHE and

[11] Bengry (2022) notes that in 2010 the government estimated that they held records for more than 50,000 cases of buggery and gross indecency, some 16,000 of which were for homosexual offences then proposed to be abolished. Yet only 522 people have applied for a government "disregard" over the past decade (as of November 2022), with only 208 succeeding.

USFI, Davidson and Davis (2006) chart how the united campaign had broadly lost momentum by the middle of 1975, in part due to a reported "obsession with process" on the part of CHE (p.540). This appeared to be an irritation that had been bubbling over for a long time, with the SMG chairman in 1973 writing to the CHE to reiterate that they agreed that "we need to meet together. But do we really need a 20-page consultation, a sliding scale set of fees…to achieve this" (Weeks, 1991). The campaign for a new, slightly more radical UK wide act ultimately did continue, if predominantly on Scottish soil. However, in 1979 the SHRG took on a new legal objective, which re-consolidated different cross-UK connections. When the Criminal Justice Scotland Act was originally tabled, the SHRG launched a campaign to oppose it. They produced leaflets entitled "Homosexuality, Arrested" and "Gay? Start Worrying" in order to raise awareness among the Scottish gay community regarding the implications of the bill for extending police powers and the remits of criminalisation. In the 1979 SHRG report that refers to these leaflets, they also thank the London branch of Gay Switchboard, one of the groups that grew from the dissolution of the GLF, for supporting them in setting up a 24-hour legal advice service across Scotland (Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, 1979). This demonstrates the how the legacies of collaborative organising between the GLF and reformist organisations such as CHE or SHRG developed even as the London GLF had formally dissolved.

The act eventually passed, with an amendment tabled by SHRG board member Robin Cook MP, to decriminalise homosexual acts in private between men above the age of 21 – which judging by their original opposition to the proposed powers of the bill, was more than unexpected.[12] The SHRG themselves admitted in their 1980 report that they had no idea law reform was to be so soon round the corner when completing their previous report. They emphasised that there could be "no one who could not thank" Cook and that whilst their law reform work had been still focussed on a potential joint bill sponsored by themselves and CHE, they were now to focus on Gay youth groups and centres in Glasgow and Edinburgh (Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, 1980). Within this context, it is possible to read the shift towards finding specific gay spaces as part of the group's broader awareness of the continuing criminalisation of homosexual life, despite some advances in the legislative context.

In the aforementioned 1980 report, the SHRG frame their move to focus on youth groups and spaces as a move towards more "educational" activities. Similarly, their largest grant request was to go towards their "befriending service." These services were generally hosted with some links to social work departments and other local state authorities – producing a particular archetype of gay socialisation and social life, that favoured the normalisation of homosexuality. After the 1967 Act in

[12] Some of the specifics of the bill were to – introduce 6-hour detention periods in police custody, allegedly for the purposes of questioning detainees; and the extended police powers with regard to alcohol in public spaces, such as football matches (Stoddart, 1983).

England, advertising in grassroots gay publications for friendly, romantic, or sexual activity among gay men could be legally risky. Cocks (2016) illustrates how segments of the Act were weaponised in tandem with the controversially vague common law offence of conspiracy to corrupt public morals in ways that further constricted homosexual male public life. Cocks highlights the case of R v. Knuller, where three people involved in the underground paper *International Times* were alleged to have committed this offence on the basis that the magazine facilitated "unlawful" sexual activity between men through its 'Males' small ads. The prosecution argued that, since the *International Times* was read by university students and perhaps some teenagers, that this evidenced a conspiracy to corrupt public morals by encouraging sex across the new age of consent boundaries – using examples such as an ad listing that stated, "Alert young designer, 30, seeks young, friendly, pretty boy under 23 who needs regular sex" (pp.267-69). Consequently, the legislation affected gay press and political activism as well as social and commercial spaces such as pubs and clubs, or public toilets as outlined in the specifics of the 1967 Act. As a result, the involvement of official state entities in the SHRG's befriending service could be read as a pre-emptive form of protection against similar persecution. However, doing things "officially" was rhetorically woven throughout the SHRG's own desires for legitimacy. In that same report in 1980, they proclaimed that they were no longer a "beleaguered and radical minority group" but rather the "nearest thing to a 'homosexual establishment' in Scotland" (Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, 1980: 3). The SHRG had observed the implications of the 1967 Act in England and Wales from afar. As the 1980 Act in Scotland was introduced, this experience shaped the terms on which they wanted to continue to organise and the spaces they were keen to construct as a result.

Charting the history of the SMG/SHRG produces a useful point of departure for research into their later organising and the landscape of queer political lives in Scotland. This chapter has so far has focussed on the trajectories of the SMG/SHRG in the aftermath of the 1967 Act, and their legal culmination in the form of the 1980 Act, in order to contextualise the political and legal currents from which Lavender Menace emerged. The bookshop's departure from the Edinburgh Gay Information Centre provided new opportunities for alternative models of LGBT social and political activities, and new opportunities for connection and solidarity. In the beginning, Bob and Sigrid rented a room for the shop from the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (SCRAM). Ross and Gibbs (2024) describe how SCRAM was the closest thing the anti-nuclear movement in Scotland had to a national organisation. They position SCRAM as emblematic of the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s in Scotland, drawing on insider member accounts that described it as a pluralistic organisation unified around a single issue. This was enabled partially by the makeup of its membership, as they assert 'at its heart SCRAM had a sophisticated and hardened group of middle-class young professionals with very high levels of cultural capital and capacity to organise' (p.9). SCRAM had rented two floors in a building on Forth street, so they

sublet the room that they set the bookshop up in. It was hard to find places, Sigrid said they "looked and looked and looked and looked…" Raymond asked Bob and Sigrid how they had managed to make that connection with SCRAM. It turned out that they knew one of the main people in SCRAM, whose girlfriend had been involved in the First of May, of which Sigrid had also been a member. These cross-movement connections enabled the invention of new spaces for political organising.

The bookshop also maintained some connections with parts of the SHRG. As previously mentioned, the Open Gaze Bookstall was established in 1979 by the Open Gaze Collective of the SHRG. Bob had been involved in the SMG since the early 1970s and he then met Sigrid when she joined the Open Gaze Collective in running the bookstall. I interviewed Bob, Sigrid, and Bob's partner Raymond Rose as a three in September 2021. The SMG/SHRG's social conservatism came to be exemplified through a row among the SHRG committee and Open Gaze regarding the stock of the bookstall. This was the event that precipitated Bob and Sigrid's departure from the centre, as they recalled:

"Sigrid: Well, I, there were two Christmas cards, one was done by my friend Joy Pitman. And it was, a poem about how, Mary felt that she'd been taken advantage of and, there was an illustration showing the hand of God, handing down a piece of paper that said child benefit. And the other one was a commercial card, and it said, the birth of a man who think he's God, is an everyday event… Bob: So, the committee decided they didn't like that. And, wanted to take over the buying policy…they thought the cards were blasphemous, so…" (Interview with Orr and Nielsen, 2021)

The religious aspect of this episode is interesting in view of the complicated relationship the SMG/SHRG had with religious institutions from their inception. Meek (2015b) demonstrates that, whilst there were overwhelming examples of opposition to homosexual law reform from major churches in Scotland, at an operational level the SMG/SHRG did maintain some productive and friendly relationships with key figures within different churches. The SMG's Ian Dunn established a liaison relationship with Reverend Ean Simpson of the Church of Scotland after SMG's first meeting in 1969. Consequently, the SMG rented space from the Church in Edinburgh, which formed their primary headquarters. However, Meek charts how this relationship became friendly but conditional, with Dunn severing the link as they felt the Church was monitoring group activities too closely. Interestingly, when this materialised in the group's eviction from the Church of Scotland premises they had been using, in 1971, the Roman Catholic Church stepped in and offered the group use of their building in George Square (Meek, 2015b: 611-612). A similar connection had been established between the group and the church a year prior, and this relationship carried on well into the 1980s, with representative speakers from the Roman Catholic church appearing at SHRG meetings. The greeting card event therefore perhaps represents a continuation of this

"conditional" feeling between the SMG/SHRG and religious institutions. Whilst the Edinburgh centre at this point was self-sustained through fundraising, membership dues, and the bookstall itself, the legacies of the Church's involvement in the spatial manifestations of the SMG/SHRG impacted how willing the group were to risk "blasphemous" jokes.

However, there was another element to Bob and Sigrid's departure from the Edinburgh Gay Information Centre that indicated another set of conflicting politics. Bob suggested that the card incident had been the thing the SHRG had "wanted to hang them on", providing a cover for what the trio felt to be the real reason that they had been targeted (Orr, 2021). Raymond recalled one of the final meetings of the SHRG that he had gone to at the centre, where one person had stood up and declared that "the centre had been infiltrated by Communists", which Raymond attributed to the collective's decision to sell the *Socialist Worker* newspaper (Interview with Rose, 2021).[13] This is indicative of the group's stance in contrast to more militant, revolutionary forms of gay liberation. The SMG/SHRG had continually differentiated themselves from the GLF for example. Ian Dunn noted that the group took a deliberate decision not to "pursue an all-out attack on capitalism and society, in the way that the Gay Liberation Front tried to do" (Dunn, 2010: 24). He associated this with their longevity, noting that he had only witnessed the GLF be active for three years in Edinburgh, "fading away in 1974."

Dunn's reflections on the place of the GLF in Scotland are interesting in the context of how similar ideas were operationalised against the Open Gaze Collective in 1981. The close of the London collective of the GLF in 1973 has prompted historiographical inquiry regarding the tactics and style of the front. Robinson (2011) notes that the loose structure of the GLF and competing political interests made it difficult to contain and therefore sustain – but also that these very qualities made it a transformative force that reshaped the public face of lesbian and gay politics in Britain. Similarly, many of the people involved in the GLF celebrated this facet explicitly. In the preface to an oral history of the GLF, Lisa Power (1995) notes that "I was not able to talk to every London GLF person (they were always people, not members, because GLF was a movement not an organisation – something the reformist groups could never quite grasp)" (pp. ix-x).

This distinction appears to hint at something organic and authentic about movements that reformist organisations were unable to replicate. This manifested in a more prescriptive model of what it meant to be part of a reformist organisation, which those like Dunn were willing to follow in exchange for a solid, permanent place in Scottish public life. Consequently, Lavender Menace occupies an interesting position in this same context, softening some of the boundaries between

[13] The *Socialist Worker* is the official newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), a British Trotskyist group. For a historical overview, see Burton-Cartledge (2014) alongside Allen (1985) for a contemporary, insider account of the paper.

radical and reformist organisations. The bookshop project was perhaps another way of establishing a sense of permanence, within different parameters to a more socially conservative SHRG. In an interview with Gay News, Sigrid noted that:

"An important part of a bookshop is that you're not forced into anything – not forced into buying or being gay in a particular way…politics are very necessary. Without them, we'd never had this bookshop. But doing something as ordinary as selling books which are also gay is an important way of reassuring people that being gay is a perfectly all right thing to be" (Hennegan, 1982).

Sigrid's reference to a "particular way" to be gay exemplifies some of the everyday ways in which the distinctions between revolution and reform played out within gay liberation movements and reformist organisations. The emphasis on the "ordinary" parts of gay life could be in reference to parts of the movement that simply wanted to normalise homosexuality, rather than expressing it as an explicitly counter-cultural lifestyle (see ch.3 of Robinson, 2011). However, given the context of hers and Bob's departure from the SHRG, the two had also encountered tensions with more reformist organisations. Therefore, it is possible to read Sigrid's musings as calling for genuinely expansive understandings of what it meant to lead lesbian and gay lives.

At this point it is useful to reiterate that Bob, Sigrid, and Raymond's exit from Open Gaze was not entirely antagonistic, not least because some members of SHRG played some part in getting Lavender Menace set up. When looking to legally set up the shop, Bob and Sigrid considered four different types of organisational structures for Lavender Menace. They sought legal advice from Hunter, Burns & Ogg, a law firm in Edinburgh, of which Derek Ogg of the SHRG was one of the founders. One of the options was a workers cooperative model, under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 and the Companies Act 1948. The advice noted that "cooperatives have not been particularly successful for commercial enterprises and there are certainly problems in trying to encourage members to take full responsibility. Since all members must usually agree with executive decisions, it is sometimes difficult for decisions to be taken quickly and this can affect the viability of a business" (Hunter Burns & OGG, 1982a). Additionally, there had to be at least seven signatories of "funder members" and a secretary – 6 more people than Bob and Sigrid had.[14] This option – alongside the other two proposed models, a limited liability company and a limited partnership – were not recommended to Bob and Sigrid as the way to set up Lavender Menace. Instead, the firm recommended that they go with a standard partnership, as set out by the Partnership Act, 1890. They proposed that this was an "extremely flexible type of organisation"

[14] The firm noted that a limited liability company was a "complicated" and "expensive" model with complex tax considerations which they did not think were justified in the case of a smaller business. For a limited partnership, there were not many of these in existence to draw examples from, and the ones that did exist demonstrated "disadvantages throughout" (Hunter Burns & OGG, 1982a)

with only government “guidelines” as to how the partnership should operate (Hunter Burns & OGG, 1982b). Whilst the individual partners would be liable for the debts of the partnership, the proposed advantage was that banks would be more willing to lend since the full commitment of the person involved is assured. Therefore Hunter, Burns & Ogg proposed it would be “very simple” to constitute a partnership” and that they would “strongly recommend” (Hunter Burns & OGG, 1982b). Bob and Sigrid took this advice and opened Lavender Menace under a partnership agreement.

Cooperatives occupied an interesting position in the labour movement and the wider left in the 1970s and 1980s. The Industrial Common Ownership Movement was established in 1971, which played an active role in the coordination of workers cooperatives across Britain. In terms of formally established cooperatives, their numbers increased more notably towards the end of the 1970s – in 1975 there were under 20 registered workers cooperatives, but by 1986 there were 1,200, employing 10-12,000 people (Mellor, 1994). However, throughout the 1970s, there were a number of nascent worker cooperatives that were tactically established in response to the threat of industry closures, usually in the aftermath of a long workplace occupation. Tuckman (2012) notes that along with workers occupations and “work-ins”, shop stewards and workers would sometimes strategically propose the idea of establishing cooperatives as a way in which to retain jobs. A notable example is within the motorcycle industry, after different mergers had created the Norton Villiers Triumph (NVT). In September 1973, the decision was taken to close the Meriden plant, risking 1,750 jobs. The plant was subsequently occupied, until the NVT came to an agreement with the occupiers regarding the establishment of a workers cooperative. They were able to access capital and assets, conditional on their profitable success as a cooperative. Enthusiastically supported by Tony Benn, Secretary of State for Industry at the time, the workers embarked on this project. Cornwell (2012) argues that cooperatives can open up “spaces of possibility” that offer the opportunity for multiple trajectories of governance and growth to convene together in a way that reconfigures the autonomy and power of workers away from capitalist models. Whilst the Meriden cooperative ultimately succumbed to its ills, it became a space through which workers could explore the possibility of production oriented around social need, rather than a drive for accumulation (Tuckman, 2012). It enabled workers to stay in their jobs rooted in the communities they lived in.

Worker cooperatives in Britain in the 1970s were ambitious forms of collective resistance to close and redundancy. They relied on often high densities of worker mobilisation. Gold (2004) situates them as part of attempts in the 1970s by workers to establish longer-term solutions to industrial disputes that aimed to totally reconfigure the relationship between management and workers. Gold examines cooperatives alongside work-ins and sit-ins, considering the relationship between them

and how one form might transition to another. Generally, he notes that cooperatives were not means to end – rather they were “ends in themselves” (p.88).

This admittedly would have been the inverse context to the one in which Bob and Sigrid were operating (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1980). The Federation of Radical Booksellers, in the first issue of their magazine *The Radical Bookseller,* celebrate the success of radical bookselling and publishing. They note there has been a “tremendous” revival of radical publishing, alongside a ‘new wave of radical and community bookshops.” Lowe (1988) suggests that actively pursuing a cooperative model can have transformative implications around the spatialities and temporalities of labour, particularly in gendered ways. Cornwell (2012) also touches on this in her conception of cooperatives as “spaces of possibility” – the freedom that workers have to decide their own work patterns releases them from an imbalance of power usually seen in employee-employer relationships. They were the predominant way that radical bookshops established themselves. The FRB advised their members that a worker cooperative was the way every FRB shop be operating, which then came to define what was or was not a radical bookshop (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1984d). However, this question of power, and who might be troubled by this shift in power, is useful for examining the Lavender Menace model. Whilst in the occupation and cooperative context, this was shaped by contestations around the relevant spaces of labour, this did not necessarily mean that cooperatives worried everyone. One example that illustrates this is the closure and subsequent cooperative reopening of the Tower Colliery in 1994. The Tower Colliery workers cooperative was supported by the then Secretary of State for Wales John Redwood, and subsequently cheeringly announced by Michael Heseltine at that year’s Conservative Party Conference (Anthony et al., 2002). This can be contextualised within the Conservatives’ vehement opposition to public ownership and nationalised industries. Sharing ownership out among “ordinary” people or “giving” nationalised industries to worker cooperatives was one vehicle through which the Conservatives could extend ownership (Francis, 2012, pp. 284–285). Thus, whilst Conservative support for workers cooperatives is not automatically demonstrative of any conservative cooperative underpinnings, it is conversely difficult to read Hunter, Burns & Ogg’s recommendation against them as necessarily indicative of a conservative legal position.

Nonetheless, the firm’s involvement and recommendation against a worker cooperative model connects to some interesting individual trajectories that are useful to consider in analysing what and *who* may have shaped the eventual space of Lavender Menace. As mentioned, Derek Ogg was a key legal figure within the SMG/SHRG and a founder of Hunter, Burns & Ogg. The perceptions of Ogg himself were varied. For example, the Economic League were a right-wing group of industrialists and financiers who were instrumental in collating information on trade union

and left-wing activists, enabling companies to use this information to blacklist potential employees (Chamberlain and Smith, 2015).[15] The League had recorded Ogg as an anarchist which he could only suggest was due to his editorship of a gay magazine that was sold in an anarchist bookshop (Fyfe, 2014). This was also particularly surprising, as Maria Fyfe MP pointed out in parliament, considering that Ogg had stood for election as a Conservative Party candidate in 1980 (Bochel and Denver, 1980; HC Deb*,* 17 May 1989).[16] Moreover, an anonymous interview with a Rape Crisis centre worker in Edinburgh mentioned seeing Ogg in court during her voluntary legal advocacy work with the centre. Her reaction was that "…it was Derek Ogg, was the Defence Advocate – he's a, (sigh) well he's a shit. He often defends rapists" (Anonymous, 2007). Thus, in and amongst the influence of the labour movement and the legal landscape in Scotland, the role of particular notable individuals cannot be disregarded in how they shaped the ways in which such spaces developed. This is particularly important for exploring the ways in which people in and around these spaces were able to form bonds of solidarity, or in cases where this would have been difficult – as exemplified by the perceived apparent lack of solidarity Ogg had for victims of sexual violence, and how this may have shaped any interaction with spaces he was seen to be involved in.

Bob and Sigrid ultimately took the firm's legal advice, with some amendments to the legal draft. In our interview, they reflected that this felt like their only option. They did not have enough people for a cooperative model, which needed 7 members, and they did not have enough people for a limited company, which required 3 signatories. With the partnership model, Bob and Sigrid were both liable for any debts if the business ceased to run. Bob noted that they were different from most other radical bookshops, who were "all collectives…there wasn't that incentive, [that] profit-making incentive or the fear of losing, of loss…they probably wouldn't even want to call it a business" (Interview with Orr, 2021). Despite this feeling of resignation, this did not stop them from trying to mould the final agreement in line with their political aims. One annotation on the draft structure stipulated that "neither party shall withdraw funds from a capital account without the written consent of the other" (Hunter Burns & OGG, 1982b). Sigrid also remembers crossing out the word profit every time it appeared throughout the first draft, before being reminded by the firm that they were "'going to have to run this shop? On money?' So, we got our eraser and signed the whole thing properly" (Interview with Nielsen, 2021). Her, Bob, and Raymond's own vision for the shop were threaded throughout the context of the left at the time, coalescing around the SMG/SHRG, the labour movement, and the feminist movement. These efforts highlight the everyday ways in which those involved in bookshops on the left sought to navigate the tensions

[15] The Economic League was formed between December 1919 and January 2020 by a group of employers' leaders, led by Conservative MP Sir Reginald Hall, with the objective of promoting the case for capitalism in the aftermath of the first World War. They sought to counter what they saw as widespread socialist and communist influence among the working classes – see McIvor (1988).

[16] On page 31 of the Scottish District Election Results 1980 report, Ogg is listed as the Conservative/Independent candidate for one of the Dunfermline districts, receiving 178 votes.

between opening a shop as a political project versus the reality of operating one as a commercial venture (Delap, 2016).

Lavender Menace represented an intriguing moment in the shifting spatialities of lesbian and gay public life in Scotland. The ways in which Bob and Sigrid came to the decision of where to open the shop, and with what ownership structure, suggests the benefit of deconstructing rigid boundaries between what represented liberatory or reformist pursuits when it came to opening spaces. As Massey continuously reaffirms, we should take no space as given or predetermined based on a rigid imaginary of what it means to exist in a particular location, or as evidence of particular ideas (Massey, 2013, 2005). Even within the forms of ownership typically represented as one or the other, a closer examination reveals the complex trajectories that historically situate their previous articulations, such as in the case of workers cooperatives. In the next section, I illustrate how questions of funding further disrupted rigid ideas of what it meant to build infrastructures of solidarity.

4.3 Funding

Unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and bookshops on the left all needed money to sustain themselves. At the bare minimum, activists had to cover the rent and running costs of their space. To varying degrees, there were also salary costs to factor in for the workers in each space, the negotiations around which I discuss in more detail in the next section. In the case of bookshops and bookstalls, there was a need for a flow of cash from which to purchase stock to sell, which prompted internal questions among bookshop collectives regarding how to manage profit and loss. With unemployed workers' centres and women's centres, there were often additional opportunities for these spaces to access pots of funding, usually administered by the local state. This would provide money for activities and services to be based within the centre premises. Carrying on from the previous section on space, I now turn to discuss the funding routes accessed by the centres and shops I explore in this thesis, and how this shaped the political activity and solidarities enacted in each space.

Bookshops theoretically had some access to government grants. The Federation of Radical Booksellers (FRB) noted in their handbook *Starting a Bookshop* that the most likely source of major grant funding would be the Arts Council of Great Britain. They describe how to access this fund, and who it made sense to contact. In terms of more local funding, they noted that a great deal depended on the specific local authority a bookshop was operating in. According to the Art Council's annual accounts, Lavender Menace received £500 from them in the financial year 1985/86 (The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986). Relatedly, in 1978 the government established

a national Cooperative Development Agency (CDA) which then developed into local agencies with the view to support new and existing cooperatives in securing funding and train workers within individual cooperatives (Cornforth, 1984).

Different left-wing, feminist, and lesbian and gay bookshops had varying relationships with profit and loss when it came to selling their books. Usually, the way in which this was structured was linked to the decisions they made around paid labour within the shop. The bookshops I highlight in this thesis were members of the FRB, which set out in their constitution that members were "not expected to distribute any profits for personal gain beyond a fair wage for shop workers" (Federation of Radical Booksellers (Great Britain), 1984). In the case of Lavender Menace, Bob and Sigrid opened the shop whilst working in other jobs to sustain themselves. Until 1983, Bob worked for the Scottish and Northern Book Distribution cooperative, which also fostered connections when Bob and Sigrid were ordering books for Lavender Menace. After this, Sigrid and Bob told me that they both "went on the dole for a year" before beginning to pay themselves through the shop income, with their wages set at the benefit rate (Interview with Orr and Nielsen, 2021). They insinuated that this might have been variable across their employees. Sigrid mentioned that one of the shop workers was "paid more than either of us ever was…we wanted to pay him fairly" (Interview with Nielsen, 2021). Their decisions suggest efforts to maintain a balance paying themselves a "fair wage" as shop workers, whilst also recognising that there was a difference between the two of them as the legal partners in comparison to the other workers in the shop.

On the whole, unemployed workers' centres appeared to have the most consistent access to local state funding, compared to women's centres and bookshops. There was a greater existing integration of trade unions within state structures. The anti-trade union rhetoric and legislation imposed by Thatcher's government had worked to unravel this. However, the ways in which this maintained at a local level is evidenced by the role of spaces such as unemployed workers' centres, providing new ways to reassess the "decline" of trade unions into the 1980s. This was a complex negotiation within the landscape of the left as it transformed in the 1980s, particularly with regard to how received local state funding was negotiated. As outlined in chapter one, unemployed workers' centres emerged out of the trade union movement's concerns regarding unemployment rates in the late 1970s and into the early 1980s. The first of the centres across Britain was opened in Newcastle in 1978, with Scotland's first unemployed workers' centre opening in 1982 (Clark, 1987). Each centre had access to regional authority funding. In the case of the Glasgow centres, they received some of their funding from Strathclyde Regional Council, which was Britain's largest local authority (Young, 1987). Keith Stoddart, who was the coordinator of Govan unemployed workers' centre from 1982-1986 recalled that the local authority was:

"Quite an innovative, a very progressive council, massive redistribution of services…I remember talking to…the social work convenor for Strathclyde, and he'd just come back from a conference in Portugal…and was quite tickled to be able to tell us that eh the social work budget for Strathclyde Regional Council was greater than Portugal's defence budget." (Interview with Stoddart, 2021).

The Scottish Trade Unions Congress' (STUC) had tasked local trades councils with finding and securing funding for local unemployed workers' centres. Each centre had five key aims as set out by the STUC, which were:

"1. The Centres' staff should provide the unemployed with information and advice, specifically in welfare rights, job search skills and representation at industrial tribunals.
2. Staff should encourage the development of facilities to allow groups of unemployed to interact with each other through actively participating in social, recreational, and educational activities.
3. The recently unemployed should have some facility whereby they could establish or maintain trade union contact.
4. Staff at the Centres should promote the development of employment schemes.
5. Staff should actively seek unemployed concessions, particularly in relation to recreational and transport services." (Allison et al., 1986)

These objectives highlight some of the key concerns historically attributed to growing unemployment. Overall, there had been a steady rise in the number of unemployed people in Britain since the mid-1960s (Massey and Meegan, 2014). Even at times where figures had stabilised, the comparison between Scotland and the rest of the UK was stark. In the post-war years, unemployment in Scotland was approximately twice the UK average (Brown, 1989). The later acceleration in these rates towards the end of the 1970s was keenly felt in social and emotional terms in communities across the country. In July 2021, I interviewed George Kirkpatrick, who was the coordinator of the unemployed workers' centre in Drumchapel. He recalled speaking to a friend about the impact of job losses, after two key employers, Beattie's Biscuit factory and the Goodyear and Singers factories, closed down in 1978 and 1979 respectively:

"[The friend] stayed right at the top of the hill in Drumchapel…and she says, 'George when I first came here, I used to go up early in the morning, six 'o' clock in the morning…and I'd sit here with a cup of coffee and you'd see the lights coming on, over, right over the scheme…and then by sort of half 7/8 o' clock, all the lights would be on.' She says, 'now I get up, and I look, and there a light goes on over there, and a light goes on over there, and there's a light, and she can pick [them] out." (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

These reflections accentuate some of the spatialities of job losses, especially those that extend beyond the bounds of the closed workplaces (Featherstone and Griffin, 2016). George and his friend could visually identify how redundancies had affected Drumchapel. The collective mourning of the industries that had shaped the housing scheme was felt in the everyday rhythms of everyone there, even those who had not lost their job, such as George's friend. The broader economic processes that produced such stark levels of unemployment could be felt viscerally and emotionally in the everyday geographies of people's lives. The advent of spaces such as unemployed workers' centres as a form of infrastructural resistance is accounted for both as a response to these developments, but also as a potential to realise a renewed form of politics characterised by newer forms of left-wing organising.

This is perhaps most acute through the ways in which the STUC unemployed workers' centre objectives highlight how unemployment was also an issue of welfare. The importance of social, recreational, and educational activities was crucial in order to maintain a sense of community, one that might have been vulnerable to being emotionally lost in the way described in the quote. This was articulated as something different from the direct local authority initiatives around welfare and unemployment. Strathclyde Regional Council employed Welfare Rights Officers, established Special Joint Initiatives, with district authorities, and placed newspaper advertisements encouraging benefit uptake, maximising the number of claimants (Stewart, 2009, p. 123). The various coordinators of and activists involved in the unemployed workers' centres that I spoke to, spoke most strongly of the social, political, and cultural activities that the funding they received enabled them to do. This was in contrast to a lesser emphasis on the administrative functions of helping people find work. Whilst this was listed as a core objective of unemployed workers' centres, those I spoke to were more interested in recounting the social, political, and cultural activities in each centre, rather than their services related to benefits advice. The regional authority funding was structured around particular objectives, but in practice this could facilitate a much broader set of activities.

Additionally, there were other trends in unemployment rates that were a concern to trade unionists and community development workers. Between 1960 and 1980, unemployment amongst young people had risen almost four times as fast amongst the working population as a whole (Peck, 1980). Peck (1980), who was chair of the committee of careers advisors, worried regarding the expansion of youth unemployment, particularly on social and moral grounds. He described long-term unemployment as "forced leisure" and that those who are most likely to have leisure "thrust upon them are those most unlikely to develop new sources of self-respect outside work" (p.5). The age of those experiencing unemployment also shaped how likely it was they would be to stay unemployed. Phillips' (2022) account of the moral economy of the UCS work-in notes that the initial

mass redundancies in 1969 and 1970 “aged” the UCS workforce. Most of the redundant workers had been under the age of 40, as the redundancy programme has focussed on those with two years or less of continuous service, and then on those with five or less years (p.19). This strengthened the support for the eventual work-in, as Herron's (1972) contemporary study of the work-in demonstrated that the likelihood of redundant workers finding alternative employment decreased in line with rising age. Keith described to me how this was experienced in emotional terms:

“Most people had a positive relationship with their journeyman...a positive influence...discipline, if you affected his bonus...you learnt a work discipline, and a trade union discipline… [it was] a major part of making me, me. My father died when I was 14, I reckon I could’ve been a wee bit haywire. Going into a workplace as a boy made you view the world differently; you were part of something bigger than you.” (Interview with Stoddart, 2021)

Concerns around the relationship between age and unemployment reflected the potential loss of access to infrastructure and the material, social and emotional support this entailed. Unemployed workers’ centres aimed to be a way to combat this.

Consequently, trades councils needed to secure funding for premises and staff to be able to sustain the new centres. Since the centres were established through the channels of the STUC, they had a representative function through the management committee. Generally, each centre’s committee would have around 6 unemployed delegates (from the centre), 2 trades council representatives, and, depending on how each centre was funded, 2 district and/or regional council representatives (Interview with Kirkpatrick and Stoddart, 2021). Across Britain, the primary ways in which unemployed workers’ centres accessed funding was through either the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) or the Urban Programme, more commonly known as Urban Aid. The MSC was created by the Employment and Training Act 1973, and it lasted until its transformation into the Training Commission in 1988. As a quasi-non-governmental organisation (QUANGO), it endured successive Labour and Conservative governments under Harold Wilson, James Callaghan, and Margaret Thatcher, evolving in the face of changing political priorities and labour market conditions (Ainley and Corney, 1990). The goals of the scheme were expansive. For example, the Youth Opportunities Programme meant that the MSC shaped the voluntary sector, churches, and trade unions (Brown, 1989).

However, the STUC did not have an easy relationship with MSC processes and structures. By 1987, the MSC was perceived as a highly centralised body that was unaffected by the input of Scottish-specific committees from trade unions, voluntary organisations, or education services that

consistently argued that their conception of education training was not relevant to Scotland (Brown and Fairley, 1987). Bill Spiers, former general secretary of the STUC, recalled the frustration of having to cooperate with the MSC "in circumstances where it seemed it was being used to implement government labour market policies with which the movement was in fundamental disagreement" (Spiers, 1989: 186). Consequently, whilst the MSC provided 86.4% of the funding for unemployed workers' centres in South Wales for example, they provided only 7% of the funding for unemployed workers' centres in the whole of Scotland (Forrester and Ward, 1990: 391).

Instead, 39% of Scottish unemployed workers' centre funding came from local authority funding, and 39% came from Urban Aid. The Urban Aid programme was introduced across Britain in 1968. Unlike the MSC's Sheffield headquarters, grant applications across Scotland were adjudicated through the Scottish Office (Robertson, 2014). It had been legislated by the Local Government Grants (Social Need) Act 1969, which empowered the Secretary of State to give grants "to local authorities who in his opinion are required in the exercise of any of their functions to incur expenditure by reason of the existence in any urban areas of special social need" (Taylor, 1988: 205). Consequently, local authorities would bid for individual projects, either on their own behalf or on behalf of voluntary or community groups. This sparked some Conservative criticism on what they viewed as a form of paternalism on the part of local authorities. Anthony Steen, Conservative MP for Liverpool Wavertree, asserted in parliament that the fact that the government would not pay successful applicant voluntary bodies directly was indicative of their view that the "people cannot be trusted" (HC Deb, 4 December 1975). The coordinators of some of the Glasgow unemployed workers' centres did articulate problems with the involvement of the state in their funding, but this was more likely to be articulated at a Scottish Office or UK government level than in the way Steen suggests. George remembered how this felt at an operational level:

"The unemployed workers' centres during that time, er were funded [by] Urban Aid which was a Scottish Office…British government initiative. So, everything's coming through the Scottish office so you're, you werenae quite working for the Tories but, there, was, it was attached to their money…they didnae want us to take part in political activity." (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

The prohibition on taking part in political activity with Urban Aid funded work was not only identified by unemployed workers' centres. The FRB's handbook warned member bookshops to "bear in mind however, that anything that smacks of the 'political' is likely to set alarm bells ringing, either at the local authority or later at the [Department of the Environment]" (Federation of Radical Booksellers (Great Britain), 1984, p.109). This perceived surveillance from the Scottish Office shaped the ways in which the centres could operate. George's above reflections were in the context of the people of Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre's excursion to Faslane with a

banner from the centre. The group wanted to join the march in solidarity with those at the peace camp. They did so, but not without altering where they stood in the procession so that they could avoid being photographed, for fear that someone would “sent it to the Scottish Office.” These fears were not unfounded – an unexpected shift in the day’s order of procession meant the Drumchapel unemployed workers’ centre contingent ended up ironically at the front of the march. This resulted in a phone call to George from the town council to chastise him for taking part in political activity.

It is important to note that constraints on political campaigning were not equally felt across Scotland and Britain more widely. The Nottinghamshire miner Brian Lawton referred to London unemployed workers’ centres as “like little soviets” for their core involvement in supporting the 1984-5 miners’ strike (Kelliher, 2021a, p. 74). Additionally, Bob Goupillot told me that he initially got involved in Edinburgh unemployed workers’ centre through his involvement in his local miners’ support group (Interview with Goupillot, 2021). Griffin (2023b) asserts that to write a singular history of unemployed workers’ centres would be inaccurate, precisely because many centres took divergent paths in their use of space and approach to funding. The various negotiations of different centres further evidence Massey’s assertion of the importance of a politics of location, reemphasising that the spatial politics of each space cannot be taken as given by virtue of its locality or overhead structures (Massey, 2022b, 2013).

To George, he was able to look back at the episode with the Scottish Office and joke about it in the interview – noting that “you had to [take part in political activity], but you generally got a kick, but it was worth it.” The impact of a “kick” was nothing in comparison to the duty to demonstrating solidarity with other campaigns and spaces. However, in some cases the consequences for centres could be more serious. An unemployed workers’ centre in Musselburgh ended up under investigation from the local council’s director of finance after claims the centre was being used by “anti-poll tax campaigners” (The Herald, 1990). The poll tax context is interesting, given that the STUC’s position was against the poll tax, but also against non-payment (Gibbs, 2016). Consequently, since unemployed workers’ centres were constitutionally affiliated with the Scottish trade union movement, this was perhaps an area in which where the stakes were higher than a “kick”, since visiting Faslane was more likely to be in line with the STUC position compared with non-payment. Bob told me about one instance where he and another activist within the Edinburgh unemployed workers’ centre went to speak about the centre at a trade union annual general meeting and consequently received an apology from the rep that had invited them, after they were mocked by other trade union members who used terms such as “scroungers” (Interview with Goupillot, 2021). Consequently, engaging with the structures of the STUC and the wider labour movement could be one way to access resources, but at times they also played a disciplining role in the functioning of these centres by way of their integration into the local structures of the state.

Nevertheless, both examples highlight the ways in which centre users and coordinators felt literally and figuratively constrained by funding that was available to them. Whilst these issues certainly did not always stop anyone from taking part in political activity or acts of solidarity, these reflections suggest that the culture of scrutiny had the potential to shape the terms on which these relations and activities were formed. Highlighting the structure and funding of unemployed workers' centres in this way is revealing of the ways in which each space was able to navigate different political constraints. Like Lavender Menace, they operated within a balance of individual trajectories and the influence of local and national state apparatuses. How individuals who worked and volunteered in each space navigated these complex trajectories is the focus of the final section.

4.4 Labour

Each space ran on a mix of paid and voluntary labour. As outlined in the previous section, Lavender Menace employed a number of paid workers other than Bob and Sigrid over the 4 years that they were open. What to pay workers could often be a point of tension for radical bookshops. Despite their assertion that no member of a bookshop collective should disproportionately gain from the revenue of a shop, the FRB handbook noted that "ironically enough, many radical bookshops are only able to survive by paying their workers little or nothing in the way of wages. Would be booksellers should be aware that even the large and more successful shops in the FRB are often paying laughably low wages – except that this is, in the long term, no laughing matter!" (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1984d, p.115). Low, or no wages were even positioned as a point of compromise. For example, if a shop wanted to "support local campaigns from [their] profits, [they] may not be able to pay wages" (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1984, p. 141). The FRB therefore sought to suggest some ways that bookshops could combat the problem of low wages. Notably, the two methods that were highlighted were, collective members could live with someone else who would informally subsidise the low paid bookshop worker, or that worker could register as unemployed and draw from either unemployment or supplementary benefit. The latter suggestion was taken up by Greg Michaelson, who volunteered at the First of May. He told me:

"It didn't occur to me to try and get a job. You know, it was in the days when dole was quite good, housing benefit was quite high, they didn't harass you. So didn't occur to me to try and get work it only occurred to me to get involved in activist things. So, I volunteered at the First of May" (Interview with Michaelson, 2021)

Greg positions housing benefit and being "on the dole" as a key factor in his being able to volunteer at the First of May. The role that state benefits played in enabling people to be active within

infrastructures of solidarity produced a complex set of negotiations. Bob and Sigrid had also received benefits while working to set up Lavender Menace and for part of its first year of existence. Whilst the shop did later constitute their paid employment, their initial period on benefits, and Greg's decision in relation to volunteering at the First of May, can be read as a partial resistance to Thatcher's moves to dismantle the welfare state more broadly. In 1979, the Conservative manifesto promised that on election they would "restore the incentive to work" (Grover, 2022, p. 4). The idea of the heavy-handed state as a constraint of economic prosperity was invoked throughout the Conservatives' industrial and welfare policy. The sharp reduction in industrial employment from 1979-1981, for example, was partially blamed on too high wages and inefficiency, but also on too high benefits (Tomlinson, 2021, p. 629). Consequently, segments of the left explicitly identified using state benefits to be full-time activists as politically strategic forms of resistance. As Bob told me:

"So, there was a lot going on, it was great actually when I look back on it now, because at that point – you could just about get by on the dole. And Housing Benefit just, just about if you were canny with your money, well I'm from Yorkshire so I am canny…you could just about get by, so I was a full-time political activist paid for by the state." (Interview with Goupillot, 2021)

From Bob's reflections, we can see the uneasy boundaries between who, or what spaces, were perceived as taking state funding. Whether taking state money was seen as reformist, or subversive, was heavily contested. In unemployed workers' centres, paid workers were established from the start, as part of the resourcing towards unemployment initiatives provided by regional authorities and the trade union movement. From this, we can envision some of the ways the STUC and the broader labour movement could play a disciplining role in the function of the centres. This was sometimes replicated within the interactions between those involved in the unemployed workers' centres and employed trade union members – such as Bob's reflections on going to speak at a trade union branch meeting.

Women's centres were usually initiated by a collective, the majority of which undertook to work a rota on a volunteer basis. Bruley (2016) assumes that this collective mindset would usually translate to hierarchical ways of working after a time, "mirroring" the broader movement. For the women's centre in Glasgow, this shifted from collective to collective, whilst also being contingent on the availability of funding for paid workers. The centre hired workers in different phases, firstly through MSC job creation schemes, and then through a research grant from the Equal Opportunities Commission (Breitenbach, 1990). The EOC was a non-departmental public body set up as a result of the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. Its remit was to tackle sex discrimination and promote gender equality across society. The EOC aimed to ensure that the Sex Discrimination Act

and Equal Pay Act were enforced in the workplace – those who felt unfairly treated could therefore take their complaints to the EOC. In some instances, WLM members imagined that their EOC funding applications would be more successful if they had a "formal" organisation and a potential premises to operate out of. Esther Breitenbach, who was the Glasgow women's centre paid worker from 1978 to 1979, told me that "Of course it is the case that having some sort of formal organisation and an office location would have been essential to the success of the women involved with the Centre in getting a grant from the EOC. So, without the Centre, my research post would not have existed" (Breitenbach, 2021).

Nevertheless, some centres found that these grants were difficult to apply for. The Oxford women's centre noted in one issue of *Wires,* one of the journals of the WLM, that they "would like to hear from any women's centre who has applied for a grant with the Equal Opportunities Commission. We have just got the forms which are very complicated, so it seemed like a good idea to ask around for some experienced advice" (The WIRES Collective, 1978). There was a diversity of experience among centre collectives. This ranged from involvement in the WLM or other grassroots women's movements in the 1960s and 1970s, to institutional knowledge from working in related paid roles. The latter could be recognised the ways in which they were advised to fund themselves at a local level, especially when it came to paid labour. In Brighton the WLM chapter secured an abandoned maternity hospital in Buckingham Road in 1974 from social services with a £6,000 grant towards renovation with the idea that the women's centre would reduce the load of social workers (Bruley, 2016).

Bruley suggests that some of these funding influences were due to how the work in these centres was perceived. For example, if women's centres were to be largely the provision of information and resources, taking on more of the grassroots and consciousness-raising model, then it was possible to run on a voluntary and collective basis. If education and training, and "serious" inter agency case work with social services, police, medical personnel, and others, were to take place, then "serious" funding was required. Ultimately, what was deemed to be the "serious" work that the state was filling to fund, was work that was being withdrawn elsewhere. What work was able to be sacrificed, or run by unpaid activists, drew out financial hierarchies in what was deemed to be worthy of compensation. It prompts a complex set of reflections. Whilst many did not seek to be paid for the consciousness-raising work they took part in, nor was that ever a movement goal, the valuing of other work over these practices could have been difficult to reckon with. The less tangible work, which was less able to be professionalised, was maligned in favour of work that could create value somewhere else (Bhattacharya, 2017; Laslett and Brenner, 1989).

Women's centres did maintain some level of autonomy over who worked for them, and what work they wanted those paid workers to prioritise. Brent women's centre listed the following ad for a "feminist worker" at the centre in 1978:

"Brent Women's Centre needs a feminist worker (part time 20 hours per week) wages £30 p.w. The centre is open all-day Thursday plus some evenings and one Sunday afternoon a month…the new worker will work in close conjunction with the women already active at the centre. We need an energic and caring feminist worker to help us set up our new projects, such as a 3-week summer school. Regular one off educationals/films. Other centre activities include [a] socialist feminist group, C.R., women's aid group, self-defence, play group, bike riding/maintenance, support, and sisterly gathering." (The WIRES Collective, 1978b)

As a result, there was perhaps a degree of pragmatism in what needed to be proposed to accept the funding, compared to what centres would actually pay their workers to do. This also relied on the presumption that there was enough money to adequately pay staff at all, a concern that was unsurprisingly not unique to women's centre. The later editions of the *Federation of Radical Booksellers* newsletter conclude a number of submissions from member bookshops, concerned over the future of their shops. Where a shop employed paid staff, this was one of the first sites of contention. York Community Bookshop wrote into the newsletter to lament that a lot of the solutions they had already explored, "run completely counter to most of our principles, but our dilemma is, as usual, that we also believe that there should be a radical bookshop in York. Is very small very beautiful? Or does it just exploit the workers?" (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1984).

Paid workers, for some collective participants, could also signal something about which subjectivities were valued in certain spaces. This could replicate tensions that existed within those sections of the left. With the WLM, this was one of the ways in which the intersection of race and gender might be made spatial (Thomlinson, 2012). For example, in one oral history project with former members of local Bradford WLM groups, interview participants described a very tense period in the local scene after a controversial decision was made in to appoint two white women to the paid posts of a newly established women's centre - which they thought had signalled to people it was a white women's movement (Lockyer, 2013). In this example, the introduction of paid labour to a centre was indicative perhaps of the space, and the movement, being ascribed a level of legitimacy and importance.

Consequently, the terms on which that happened were important. This suggests there were varying, and sometimes competing, views on what the introduction of paid labour to these spaces was seen to represent. For some, these were practical and necessary roles, that allowed some

members of the collective to take on duties that ensured the administration and operation of the space, and the movement. Conversely, as spaces grew in members and capacity, the scarcity of funding and expansion of the different groups of people that might utilise a space, enabled the conversation around paid labour and spatial politics to expand. This is interesting in relation to other accounts of how paid workers, political officials, and councillors navigated the balance between grassroots politics and the crafting of local state projects. Joubert (2023) explores what he terms “activist-state work”, outlining the everyday labour behind transformations in urban governance. This term refers to the work of radical councillors and staff members, as they struggled to assert political agency against institutional bureaucracy, while simultaneously navigating competing personal subject-positions. He suggests that the practices and subjectivities within this work complicate the boundaries between “officialdom and activism”, troubling any rigid boundaries between the state and civil society. Also, it is interesting to think through this in relation to a blurring of lines between paid work and activist labour, and how this led to personal and emotional tensions – which is theoretically expanded upon in chapter six.

4.5 Conclusion

The central argument of this chapter is that in order to understand the spatial politics of solidarity, it is crucial to interrogate the infrastructural negotiations that are produced through crafting left-wing spaces, such as unemployed workers’ centres, women’s centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops. The process(es) of crafting infrastructures of solidarity reveal how left-wing activists negotiated questions of space, funding, and labour in ways that did not always map neatly onto the proposed aims of the centre or bookshop in question. The insights gleaned from these infrastructures of solidarity reinforce Doreen Massey’s assertion that you cannot take any space as given along the lines of a predetermined location or subjectivity (Massey, 2005). The overlapping, and sometimes contested, political trajectories that shaped how particular spaces were established, reveals the expansive terrain in which these spaces were operating (Massey, 2007). I propose a hopeful reading of this, emphasising the myriad possibilities of solidarity that are uncovered through revealing the broader landscape that these sites existed within (Featherstone et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the spaces I explore in this chapter both complement and expand understandings of “local socialism” in pluralistic ways that go beyond the bounds of municipal institutions (Cooper 2017). Those involved in unemployed workers’ centres, women’s centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops had varying levels of involvement with regional authorities. The ways in which these interactions were negotiated complicate hard boundaries regarding what activist work is done in/against the state (Wheeler, 2021). To pay attention to these processes produces a deeper understanding of how solidarity is spatially affected. The different ways in which groups were able

to establish spaces had tangible effects on how they were able to act politically and also how they were perceived in the broader context of the left. Yet in this chapter, I argue that whilst at times infrastructural constraints could be challenging to navigate, they also produced new configurations of solidarity and resistance (Featherstone, 2012).

The different ways that those involved in infrastructures of solidarity negotiated establishing these spaces opened up a range of possibilities. At times, this initiated some tension among those working within or across various sites on the left during this period. In the next chapter, I unthread the different relationships that were implicated in building these infrastructures and the politics of building solidarity across difference more broadly.

Chapter 5.

Space and difference

5.1 Introduction

"So yes…gay space it's, it's a bit more fluid than perhaps people might have imagined." (Interview with Rose, 2021)

"We began to meet as 'Edinburgh Books Collective in December 1975. We were – and still are – a group of women and men involved in the left movement, and with our own 'communities' (i.e., gay, women, community, other). Nevertheless, we share a common desire: to set up a left bookshop…" (First of May Collective, 1977)

In the summer of 1977, the Edinburgh Books Collective opened the First of May bookshop on Niddry Street in the centre of Edinburgh. This was the culmination of nearly two years of organising around opening a physical premises for the group. Whilst collective members recalled a Communist party bookshop existing at the same time, they described the First of May as the first, "non-sectarian" left-wing bookshop in Edinburgh (Interview with Michaelson, 2021).[17] To them, this meant presenting and selling books from a variety of left-wing traditions of political thought. As the First of May collective made plans to open their premises, there were concurrent efforts from other groups on the left in Edinburgh to begin bookselling as a form of revenue. As described in the previous chapter, in 1976, Scottish Minorities Group (SMG) members Bob Orr and Sigrid Nielsen set up a bookstall in Edinburgh's gay information centre, which was the beginning of the path to Lavender Menace, opened by Orr and Nielsen in 1982. Previously, Sigrid had also been a volunteer for the First of May and subsequently other bookshop collective members helped to construct the Lavender Menace premises – building shelves, doing the wiring, and assisting with the general setup of the shop. Whilst some were involved in one and not the other, many of the people involved in the network of left-wing bookselling organised across a number of different shops. These overlapping encounters, aims, and relations produced the networks of solidarity that shaped the social and physical infrastructure of each space (Kelliher, 2019).

[17] "Non-sectarian" in the context which Greg was describing means not aligned to any particular left-wing party or group i.e. the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), or a Trotskyist group such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Importantly, the tensions that sometimes emerged from these encounters also circulated across the network. This was replicated across the other sites I explore in this thesis, such as unemployed workers' centres and women's centres. Each space existed in the broad landscape of the Scottish left in the 1980s. Some sought to cater for a broad range of groups and political ideologies, whereas some revolved specifically, or exclusively, around particular subjectivities. This chapter explores how this was negotiated throughout the day-to-day running of each site, particularly within the context of the broader networks each space was situated within. In the first oral history interview I conducted during the thesis research, I spoke to Greg Michaelson, who had been a volunteer in the First of May bookshop. While we were discussing the relationship between the First of May and Lavender Menace, he told me, "This was never stated, but I think, you know, the gay people around the bookshop felt strongly they wanted a separate gay space, which was a) absolutely fine and b) awful" (Interview with Michaelson, 2021). This complicated emotional articulation of how some aspects of navigating difference across these spaces could be absolutely fine, and simultaneously not fine at all, provides a key grounding for this chapter.

The first section begins by historically situating the different political groups and subjectivities that formed the New Left in the 1970s and 1980s. Their emergence contextualises some of the formalised networks that sought to link particular spaces together – such as the Federation of Radical Booksellers, that offered membership to a range of radical, feminist, and lesbian and gay bookshops. From this, I discuss spaces connected through less visible networks, particularly as created through personal contact – in turn, examining how these formal and informal networks interacted with one another. I examine the structures and encounters that produced and sustained these networks, contending that the spaces themselves, and the networks they were part of, mutually shaped and reproduced one another. Rather than the networks and political movements producing particular spaces in a one-way flow, the relationship between these spaces as nodes within a larger nexus was agentic and reciprocal (Featherstone et al., 2012). I then attend to the personal relationships that were woven throughout more formalised networks. I contend that these were equally as important in sustaining connections of support and communication, whilst sometimes operating in spite of broader institutional tensions. I close the chapter with a discussion of how these trajectories coalesced around separate spaces, in particular on the grounds of gender. Overall, through this chapter I propose that key sites, such as unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops, are illuminating case studies through which to understand the negotiation of solidarity across difference in the 1980s in Scotland. Studying such sites produces a more fluid understanding of how different groups interacted, in particular spaces and more broadly (Massey, 1999). Far from a romanticised picture of organising without conflict, I suggest that this framing allows us to (spatially) hold the tensions of difference

together alongside moments of coalescence, complementing theorisations of a more critical, generative solidarity (Featherstone, 2012; Gilmore, 2007).

5.2 Networks of solidarity

Bookshops, women's centres, and unemployed workers' centres all existed within networks of other similar spaces. Some of these networks leave behind a concrete materiality that points to their existence – membership lists, a constitutional agreement, regular meetings of network members, and promotional material such as posters and leaflets. These materials contribute to one archive of these networks, one that perhaps helpfully draws out the acts of organising that some have argued were often rendered unseen. For example, using feminist bookshops as a case study, Delap (2016) argues that they provided visible, public sites where people could access information and support that might have otherwise been hidden to those outwith the relevant social and activist circles. As Massey (2007) proposes in *World City*, these represent the lines through which the trans-local and local to national acts of solidarity were connected. To make space, to build networks, to craft materials, appeared to be a simultaneous mission of enhancing visibility and connectivity. By extension, crafting a network that formally connected different radical bookshops to one another aimed to consolidate this work.

This is exemplified by the material of the Federation of Radical Booksellers (FRB), a network which is a key focus of this section. The FRB started out as the Federation of Alternative Booksellers in 1975, before changing their name to include "radical" in 1981. The FRB was one of many networks that were formed around bookselling and the left throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The First of May and Lavender Menace were key members, which meant the FRB formed a key part of the historical narrative for interviewees involved in those bookshops. In terms of the British radical bookselling scene more broadly, in amongst different bookselling collectives, it is perhaps less clear to what extent FRB work had an influence. Delap (2016) estimates that the FRB's total membership in 1986 was around 35, while the total number of "radical" bookshops in Britain at the time was 150 (p.19). However, despite not having a proportionally large formal membership, the FRB is a useful case study for examining how some of the spaces in this thesis utilised and navigated broader network politics.

One of the Federation's key aims was to encourage connection between fellow FRB members. This also extended to other radical bookshops outside of the UK. In one of their regular newsletters, they included an ask for FRB members to keep the network informed if they had contacted bookshops elsewhere, stating "It would be interesting to hear from other members who have made

contact with bookshops or organisations in other countries. It's encouraging to feel that there is a network of people around the world doing similar things with the same ideas as us" (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1984e). Sigrid, who volunteered for the First of May before then opening Lavender Menace, remembered the FRB as being "a tremendous [organisation]. You could, you could go all over the UK. People, went, would drive so that you only had to pay the petrol costs, and shops from all over even sometimes Northern Ireland, I think, would talk about the problems they had, and the ways, they could support each other. And that is one of the reasons we survived as well" (Interview with Nielsen, 2021). From Sigrid's account, the FRB provided both social and material support. The desire to set up such a network stemmed from the belief that they would be beneficial to furthering the cause of radical bookshops. Their overall success on this point was variable. However, for some of those involved in radical bookshops the access to advice, on both practical and social matters, was perceived as crucial to the development of each bookshop – or even their survival, as Sigrid describes. Overall, FRB membership numbers were varying, as indicated by the fact that they repeatedly reported having to chase up shops for subscription fees. For a bookshop to join the FRB, they would pay an annual subscription fee of 0.1% of their annual turnover, capped at £80. The organising group made public call outs for late fees, some of which added up to nine months of arears, whilst fatefully threatening to withhold sending that shop the FRB newsletter in the meantime (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1983b).

In the introduction to their handbook, *Starting a Bookshop,* the FRB explain that the purpose of writing this text was to "[formalise] the informal communication of ideas between shops, which has always been a feature of the movement" (Federation of Radical Booksellers (Great Britain), 1984). In addition to this one text, the FRB had various adjacent publications through which to circulate news. There was the official FRB newsletter and the separate *Radical Bookseller* publication, which covered much FRB business and that of their members. Alternative forms of media and print culture were often seen as integral to establishing various political networks (Forster, 2016). This was a recurring theme across most of the interviews I conducted, for a variety of space and networks that were discussed. For some interviewees, movement newsletters, flyers, and publications enabled radical bookshops to establish themselves as useful to activists in other political spaces, such as women's centres and unemployed workers' centres, who were developing their own media. In my interview with Bob Goupillot, who had been involved in the Edinburgh unemployed workers' centre, he stressed the importance to the centre of having their own media, which was facilitated by the centre having their own printing press (Interview with Goupillot, 2021). Issues of ownership and independence were crucial. These channels of communication were perceived to be an integral part of developing new networks and connections with different groups.

Importantly, the politics of production and business across these different literatures were often contested, which could shape the terms on which these connections were made. For example, Delap (2021) charts how *Spare Rib,* amongst other feminist periodicals in the 1970s and 1980s, grappled with questions of advertising, distribution, wages, and revenue. Women involved in these publications often grappled with how to secure the longevity of their circulation, whilst also endeavouring to maintain a feminist politics around the practical issues they faced in publishing. In the case of *The Radical Bookseller,* the collective resolved to form as a worker cooperative, aiming to avoid any editorial influence from key bookshops and distribute power equally (The Radical Bookseller, 1980a). They believed at the time that they would be able to be financially self-sufficient within two years and hiring permanent staff within six months (The Radical Bookseller, 1980b). Despite aiming for editorial separation from existing outlets, the reality was slightly messier. *News from Neasden*, another catalogue and publication of radical books that had predated *The Radical Bookseller*, complained to the FRB that the *Radical Bookseller* spoke in their first issue as though *News from Neasden* did not exist (Pollard, 1980). Whilst there was some crossover in key members across the coordinating groups of the FRB and the *Radical Bookseller,* on paper the aim was for them to be editorially separate, at least from the perspective of the latter. However, *News from Neasden's* decision to address their grievance through the channels of the FRB, suggests that there was more overlap, and perhaps more hierarchy, than *The Radical Bookseller* statement might suggest. As such, the organisational politics of umbrella networks like the FRB mapped themselves onto the day-to-day activities of member bookshops and related publications. As outlined in chapter four, the introduction of a workers cooperative was no panacea to the potential tensions in crafting a larger network of diverse radical bookshops. The politics of the network were continually (re)negotiated, emphasising Massey's conceptualisation of space as always in a process of becoming (1999, p.2).

At an institutional level, it is slightly less clear how the FRB legally chose to operate. It is clear at least that the formal structures of the FRB were developed at a national level. These included issues pertaining to membership administration and their official communication channels. The problems and capacity issues they faced were therefore usually framed in these terms. The FRB often complained of poor turnout at national conferences, low return on subscription monies, and a lack of funds to produce anything other than the FRB wide newsletter (The Radical Bookseller, 1982). In their 1983 newsletter, they lamented that their most recent conference in London had been "in many ways not a success" and that "very few shops attended and very few publishers were present" (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1983c). Consequently, despite its purpose as a network of support for radical bookshops, the FRB itself at times was difficult to maintain. This also constrained some of their other broader political ambitions. The FRB were also concerned with how to extend the influence and importance of radical bookselling beyond the physical shop

premises. In 1981, the annual FRB conference was titled “Out of the Shop and Into the Streets: Taking Radical Books into the Community” (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1981). The agenda set out the following suggestion for how they might become more than a “support group” or forum for exchange:

“This conference hopes to take a look at the uses of radical books outside shops – in trade unions, political parties, libraries, schools, and (possibly even) straight bookshops[18] *– in order to see how we could learn from these groups and how we could link up with them to give our books wider circulation.”* (Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1981 p.1)

The FRB desire to actively and independently disseminate the texts that FRB bookshops sold can be situated in long-term trends of left-wing bookselling. In her examination of inter-war bookselling, Cocaign (2012) suggests that historically there had been a reticence among standard booksellers to sell left-wing literature. As a result, the Labour Party, trade unions, and the Communist Party used other channels to circulate material to their members, such as party mailings and conferences. With the Communist Party specifically, in their efforts to reach beyond their membership, they opened a number party-owned bookshops steadily over the 1920s. Bookselling was thought to be a key channel of dissemination for ideas and printed material (Hajek, 2018).

One notable absence from the list of those groups or spaces the FRB might seek to learn from is black bookshops. In 1966, John La Rose and Sarah White founded New Beacon publishing, which soon after became the bookshop of the same name (Bush, 2014). Two years later, in 1968 Eric and Jessica Huntley established L-Ouverture publishing, hosting a community bookshop out of their living room which later became Bogle’s bookshop in a commercial premises (Ireland, 2013). Eric Huntley and La Rose had met in Trinidad as Huntley was moving to the UK, remaining close through political involvement once they had both migrated to Britain, establishing the West Indian branch of the Communist Party in London in 1961 (Ishmael, 2020, p.91). Furthermore, in 1973 Darcus Howe, a well-known Black Power activist and one of the Mangrove Nine, was appointed editor of the journal *Race Today,* a groundbreaking journal that covered the struggles by Black and Asian workers in the UK against police and state racism (Hassan et al., 2019).[19] These shops, publishing houses, and the squat where *Race Today* ran out of, were all based in London, where

[18] Straight bookshops in this context refers to general sale or not explicitly political bookshops.
[19] The Mangrove Nine refers to a trial of nine men and women who were tried on charges of assault, possession of an offensive weapon, and incitement to riot in relation to a protest against police brutality, and in particular the aggressive policing of the Mangrove Restaurant in Notting Hill, which was a popular meeting place for black radicals (see Angelo, 2009; Waters, 2019, pp.93-124).

the FRB conferences were often held.[20] Rather than beginning in bookselling, then branching into the community, New Beacon, Bogle, and other black bookshops were often produced by the work of existing infrastructures of black resistance (Beckles, 1998). This might have been a struggle for spaces like the First of May who, in aiming to be "non-sectarian" were theoretically aiming to move away from being attached to particular group or community. Before there were bookshops, the Huntleys recalled being invited to Black power meetings to sell books to attendees. Moreover, local black bookshops played a crucial role in supporting the emergence of supplementary schools (Waters, 2019). Some even were directly attached to the bookshops themselves, such as in the case of New Beacon's George Padmore School (Beckles, 1998). Contemporary and historical accounts often celebrate how black bookshops were firmly embedded into existing community infrastructures particularly as spatial manifestations of black feminist organising and resistance (Bryan et al., 2018).

That the FRB did not include mention of black bookshops as an example to follow with regard to expanding the reach of member bookshops beyond the space itself represents the gaps in the FRB network. The lack of dialogue between two different strands of radical bookselling perhaps speaks to the initial social base of the FRB, in that they were a predominantly white collective. Towards the end of the 1980s, there appeared to be a more transparent engagement with black bookshops from the FRB, particularly through the advent of the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books, established by La Rose, Bogle L'Ouverture Press and *The Race Today Collective*. The International Book Fair was indicative of La Rose and *Race Today's* anti-colonial politics which were firmly embedded within their critiques of and resistance to state racism. In a 1976 speech, La Rose offered a powerful counter to the idea that Caribbean migrants had arrived in Britain and were shocked to encounter racism. Famously noting that they did not "come alive" in Britain, La Rose pointed out that majority of people migrating to Britain had already experienced racist state and colonial governance (Elliott-Cooper, 2021, pp.21-24). In 1988, the FRB published *Making the Connections: Radical Books Today* which featured a conversation between John La Rose and Errol Lloyd, an artist involved with the Caribbean Artists Movement who regularly produced the visual material for New Beacon Books and Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications. The two men discussed the emergence of the book fair and other forums for black and third world bookselling. They note that some of the international visitors to the most recent book fair were interested in how the "white left was influenced by all of this" (La Rose and Lloyd, 1988, pp.31-32). La Rose states that he thought it would have a significant impact, and Lloyd responds with "but the white left has always to a certain extent fed off the struggles of black people,

[20] After Darcus Howe made the decision to break with the Institute of Race Relations, the collective moved out of the Institute to operate from a squat in Brixton, South London. Olive Morris, one of the founders of the Brixton Black Women's Group was instrumental in supporting the move of *Race Today* to the squat. See Cook (2013) for an overview of the Brixton squats and Okundaye's (2024) collection of oral histories of black gay men in Brixton.

haven't they?" (p.31). Consequently, Lloyd's comments reveal how uneven left-wing networks of organising were perceived. Where left-wing groups "fed off" others, this reproduced racialised hierarchies of difference that compromised a more expansive, connected politics of solidarity (Sundberg, 2007).

Making the Connections and the FRB newsletter provided an initial platform for some of the more uncomfortable discussions for bookshop members on a collective basis, especially with regard to questions of difference. In the summer of 1984, the FRB welcomed Womanzone into the network. Womanzone was a women's information centre in Edinburgh that held bookselling as one of their core activities and sources of revenue. Whilst not explicitly categorised as a bookshop, the FRB was open to affiliates from broader organisations that were committed to some form of radical bookselling – the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group were also a member through the existence of the Open Gaze Collective bookstall (Open Gaze Collective, 1979).[21] Womanzone's entry into the FRB was reported in their newsletter in summer of 1984, taken from the minutes of their 1984 conference in Edinburgh:

"Womanzone is a women's bookshop/café/info-exchange involving six women. They've had two joint meetings with Frist of May and Lavender Menace to discuss problems/possibilities of co-existence. Discussion of increasing likelihood of competition amongst FRB shops led to suggestion of workshop on co-existence." (The Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1984a)

In both language and sentiment, this excerpt evokes some of Doreen Massey's theorisations on the coexistence of difference and her concept of "throwntogetherness" (Massey, 1999, 2005). Massey posits that space, made up of multiple trajectories of inter-relations, is never finished or closed. It is ever shifting and even those spaces that remain in the same place, that place can still always be different. This negotiation, as Massey articulates it and as the FRB are grappling with in their newsletter, will always be (and necessitate) an invention. The same "rules" cannot just map exactly onto the new – the emergence of the unique, conflictual new, sets out a landscape of political opportunity (Massey, 2005, p.162). In this case, the spaces of the First of May, Lavender Menace, and then Womanzone, fluctuate within various sets of inter-relations as well as with one another, and those trajectories that have shaped them, and the FRB. Whilst this newsletter excerpt appears to acknowledge this, and *make space* for discussions of the new, this also prompted uneasy reflections from individuals involved. When we discussed the emergence of Womanzone, Greg articulated it more in terms of a breakaway from, rather than an extension of, the First of May:

[21] As discussed in chapter four, Bob Orr and Sigrid Nielsen were core members of the Open Gaze Collective before moving on to open Lavender Menace.

"That was also a First of May split and that was unfortunate. I mean, they set up their own shop. And they said, okay, this is a women-only space, but then they didn't have enough business to sustain it. So, they were grumpy, why is the left not coming into the shop to buy books, which I mean I'm far too tactful to say anything, but it seemed, [it] struck me as being totally contradictory." (Interview with Michaelson, 2021)

Greg's positioning of himself as "tactful" compared to the "grumpy" women involved in Womanzone demonstrates some of the gendered emotional politics that were woven throughout establishing different bookshops. Greg positions Womanzone's difficulties as related to "not having enough business" from the left, while questioning their right to complain about this. Later on in the conference minutes, the FRB resolve that the role of the network should be to minimise conflict between bookshops, particularly where all parties involved were FRB members (The Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1984b). This can be read as a response to the tensions that are evident in Greg's reflections. The FRB resolved to write up guidelines on how bookshops should handle these sorts of situations, to then circulate out to the FRB membership – producing an intriguing regulatory aspect to their perceived role. In spite of this, some of those involved in the bookshops held strong views about how the emergence of new bookshops affected the broader movement. The above excerpt, among others, emphasise some of the emotional politics that may have been hidden beneath FRB attempts to smooth over this coexistence, that ran along notably gendered lines. Later on in my conversation with Greg, I asked him what he thought brought the First of May to an end. He told me that:

"Yeah, it was absolutely Thatcher, the defeat of broadly the Labour Party, the defeat of trade unionism. And then this splitting out of separate shops reduced, this concentrated broad radical customer base…There was a sense of it being a front and it being a united front, particularly in the teeth of Thatcherism…people had to hang together. So yeah, the shop splitting off, there was, there was scepticism clearly, and there was a sadness that the shop would not only lose the income, which was clearly vital for it to continue, but lose that sense of it being an all-embracing space." (Interview with Michaelson, 2021)

In mentioning all of the above at once, it appears that the division of the membership and customer base was inextricable for Greg from broader structural factors that saw out the end of the First of May. The Womanzone split featured heavily in this narrative, alongside the emergence of Lavender Menace. Through these reflections, the broader transformation of the left during the 1980s is reproduced at the everyday level. Some segments of the left viewed the emergence of new social movements such as the WLM and lesbian and gay liberation as a weakening of the power of a

unified class base. In *Beyond the Fragments,* Rowbotham et, al. (1980) noted that they were "faced with creating a socialist organisation not primarily through debates, struggles and splits within existing parties…but through the coming together of socialists based in the various 'sectoral' movements, the majority of whom are not members of any political party" (p.9). The FRB as a network might have brought together some bookshops that represented different 'sectoral' movements, but this was not without tension.

Moreover, it is interesting that these splits appear to signal the end of what was an "all-embracing space" for some involved in the First of May. For others, such as Keith Stoddart, this idea was hotly contested from the beginning:

"I think that bookshops like the First of May…they were trying to touch too many bases. Being a left bookshop and having a bit of a pick and mix, about in the ideology, a lot of anarchists, some syndicalist stuff and all the rest of it, they very rarely had anything that had to do with the mainstream left. And they would almost have nothing about the trade union movement except to condemn the reformist leaderships of the trade unions if you like. So, it would be a bit ultra-leftist, it would probably be touching on eh, Trotskyist rather than, mainstream…Marxist, official Communist Party, if you like, I'm trying to think of, you know, eh, where the, the bulk of people in the Communist Party, you know, would have come from working class backgrounds, and would have been active in trade unions. That was where the Communist Party's strength was. So, they weren't a bookshop, that would attract, that type of thing. If you wanted eh, postcards, of UNITA, and eh, "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," superimposed on the photograph, then it was the place to go." (Interview with Stoddart, 2021)

Reading Keith and Greg's reflections in relation to one another demonstrates the complex political trajectories within the left that enveloped left-wing bookshops. Greg's assessment of the First of May having been an "all-embracing space" contrasted Keith's position that they were trying "to touch too many bases." Taken together, the two excerpts reveal competing articulations of what bookshops should be as infrastructures of solidarity. Rather than existing as two separate nodal points within a broader web of interrelations among the left, spaces such as the First of May and CPGB bookshops are rhetorically in conflict with one another (Massey, 2004). This is reinscribed through the gendered respectability politics mirrored in both retellings. Keith asserts the legitimacy of the CPGB, with their roots in the working-class and the labour movement, against a perception of the First of May as less streamlined. For Greg, the First of May was somewhere where people "*had* to hang together" for the sake of the cause beyond the rigidity of a particular left party. However, this unity was perceived to be compromised by the departure of shops such as Lavender Menace and Womanzone, a decision which was critically reflected on.

The FRB newsletter that announced Womanzone's new membership of the FRB also detailed a troubling time for many of the bookshops in their network. The issue starts by stating that they were writing at a time of "crisis" for radical bookselling – given the continued attacks by the state on radical bookshops, and the "period of financial crisis many of us are suffering" (The Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1983a). The issue details a number of raids on member bookshops. The most common form this took was UK Customs seizing imported books they deemed potentially "indecent", meaning lesbian and gay material. Most notably Gay's the Word in central London were regularly reporting having been raided by the police or scrutinised by customs officials (The Federation of Radical Booksellers, 1984c). The founders of Lavender Menace told me that their book orders were regularly seized. In one rare instance, when one box of books was eventually released to them, it returned to the shop "covered in hot chocolate power, cigarette ash, and coffee stains" (Interview with Nielsen, 2021). *The Radical Bookseller* ended up featuring a regular section on how to circulate information and build support for the Defend Gay's the Word campaign, in the aftermath of their premises being raided in 1984, and criminal charges filed.

At a local level, the FRB network, amongst others, were made tangible by the labouring of those involved in it. Often, belonging to a network meant there would be some crossover in terms of who was involved in setting up different spaces. Sigrid recounted that, after having volunteered for the First of May, they were supportive in helping with the physical construction of Lavender Menace:

"And they, it was a lovely shop, that had a little room at the front and, a bigger room that was, shaped, like a parallelogram at the back and, and upstairs for meetings, the only thing it didn't have a lot of was storage. But I started working at the First of May when they moved into that shop. And, we got stock from them, we got advice from them. They were very supportive of, of Lavender Menace. And [The First of May] was a much bigger collective than Lavender Menace and, by the time we opened it, it was just us. But it was, I would say it was, a very broad leftist group. With all sorts of different backgrounds and the bookmark for the shop, which was designed by somebody who was in the Open Gaze collective briefly. As well [as] environment, labour history, lesbian and gay, feminism, that was, that was the image that I think they wanted to put across and it did reflect the way the shop worked. As I mentioned before the recorder was on, Greg Michaelson, did the wiring, he was a member of the First of May collective, he did it for nothing". (Interview with Nielsen, 2021)

It is worth briefly recounting again at this point that, as discussed in chapter four, the different events that prompted Bob, Sigrid, and Raymond to set up Lavender Menace, as it emphasises the role of personal relationships in establishing infrastructures of solidarity. Bob and Sigrid had

formerly been involved in the Open Gaze Collective, a bookselling group that ran a bookstall out of the lesbian and gay information centre in Edinburgh. They sold books as a means of revenue for the centre, both within the space itself and by taking the bookstall to other local lesbian and gay spaces, like Fire Island Disco (Interview with Nielsen, Orr, and Rose, 2021). The lesbian and gay information centre was part of the project of the Scottish Minorities/Homosexual Rights Group, who were aiming to set up a network of lesbian and gay centres across Scotland (Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, 1980). Bob and Sigrid left the Open Gaze Collective on difficult terms, after a dispute over "blasphemous" Christmas cards that the SHRG forbade the group from selling at the stall. Whilst none articulated this move as marking their final engagement with the SHRG, it is important to note the significance of the support offered by the First of May in view of Bob and Sigrid's withdrawal from the Open Gaze collective. Whilst the SHRG were also members of the FRB, this broader network opened up Bob and Sigrid to another source of support when embarking on their new adventure. Notably, despite his concerns over the implications of separate spaces for the First of May, Sigrid emphasised how practically supportive Greg had been in constructing Lavender Menace. This is not to suggest that the politics articulated by Greg and others in reference to the broader trajectories of the network dissolved into insignificance at the local level of the bookshop. Rather, that they came into contact with a different set of politics, that involved social and emotional negotiations (Rowbotham et al., 1980). It is these complicated everyday inter-relations, made manifest by networks of personal contact, that I attend to in the next section.

5.3 Personal relationships and political networks

"By the end of the year I had resigned from the Black Dwarf editorial board and from International Socialism. Close friendships made leaving both painful. But there was also a tremendous sense of release. It felt like the symbolic burning of ideological bras, a break with my sixties political past. Henceforth I resolved to focus on women's liberation. Then – to my surprise – I fell in love." (Rowbotham, 2021: p.7)

The FRB's insisted that alongside their new formal structures, the informal communication of ideas would "no doubt continue to take place" (Federation of Radical Booksellers (Great Britain), 1984, p.5). Namely, that offhand, personal encounters were still threaded throughout moves to formalise and make visible the support and information that was available to left-wing groups and spaces, and these were equally as important in sustaining networks of solidarity. Rather than the formal networks and spaces replacing these more casual encounters, they worked in tandem, mutually reproducing one another. The social interactions between friends, comrades, partners, enemies, and more, replicated the work of political groups and often brought it to new spaces and places.

During my research I interviewed Kate Fearnley, who had been involved in socialist LGBT student politics whilst at the University of Edinburgh and had joined the student branch of the Communist Party, which she noted was "pretty much all LGBT people" (Interview with Fearnley, 2022). Willett (2014) notes that the younger generation of CPGB members and the Young Communist League (YCL) were determined to bring issues of gay and women's liberation within the purview of the Party. YCL and young CPGB members were active in the National Union of Students (NUS), which "gave them a forum in which to test and apply their new politics with relative freedom" which they then took back to their respective party branches (p.179). As we discussed her entry into political activity, she spoke in depth about some key people in her life who she felt had influenced her politicisation:

"And I met another guy, and he was called Step or Steven Holdsworth. And he was a gay man, and very politically active. He was actually studying theology, but he was really into liberation theology and hugely into politics. And he read all the serious stuff and digested it for me, told me all about, well, everything I needed to know about feminist politics and all the rest of it, it was very handy. It was highly intellectual, really, really intelligent guy. And we were together. I don't know how long for, maybe about a year, something like that. As a… as a couple. And then just remained really close friends. Thereafter, really, and he was the one who kind of got me involved to a great extent in kind of other political stuff…" (Interview with Fearnley, 2022)

Kate's testimony foregrounds some of her personal, intimate relationships that were clearly important in her experiences of politicisation. Her expression of love and admiration for Step highlights the ways in which examining these relationships can provide an insight into how personal relationships can shape our historical selves, in the realm of the social, emotional, and political (Hughes, 2014; Langhammer, 2013). Importantly, as we charted the next steps of her journey in political activism, her testimony exemplified how these personal relationships played a key role in expanding the geography of her organising. She later joined Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM), after moving to London to start a PhD in computer science. LGSM were a group of activists organising support in solidarity with striking miners during the 1984/5 strike, raising money notably for the Dulais mining community in South Wales. Their members had been involved in gay liberation, with many also active in the trade union movement, the Labour Party, and the CPGB and YCL (Smith and Leeworthy, 2016; Kelliher, 2014). But the nature of her relationship with Step meant that this was not the end of building a political base in Edinburgh. She told me that:

"A sort of hybrid period of my life started, I was still kind of involved with Step, except we weren't really a kind of couple, he was, we did still sort of share a bed and so on, but he was he had other

interests, various men in his life. But I was very, very attached to him and to Edinburgh. So, although I moved back to London for this PhD post, I was commuting back to Edinburgh every couple of weeks by bus, overnight bus." (Interview with Fearnley, 2022)

This prompted a new chapter in Kate's work organising around LGBTQ+ liberation. Consequently, she brought some of what she was involved in in London back up to Edinburgh:

"In Edinburgh, we were organizing a lesbian and gay socialist conference. The B word didn't really get in there at the time. Bisexuals didn't really get a lot of mention. But I was beginning to get a little bit militant about that - I was attending the London bisexual group…And [so] one of the things we did was form a bisexual group in Edinburgh. And I've been combing through my diaries to work out when that started, and I can't work it out. The lesbian and gay socialist conference I found that was in 24th and 25th of November 1984. And then I found a meeting of the Edinburgh bisexual group on the 12th of January 1985. But something must have happened in between because that was not the first meeting. But we met at the lesbian and gay centre in Broughton Street." (Interview with Fearnley, 2022)

Martha Robinson Rhodes' (2021) work on how members of the Gay Liberation Front and the Campaign for Homosexuality respectively dealt with bisexuality and multiple-sexual-attraction more broadly, charts some of the broader political trajectories that produced both the London and Edinburgh Bisexual Groups. There were scarce references to multiple-sexual attraction throughout both the GLF and CHE's campaign material. In addition, GLF and CHE activists alike were critical or dismissive of multiple-sexual-attraction as a legitimate political subjectivity from which to build liberatory politics. Consequently, as Robinson-Rhodes notes, at times the separation between these groups was then reinforced by lesbian and gay groups – as the London Lesbian and Gay centre banned bisexual groups from meeting there in 1985, concerned that bisexual men might "harass" lesbians in the centre (p.141). This reinscribes the utility in examining the networks of personal relationships that coalesced around relations of solidarity. Whilst one member's relationship with another in a different city was not the sole motivating factor in the emergence of the Edinburgh Bisexual Group, Kate's mobility between the London centre at one time, and subsequently the Broughton Street centre, facilitated the emergence of a network of solidarity in the fact of hostilities within the broader lesbian and gay movement. It highlights a fluid and mobile solidarity. The love and care woven throughout how different people were able to maintain relationships across different political scenes, paved the way for new, care-full solidarities on the move (Griffin, 2023a).

As this suggests, networks were propped up by the people involved in reproducing them. This element of personal contact was crucial in building solidarity, alongside whatever negotiations might be happening with regard to tensions or allegiances at a larger scale (Kelliher, 2014). This could be in *spite* of how "official" movements and structures were established. However, there were also many instances in which members of different groups thought actively about how to sincerely reinforce connections they had with different groups on paper through their everyday practices. The ways in which these relations were (re)negotiated therefore provide a useful insight into how different actors navigated different experiences, expertise, and subjectivities. In light of these considerations, this usually involved careful scrutiny over *how* these connections might be made. Often, activists were keen to make sure that there was meaningful engagement between different parties that built sustainable relationships. For example, in an article for the *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal,* one WLM activist worried that the women's movement might be out of touch with the organising of sisters in the trade union movement. She noted that there needed to be a considered way to remedy this, avoiding previous pitfalls of the left. Building networks of solidarity with striking women workers solely through the channels of their disputes was not deemed good enough:

"We join the queue of left groups suddenly interested once something is happening. We have sometimes adopted the left's worst habit – co-opting those involved in struggle of their own as cannon-fodder or token workers for our campaigns…we appear on picket lines, only too aware of the fact that we have less knowledge than the women we see ourselves as 'helping'" (Aldred, 1978)

Whilst Aldred's perspective represents concerns regarding a "tokenistic" approach to industrial solidarity, there were examples of where the WLM were consistently, meaningfully engaged with workplace disputes. For example, the Night Cleaners Campaign in the early 1970s saw WLM members actively seeking to unionise and support night cleaners across London (see Rowbotham, 2006). In the anxieties reflected in the above extract, and the efforts of the Night Cleaners Campaign, there was a clear desire to engage with the trade union movement and segments of the broader left in a more sustained way. Consequently, some positioned the Glasgow Women's Centre as somewhere where women could meet and gain the knowledge that would allow them to build more informed, meaningful relationships within and outside the women's movement. This is not to downplay the significance of those picket line encounters, nor position them as merely temporary in comparison to sites such as women's centres, bookshops, or unemployed workers' centres. As Kelliher (2019, 2021) sets out, the picket line was a dynamic space, within which encounters between diverse political groups could be enacted. The relationships of solidarity that were built through industrial action, in which picket lines were a crucial space, often endured long

after disputes ended (Kelliher, 2018). However, the ongoing nature of being able to visit a women's centre, reinforcing the personal relationships made in other moments of political organising, enables something more enduring and therefore infrastructural. As such it is useful to emphasise how these sites complemented one another in facilitating long-term, durable relationships of solidarity.

Personal networks were integral to enabling people to successfully organise across different meeting-places. This is exemplified by the ways in which interviewees remembered how both the building and membership of such networks sustained organising in particular spaces. Carol Thomson was a trade union representative and activist with the Scottish Abortion Campaign (SAC). She regularly organised out of the Glasgow Women's Centre on Miller Street. She told me about one of the best things about this period of political activity in her life:

"The thing that I take away most strongly from that – and in terms of solidarity and things, quite apart from the meetings we had there, which were great, talking to other women, knowing that other women felt the same way that you could actually try and do something. That we were working with women, not just in Glasgow, but you know, there was a network of women everywhere…there was trade union women as well, not at the women's centre, but they were working inside their union, and there was some really, really good trade union women, from the Communist Party…[who] fought some hard battles inside the Communist party…they had really kind of laid the groundwork that we were able to use as to follow up." (Interview with Thomson, 2021)

From Carol's testimony, it is clear that the networks of solidarity across different groups were crucial to building the expertise and capacity of the women's centre. Whilst the women that she learnt from might not have been involved in the space itself, the "groundwork" that was laid out before her was informed by the landscape of broader political organising across the left. Moreover, both Carol's testimony, and the article in the *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal,* present women active in the Communist party and the trade union women they refer to as very politically experienced and knowledgeable. This is interesting given some of the ways in which gender shaped women's involvement within trade unions and strike support campaigns during this period. For example, Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and Thomlinson (2018) examine how women who were active in National Women Against Pit Closures might downplay their political experience, given that some felt that it made for a more powerful narrative that "ordinary" women might be empowered to political consciousness overnight as a result of the miners' strike (p.9). Another interview participant, Jan Macleod, regularly attended the Glasgow women's centre. She came to Glasgow to study, and whilst at university she volunteered with Strathclyde Rape Crisis. She then began working at the Women's Support Project, whilst continuing to organise around violence against

women and girls in her spare time. Her decision to focus on this aspect of feminist political struggle emerged from engaging with a range of different groups and political organisations. As a result, her political work volunteering with Rape Crisis was connected to other parts of the movement, with the Glasgow women's centre as an important connective hub. In our conversation, she also reflected on the variety of, and often difficult, work being carried out by other woman across the movement. She told me that at the centre:

"Erm…there was always meetings, endless meetings, you know, there'd be meetings in Glasgow, and then they'd be linking up with groups in Edinburgh. And then there was, I mean my sort of entry into it was really through like violence against women. But at that time, I would say there was there a period when there was like, very close links with left wing groups and activities, erm and also, I accessed them through the university. So, there was lots of links, like women's groups would tend to meet maybe in like left-wing bookshops, or we used to have fundraising discos in the Star Club, which is a communist club in Glasgow which used to be down at Clyde place. Erm, we had quite a lot of them… I remember meeting women who worked in the union. And thinking oh God, I don't know how they can stand it, but it's glad that somebody can do it, you know, because they were working in like very male dominated, sort of erm environments. And I mean, of course, there was a lot of men that supported what the women were calling for, but there was also a lot of opposition. And just the stuff, you get in any setting, when women are talking about their rights, or talking about changing things, you know, whereas I was working much more in women only settings, you know, it was sort of like different dynamics and different issues." (Interview with Macleod, 2021)

It is interesting that Jan was "glad that somebody [could] do it" and that somebody did not have to be her. She refers to the opposition and sexism women organising in more traditionally male political spaces must have faced – and being thankful that she minimised her own exposure to this. In addition to this, Jan, and others organising around violence against women, likely would have also faced opposition for being seen to prioritise issues of male violence. For example, some women who had been involved in the Labour Party reported facing scepticism when they started working in Rape Crisis centres. Jane Dorby reported being told that "we were wasted in the Rape Crisis Centre, that women like us should be in the Labour movement, fighting the good fight" (Maitland, 2009, pp.99-100). The use of words like "wasted" appears to have minimised the work of those volunteering in Rape Crisis centres. In oral history interviews with revolutionary feminists, Rees (2010) notes how some of these women veered away from socialist feminism for this reason. They criticised the lack of any sufficient analysis of violence through the lens of class, growing tired of the message that this was less important than questions around work and labour (p.342).

These overlapping political trajectories on what issues were hard work, what counted as political expertise, or what constituted legitimate political graft shaped the encounters at the women's centre, through its role as a meeting place for particular campaigns and demands. Whilst there undoubtedly were tensions, there is clear evidence that the women's awareness of this also translated into some active engagement to craft meaningful relationships of solidarity – ones that avoided co-option and that recognised difference. It is important to note that ultimately, not everyone felt as though these attempts were successful. Esther Breitenbach, one of the women's centre's first paid workers, admitted that whilst it was fair to say that there had been a hope that the Glasgow women's centre might attract more working-class women to the movement, she did not feel as though this had been successful (2021). Nevertheless, these ongoing negotiations highlight the plethora of relations that shaped the women's centre, beyond those who were directly involved in the space itself. Examining these networks of solidarity through the lens of spaces such as women's centres, unemployed workers' centres, and bookshops, emphasises the fluidity of the different movements attended to so far. However, undoubtedly this analysis comes into sharp focus when faced with the question of explicitly separate, or separatist spaces. As such, I examine these sites in the final section of this chapter.

5.4 Separate spaces

RH: "Were the two parts of your political life separate then?"
BT: "Yes. Yep, I mean for the likes of myself yes, a senior union official there, I mean I didn't, hide it but I didn't sort of, wear a "glad to be gay" badge or anything else like that. The reality here is of course…is, it did affect me. I mean it, took me, probably about five years longer, than it should have to become the Scottish secretary [of Unison]." (Interview with Thomson, 2021)

At times, the distinction between different parts of interviewees' political lives were spatially enshrined. Consequently, discussing the spatial manifestations of difference in the oral history interviews I conducted meant that the topic of separatist spaces came up at different intervals. Some women's centres and bookshops (such as Womanzone) across Britain were explicitly separatist spaces. Across the interviews I conducted, the language of separatist spaces and what seemed to be more like *specific* spaces often was interchangeable. Whereas although bookshops like Lavender Menace focused mainly on lesbian and gay literature, their goal was in no way to fully separate themselves from heterosexual audiences – despite previous articulations of them as a breakaway of a separate space. In the case of Lavender Menace, this was heightened as they moved location and rebranded as West and Wilde, at which point Raymond Rose became more involved with running the shop. Raymond and Bob have been in a relationship since the early days of Lavender Menace and they both remain good friends with Sigrid. I interviewed the three of them

together in late September 2021. At one point the conversation moved onto a discussion about the transition from Lavender Menace to West and Wilde:

"And also, the complexion of the shop slightly changed from radical to mainstream. So, that also encouraged heterosexual buyers into buy gay books. And we became the local bookshop for the area…. So, there was a sense of inclusion, which I guess I had always in mind, [I'd] probably not talked to Sigrid about it. I had always a sense of the, the normalization of gay culture into heterosexual life. So, it didn't become such a, you know, it wasn't quite such a distinction being made all the time. So, we became the local bookshop for local people, you know, that that was good too." (Interview with Rose, 2021)

At this point, Sigrid did not comment on whether her and Raymond had had this explicit discussion at the time. Given the nature of the group conversation, it is difficult to ascertain whether this desire to foster a sense of inclusion was something shared equally by the three interviewees. The silence in this moment contrasts with much stronger views on separatist material across the interviews I conducted. Keith Stoddart, coordinator of Govan unemployed workers' centre between 1982-1986, reflected what he thought of the feminist publications sold by the First of May:

*"You would have got maybe some erm, you would have got feminist stuff. You could probably pick up thingmy, what is it, Valerie Salonas' SCUM Manifesto? D'you know the SCUM Manifesto? She was the woman who shot Andy Warhol, Society for Cutting Up Men, SCUM, collective…they would have that kind of feminist stuff that was very confrontational. I'm willing to accept that men don't always behave well. But I think it's a crude slogan to say all men are rapists. The same way to say all women are prostitutes isn't a fair assessment of how the world is. And a lot of it was a bit provocative, being provocative. And agitational." (*Interview with Stoddart, 2021)

Keith's retelling here is interesting, as it implicitly points to the micro-level manifestations of separatism that could exist, and that played out in the First of May. As Greg told me:

"There was a lot of debate in the First of May, about separatism…[we] sold separatist material and as a man, I wasn't allowed to handle that. If somebody wanted to come in and buy that, I had to ask one of the women to sell it." (Interview with Michaelson, 2021)

Greg's reflections highlight the day-to-day ways in which the broader politics of the bookshop were articulated alongside the practicalities of running a commercial space (Delap, 2021). Separatism was a provocative topic across the left. In the context of the bookshops and women's centres I discuss in this chapter, separatist thinking existed on a broad spectrum. Its currents varied over particular geographical contexts, and everyday spaces. Importantly, as demonstrated through

Greg's experience in the First of May, separatist thinking also shaped non-separatist spaces. It is notable that separatist splits from the bookshop and the concept itself featured heavily throughout my conversation with Greg. He attended St Andrews University, where, according to him, the left could probably "fit inside a telephone box" (Interview with Michaelson, 2021). With regards to the Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland, Sarah Browne has noted that St Andrews was at the forefront of lesbian separatist practice and discussion (2012). Through personal connections to both women from St Andrews and Edinburgh, Greg had some peripheral knowledge of the local geography of the everyday manifestations of separatist politics:

"There was a communal household in Stanley Road in Leith. And a lot of, I think, perfectly decent, non-sexist men lived there. And eventually the feminists slung them out, they decided it was going to be an all-woman household." (Interview with Michaelson, 2021)

The practical difficulties of separatism within the WLM are well documented and emotionally charged (Leathwood, 2004). Owen (2013) notes that the exclusion of men from particular spaces and groups of the women's liberation movement was neither immediate nor straightforward. Greg's perception that "perfectly decent, non- sexist" men had been "slung out" of what eventually became a separatist space, is emotionally in line with this sentiment. However, Greg's own perceptions of what constituted a "non-sexist" man was likely to be linked to his subjectivity as a man, the same as which could be said for Keith's reflections on the SCUM manifesto and what this represented about the First of May. Broadly, the use of the term "non-sexist" as a barometer for acceptability with regard to men's role in the women's movement provides one perspective that can be extrapolated from women's movement debates on how men – as individuals, as a class, as oppressors, as loved ones – should be theorised with regard to women's liberation. Women's centres became one spatial manifestation of these debates, with Owen (2013) arguing that the question of men's presence in a women's centre was a particularly difficult one. Other accounts however (for example: Bruley 2016), query to what extent those active in women's centres had to regularly deal with questions regarding whether men should be allowed in. Some women undoubtedly did have notable accounts of centre-based hostility, related to the question of men in relation to the WLM. In her work, Sue Bruley included one anecdote of a woman being told she was a "traitor and had no right to be in the centre" after revealing she was married with two children (2016, p.14). However, Bruley reiterates that, beyond some notable exceptions, the day-to-day fluidity of discussion between socialist, radical, and revolutionary feminist ideas meant that generally women's centres navigated this issue without significant detriment to their wider cohesion.

Notably, the Glasgow Women's Centre could fit well into to Bruley's analysis. The women's centre on Miller Street, in the centre of Glasgow, was on paper a women-only venue. As such, there were reports of similar discussions on how to navigate issues of childcare for male children, violence against women, and male partners (Browne, 2016). The centre played host to a number of different campaign groups. During the 1980s, the centre was a key base for the Scottish Abortion Campaign (SAC), which had emerged from the Britain-wide National Abortion Campaign (NAC). Carol Thomson was one of the key women who had been involved in the SAC and regularly campaigned out of the Glasgow women's centre. Broadly, both the NAC and SAC were open to the involvement of men (Hay, 2021; Rees, 2010). Carol told me how this was negotiated spatially:

"It was important for us to have men involved [since pregnancy was their responsibility too] …now, lesbian line operated out of the women's centre. And of course, for them, it was so important for them to have a woman only space. It was very, very difficult for lesbians at that time, they were really considered…weird, there's no other word for it…it was very difficult for them. And the very thought of, that men were going to be in the women's centre, was very difficult indeed. And we had a lot of discussion about that, with SAC/NAC women, lesbian line, and they decided that they, accepted and agreed with why we had men behind us in the campaign. And they accepted men being in the centre…it was a huge thing that they did that for us." (Interview with Thomson, 2021)

The emotional significance of what Carol describes here is palpable. This short excerpt points to a multitude of, often tense, political trajectories around space and difference that culminated in this discussion at the women's centre. The quest for meaningful engagement around different campaigns opened the doors for a situated discussion on who was able to physically enter the centre. Practically, this was managed by sensitive timetabling, and ongoing conversations about how the campaign was operating. This represented a more careful engagement with the politics of difference that recognised the emotional significance of separatist spaces in expansive ways. These multiple trajectories were born from a conjuncture of crisis, thus opening up an opportunity to refashion existing spatial interrelations (Bodden, 2022; Massey, 2005). Whilst the space might have been in name a women's only space, the inter-relatedness of campaigns such as the SAC were made explicit in ways that generated new possibilities for solidarity. Crucially, this was initiated in ways that honoured what those organising separate spaces had set out do, whilst not closing off the space to new political opportunities. Therefore, the coexistence that existed within the women's centre was actively renegotiated, and carefully generated – and from Carol's retelling, none of it was taken for granted.

5.5 Conclusion

Infrastructures of solidarity are crucial vehicles through which to explore the coexistence of difference and how this is spatially negotiated (Massey, 1999, 2005). In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate the ways in which fluid conceptions of space, as spheres of multiplicity, can further strengthen theorisations of solidarity as a generative political relation often constructed between diverse political groups (Gilmore, 2007; Kelliher, 2021a). This builds on my analysis in chapter four, in that by taking no space as given as a result of its particular location, this opens up expansive possibilities regarding how we might envision the different relations of solidarity that can be forged between diverse political groups (Featherstone, 2012; Massey, 2007).

The personal relationships built through, in, and around these infrastructures reveal the complex layers of solidarity that connected different spaces to one another. Formal networks enabled new points of interaction, creating a web of trans-local solidarities across Scotland and beyond. Throughout this chapter, I propose that the *informal* networks, crafted through the day-to-day work of political organising are revealing of how those new points of interaction played out at an everyday level in infrastructures of solidarity. I argue that considering these interpersonal relationships in the coexistence of difference allows for a nuanced and generative conception of solidarity. This is not to suggest that any core principles of solidarity were watered down through their everyday negotiations. Rather the opposite, that the ways in which solidarity was enacted within everyday relationships within these infrastructures offers a framework of a robust solidarity, one not weakened or compromised but instead reinvigorated and enhanced through navigating difference.

Throughout this chapter, I have argued that these infrastructures of solidarity are fruitful case studies through which to understand the coexistence of difference and its implications for a generative politics of solidarity. However, it is important to emphasise that this does not mean romanticising solidarity as a political relation that could and can conquer all. As demonstrated by the vignettes in this chapter, there could often be tension imbued throughout organising across difference. In the next chapter, I set out an argument for attending to the emotional historical geographies of solidarity in order to understand and nuance analyses of solidarity across difference. In turn, I call for greater attention to the politics of care in sustaining relationships and infrastructures of solidarity.

Chapter 6.

Emotion and care

6.1 Introduction

In 1977, the Scottish Minorities Group (SMG) released the agenda for their eighth Annual General Meeting (AGM). It included a report from each of their ten branches, north to south, on the work and activities they had completed over the past year.[22] One of the SMG's main aims was to establish lesbian and gay centres in each of the cities or localities they were based in. This was no mean feat. In Aberdeen, group members admitted struggling to find a premises to buy and renovate, amongst all the other activities they had committed themselves to. They identified that, "the major danger is that we slip back into lethargy: to prevent this we need all the encouragement, advice, and support we can obtain from our friends" (Scottish Minorities Group, 1977a). Similarly, the group in Cumbria and the Borders reported having to leave the pub they were using for meetings, as the landlord was not happy with the poor turnout, and therefore poor purchasing. They admitted in the report, "in Cumbria & the Borders we've had our ups and downs, we're enjoying a down at present, yes! – Happy in the knowledge that the next will be an up! It HAS to be, the alternative cannot be contemplated*"* (Scottish Minorities Group, 1977a)*.*

These reports suggest that the work of finding and maintaining a physical premises involved sustaining themselves emotionally, as well as materially. The need for money for rent and activities was highlighted alongside the need for friends and emotional support as integral to the running of a successful centre. This chapter examines this idea in the long-term, across the 1970s and 1980s, as those across the left fought to maintain the premises they organised out of. In the oral history interviews I conducted for this thesis, many interviewees spoke about the emotional toll of being involved in radical and/or lesbian and gay bookshops, women's centres, and unemployed workers' centres. Their testimonies feature prominently throughout this chapter, as they articulate the ways in which they crafted new practices of care and solidarity to sustain the spaces, each other, and their communities. This chapter takes an emotional lens to the crafting of these solidarities, revealing the complicated caring relationships that underpinned them, and how these were integral to the very makeup of each centre or shop (Ahmed, 2014; Brooke, 2017; Copestake, 2023b).

The first section explores the different practices of care that were present throughout each space. I examine the labours of these caring relationships, and what role different spaces played in how

[22] The SMG was a Scottish organisation, although the Borders branch covered "Cumbria and the Borders."

these were built. At times, it was important that care was firmly attached to durable, established spaces (Gutiérrez Sánchez, 2022). However, some worried that this model did little to reach people beyond the community they were perceived to serve. As such, this section also explores the potential mobilities of these caring acts (Sheller, 2017). I explore how users of different spaces worried that they could become "stuck" in their communities (Interview with Biggerstaff, 2021). The ways in which people challenged that stickiness, revealed an enduring, agentic articulation of solidarity and care. Next, I examine the emotional registers of those organising out of those spaces. I contend that this is useful in exploring how established networks of care and solidarity are built and sustained over time, aligning with illuminative, historical perspectives of relationships of solidarity (Kelliher, 2018). As the 1980s ended, some spaces shifted form, some closed and reopened, whereas others ceased to exist altogether. This account therefore offers important insights into the varying trajectories of the left into the 1990s and how this was emotionally articulated.

6.2 Care

6.2.1 Care in context

How care was articulated in different unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and bookshops was contextually specific. The ideas around how to embed care within the political work of each space would often reflect what was missing in the communities in which these sites existed. Consequently, different spaces had different practices of care, which were shaped by the existence or lack of service provision, political issues facing those moving through the different spaces, and their connection to political movements. Ideas about care revolved around the communities served by each space, with community articulated through the local context in often expansive and dynamic ways (Massey, 1993). As such, what should be considered as care across the different spaces is specific but generously defined. For example, many interviewees reflected on the importance of putting on creative activities at their respective space, such as art, drama, and creative writing, alongside providing things like food, welfare advice, and other support to meet both their emotional and material needs. George, who was the coordinator of the unemployed workers' centre in Drumchapel, noted that "building confidence" in people was integral to their work. He told me that they wanted to convey to people that "[they] matter, okay the capitalist system has failed you, drastically just now, and you're a victim of that. You're not, you're not the cause in any way" (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021).

This demonstrates that many of the activities were connected to a broader political vision, one that challenged the current conditions communities were living under in a local context (Featherstone, 2005). The ways in which those conditions were confronted emerged both through acts of political

campaigning, and through asserting practices of social reproduction as valued acts that needed collective and infrastructural support (Fraser, 2017; Kapsali, 2020). This produced particular relationships and acts of care that reflected the needs of those using the space and/or involved in different political battles in and beyond their communities. As a result, there is no one set model of care that spans across all of the individual spaces. This was true even when theoretically certain spaces were all initially structured in the same way. For example, Glasgow unemployed workers' centres were established under the same framework which had been set out by Strathclyde Regional Council and the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC). They each had the same strategic priorities, yet those involved in the individual centres were clear in that you could not necessarily replicated the same thing in different communities across the same city:

"What the trades council then did …when [Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre] was very successful, was send people, fae Garthamlock, fae Milton, and just said, go and copy [Drumchapel]…everybody who then started after, a year or so, were sent and their induction was – go and talk to George at the centre, and he'll tell you what to do. And I'm thinking, but I cannae tell you, I don't know, I don't know where Garthamlock is! Know what I mean. How can I tell you what to dae? I can tell you the principles of what you should dae, try and adapt, your things, to suit the people of Garthamlock, no to suit the people of Drumchapel, that's how I see it. But I think, the trades council at the time thought you could just replicate…that 8 times. And obviously...you Cannae do that in any, any sort of vibrant working-class community, you can't say, it works here so it's gonnae work there." – (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

George's view of how to craft a successful unemployed workers' centre, with activities that were "applicable and relevant" to the residents of the community in which it was set up, chimes well with theorisations of care that present it as necessarily situated and relational (Fisher and Tronto, 1990). Whilst unemployed workers' centres across Scotland might have hosted the same activities, the needs of those in the local communities around the centres shaped how those activities and practices of care were presented and negotiated on an ongoing basis (Tronto, 2015). These acts were also attached to what the workers in the centre explicitly articulated, at least for themselves, as a political project. George noted that his move from being a shop steward in the shipyard to working in the community development work and voluntary sectors was a continuation of his political activities (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021). The different practices that made up relations of care in each space also acted as forms of politicisation. Workers and users of different spaces collaborated on different cultural projects, such as art, music, and drama pieces, that reflected their material conditions. As George recalled:

"*Underlying it all, there was the discussion groups and the drama group, and they were…writing things about the conditions they had…about their expectations, Drumchapel in the 50's, slums of Glasgow as the middle classes call them. To, the great expectations of Drumchapel. And then being let down with mass unemployment."* (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

George appears to separate the notion of unemployment here from the users from the centre themselves, as something external to them. Rather than suggesting that Drumchapel residents themselves who had individually been unable to make the most of the potential of the new housing estates, he suggests it was them who had been collectively let down by the structural neglect they encountered which had led to mass unemployment. Thus, having care activities that were built collectively meant that they could repair the psychological damage of unemployment together, on emotionally and materially reciprocal terms (Bonner-Thompson and McDowell, 2020).

Subsequently, one of the key specific determinants in what sort of caring activities were organised in a given space was the space's physical location. For example, workers and volunteers in the Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre organised a subsidised café on the premises. This meant that people in the community were able to come along to the centre and receive a very cheap, or even free breakfast. Linda, who was involved in community education work at the unemployed workers' centre, even recalled that they set up a children's breakfast club (Interview with Biggerstaff, 2021). Those involved in the unemployed workers' centre took pride in this initiative, having set up a "very good café" in Drumchapel (Interview with Biggerstaff, 2021). This reclamation was important, particularly because of the shame that was identified by centre users as often wrapped up in struggling to access food – which the centre then also addressed. George told me that the centre was open during the week and on Fridays they would send the teenagers that were part of their youth work initiative home with a food parcel. This was not without emotional complications. He recalled that:

"Sometimes the…the young person would be too embarrassed. To come, no all the time, too embarrassed to come but what happens is their mammy or their granny, would come down and say look, he's eating us out of house and home we cannae, he's no got any money we cannae get him a job, so we'd give, we'd try and respond to that in a sort of positive way." (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

The unemployed workers' centre therefore represented a counter to the "affective governmentality" of shame, that otherwise would have resulted in a much more constrained spatiality for centre users (Strong, 2021, pp.74-75). Strong notes that shame produces a conflicting spatiality, in its contradiction as both a deeply personal and highly public emotion. It is a response to a real or

imagined outside influence, that emphasises a personal feeling of individual failure. Furthermore, Strong asserts that we should be mindful of the nuanced and non-linear temporality of shame. As emotions circulate and become attached to certain acts, the complex ways in which this happens across time and space are worth bearing in mind (Ahmed, 2014). As George notes, the young people might not be embarrassed “all the time” which created a need to craft their response with care for both the spatial and temporal considerations of those who visited the centre.

Additionally, access to care that was external to the confines of the household was important (Jupp, 2022). The ease of access to a hot meal, or a cup of tea, was a contrast to the lack of infrastructure in Drumchapel as a housing scheme. One of four key peripheral housing schemes planned in the post-war housing crisis in Glasgow, the others being Castlemilk, Easterhouse, and Pollok, Drumchapel was envisioned as being a “town within a city”. But with botched and delayed plans for recreational spaces such as a cinema, a swimming pool, and even basic shops, many compared the scheme to something more like a dormitory town (Keating and Mitchell, 1987). This perception of the scheme remained even when shops, supermarkets, and other public buildings were set up in the town centre. George, in describing Drumchapel to me in our interview, relayed an anecdote that he’d read and heard from comedian Billy Connolly, that Drumchapel was a “desert wi windaes” (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021). George repeated this quote a couple of times to me throughout the one-on-one and group interviews, suggesting that the image of Drumchapel provoked by Connolly was one that particularly resonated. Contemporary accounts of Drumchapel similarly drew attention to how the mere existence of these amenities was not enough. Robertson (1984)’s investigation into the daily routines of lone parents revealed that access was still a major problem for many participants. The shopping centre was not centrally located, with some participants having to walk 40 minutes, or wait on an unreliable, expensive bus service. Consequently, the option of a hot meal, or even just a cup of tea at the unemployed workers’ centre, diversified the opportunities for Drumchapel residents. Their travel time may have been reduced, or they were at least not the ones who had to prepare the food themselves. The care that infused the infrastructure of Drumchapel unemployed workers’ centre was an important moment of recognition for residents otherwise maligned by the lack of amenities in the scheme and the built environment itself. The provision of this care was articulated in firmly political term, twinned with the acts of protest and campaigning that took place within the centre. This was in line with the wider ethos of the unemployed workers’ centre movement, that emphasised responses to unemployment should revolve around “solidarity not charity” (Griffin, 2023b, p.402).

6.2.2 Mobilities of care and solidarity

This first section highlights the importance of these spaces as consistent, in a particular location that was central and easy for users to access. However, much of the work of each centre was importantly not “stuck” to the locality in which it was based – or to others’ perceptions of the communities that they were utilised by. In fact, the mobilities of the infrastructures of solidarity that characterised some of the spaces provide a useful lens through which to explore their politics of care and solidarity. It reinforces a framework of solidarity that is fluid and generative, in a way that allows for an equally translatable articulation of care. As we might imagine solidarity as able to productively travel between particular places, the acts of care that I propose are crucial to the sustaining of solidarity are similarly mobile. Therefore, emphasising the mobility of both solidarity *and* care reinscribes its generative character in both spatial and temporal terms.

Each of the spaces covered in this thesis played an important role in looking to counter some of the emotional impacts of the structural conditions that enveloped the 1980s – unprecedented post-war unemployment, sharply rising poverty, and the later decimation of the welfare state (Römer, 2022; Worth, 2021). The practices of care that were embedded in women’s centres, bookshops, and unemployed workers’ centres, as some sites of many across the left during this period, were integral to developing long-lasting acts of resistance. At times, this meant carefully addressing intravenous drug use (IDU), particularly in the context of the developing AIDs crisis in the latter half of the 1980s. This was present throughout the work of unemployed workers’ centres in particular, but also in the solidarity work carried out by those involved in Lavender Menace. Raymond Rose remembered working with Scottish AIDs Monitor to do outreach with people who were intravenous drug users and had contracted HIV. He remembered going to visit the homes of people who had been diagnosed with HIV, providing social support alongside other caring activities such as cutting people’s hair. Bringing the care to the homes of those he was supporting was an important part of its provision. It reinforces the need for care to be articulated as mobile and fluid. Overall, the role of intravenous drug use was an important social issue that framed some of the care and solidarity work ongoing in different left-wing spaces, against a backdrop of the wider landscape of the HIV/AIDs crises.

It is difficult to assess the local specificities of IDU during this period. The most notable drug consumed in this way was heroin, and the statistics on “known” heroin users to the Home Office were recorded on a city-wide basis. Nevertheless, historians of drug use and medical practitioners reflecting on patterns of drug use during this period suggest that the early 1980s saw a rapid increase in the use of opioids by way of injection – in particular, heroin (Davenport-Hines, 2002). Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Tayside were three areas in Scotland where rates of heroin use were particularly high compared with the averages across the UK. The impact that this had was felt

deeply at a community and city-wide level. Glasgow and Edinburgh in particular were noted as unique urban centres in that the main method of consumption was via injection rather than smoking (Matheson and Robertson, 2022). This was notable as it marked a change from the ways in which people who used drugs had engaged with them before. Cities with no experience of intravenous drug use suddenly became very familiar with the practice in a way that had not been anticipated by public health authorities or local communities (Robertson and Richardson, 2007). In our interview, Keith Stoddart describes how intravenous drugs, such as heroin, were just a "fucking cancer" in their effects on the community in and around Govan, an area in the south-west of Glasgow where Keith worked in an unemployed workers' centre.

Roy Robertson, who worked as a GP in Muirhouse, Edinburgh during the 1980s, has written extensively about the emergence of intravenous drug use, particularly as it related to the burgeoning HIV and AIDs crisis in Scotland. A strong advocate of harm reduction around intravenous drug use, his work in the 1980s drew attention to the relationship between the use of heroin and social deprivation. He was, and remains, critical of a criminally punitive approach to heroin use. His contemporary work in the 1980s provides some particularly useful reflections on the links between intravenous drug use (mainly heroin) and unemployment, such as:

"Unemployment has a low status in society and carries with it a lack of purposeful activity, an absence of a structure to life and an identification with a peer group with no particular redeeming feature…the choice of heroin use as an occupational substitute may not be as illogical or bizarre as it might seem to those with prospects for following a more conventional career." (Robertson, 1987: pp. 42-43)

Robertson links the use of intravenous drugs to the structural conditions affecting people who are unemployed, rather than pathologizing heroin users as having some innate predisposition to drug use. The sudden increase in intravenous drug use across Scotland in the 1980s can be felt through some of the oral history interviews with those working in Glasgow and Edinburgh's unemployed workers' centres. These testimonies also offer a more magnified look at some of the neighbourhood variations in the availability of heroin, enriching accounts of this period that take a nation or city-wide approach (see Parsons et al., 2002), or longitudinal accounts that focus on particular centres of primary care (see Copeland et al., 2012). George narrated the emergence of heroin into the Drumchapel community in north-west Glasgow very starkly. As he found that when he arrived there in 1983, "you couldnae buy heroin. You had to go to Possil or to, Yoker. Sadly, when I left in 1990/91, it was readily available" (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021. This introduction was perceived to have entrenched people within their communities, in a way that removed the agency of those impacted. Keith, during his time working as the coordinator for the Govan

unemployed workers' centre, recalled that "by the time the 80's came along, there was a lot of drugs, there was a lot of…people who lived in Govan…who couldn't get out" (Interview with Stoddart, 2021).

The association of drug use with immobility in Keith's statement is poignant. Whilst a situated programme of care was important in the context of certain spaces, the ways in which intravenous drug use was handled enforced an unjust lack of mobility for users in and around the unemployed workers' centres. Consequently, George recalled how in Drumchapel, the centre workers and users took matters into their own hands:

"People in power were saying there's no an issue [with heroin use] in Drumchapel. So, we managed to set up a, a needle, a minibus that would pick people up at the health centre, and take them to Ruchill, where there was a needle exchange. And then we could show, through that, there was a need in Drumchapel, and then one was set up." (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

Needle exchange programmes in the UK were set up in the winter of 1986. They were conceptualised as an urgent public health solution primarily to the emerging HIV/AIDs crisis, as intravenous drug users were identified as one of the key groups that were at risk from contracting the virus. Viewed in isolation, they were one of the key measures that brought down rates of new transmission of illnesses such as HIV and hepatitis, among intravenous drug users. Existing literature that covered the "local" response to the needle exchanges, tended to emphasise the "opposition" from the community in which the exchanges were set up. Hayle (2018) in particular details the protests from the local community council in Ruchill, which was where the first needle exchange in Glasgow was set up. Hayle notes that whilst it is reductive to say that needle exchanges were merely imposed on local communities by the central Thatcher government, he states that local policymakers and community members were unable to stop the schemes being set up in their communities despite voicing concern. Hayle's framing of the protestors as the local "community", whilst the exchange users are seemingly depoliticised actors in this encounter, is arguably countered by George's testimony. The juxtaposition of mobile infrastructures of solidarity, in the face of static notions of community "resistance", reveals the importance of viewing care and solidarity in tandem with one another.

6.2.3 Care-full vs. care-less solidarity

The previous section details how some centres served their communities through various acts of care, which were largely shaped not by being situated directly within the communities themselves, but also the potential mobilities of these infrastructures. Their location was integral to the acts of

care people were able to provide for one another, as the spaces accrued regular visitors, but also as regularly on the precipice of precariousness (Kapsali, 2020). This was true in particular for unemployed workers' centres, as demonstrated by George and Linda's testimonies, but their fluidity also highlights the importance of the care work taking place. In other spaces, this same lens reveals the tensions that sometimes arose in considering a politics of location, as related to care and solidarity (Massey, 2022b). For example, those involved in the Glasgow women's centre reflected on how their physical location shaped the care they aimed to provide. The centre was located in the centre of Glasgow, on 57 Miller Street. Some of the women involved argued that this grounded the women's movement in the core of the city and that it made the centre, in theory, easier for a range of women to find. However, as time went on, differing views emerged on how successful this ultimately was in practice.

In the February/March 1985 issue of *Hen's Own*, the magazine produced by the women involved in the Glasgow Women's Centre, members of the centre collective recounted how they had been to a welfare rights course. They reflected on its practical and political usefulness, in light of growing unemployment in Scotland. By January 1985, unemployment had reached 400,000 in Scotland, a landmark not seen since the early 1930s (Fraser and Sinfield, 1987). Delighted by the "critical" approach of the course tutor, that refuted the government's "scrounger" rhetoric, the two women who attended the course decided they were "going to do a series on Welfare Benefits – just like the course we attended, only specially [sic] adapted for women" (Glasgow Women's Centre Newsletter Collective, 1985). This brought the knowledge of the course back to the women's centre, crafted, and reshaped in line with their own aims and specific needs as women using the centre.

This careful approach to disseminating this knowledge was in-keeping with the proposed aims of women's centres. In Sarah Browne's account of the Women's liberation movement in Scotland, she highlights that setting up the centres was part of an attempt to increase working-class women's engagements with the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) (Browne, 2016, p.74). Browne notes that it was expected that women would be able to drop into the centres on their own schedule. They would not be constrained by meeting times that potentially conflicted with work rotas, childcare needs, and other non-negotiable commitments. If they were not able to make a course or a meeting, the information would be there for them to access at any time that was available to them – whether that would be in written form, or by speaking to another centre user. Thus, the importance of a regular, durable meeting space was emphasised throughout all of the centre's activities – where activities such as the welfare rights course could be brought back to. The core group of women involved in running the centre encouraged every woman who visited to take some sort of ownership of the centre, regardless of their level of involvement in the WLM. In the first

issue of *Hen's Own*, they introduce the centre as "for any woman to use, so why not use it, it's your centre" (Glasgow Women's Centre Newsletter Collective, 1984). It was a permanent and openly accessible space for any woman in Glasgow to use. This statement that it was "your centre" suggests that they aimed to encourage the women to take ownership, to feel able to take up space within the centre.

These were the aspirations of the centre. However, to what extent this ideal was felt to be realised or even articulated by all of the women who were involved in the centre, is variable. In my interviews and written communications with women who were involved in the centre, some doubted whether or not the centre was actually perceived as somewhere where women might *want* to drop in. Esther Breitenbach was one of the centre's first paid workers. She recalled the centre receiving funding from both the Manpower Services Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), which consequently meant the centre collective could create paid positions. The EOC was a non-departmental public body that was tasked with ensuring the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act were enforced in the workplace (Byrne and Lovenduski, 1978). Therefore, Esther recalled expectations that the "drop-in" might work for women looking for specific advice on employment, legal, or welfare related issues. She reflected on whether this came to fruition:

"The location did not make it easily accessible or particularly welcoming. During my time there, there is only one occasion that I can recall someone coming in off the street. She was seeking advice in relation to equal pay/sex discrimination, and I referred her onto the EOC Glasgow office. This was exceptional." - (Breitenbach, 2021)

These reflections reveal the potential disparities between the aims of the centres and the reality. Whilst the organising collective had sought to create a space in which women felt able to drop in to find out more about the WLM, not everyone felt as though this had been successful. However, other women involved in the space articulated a different purpose, and perhaps a different audience of the centre "drop-in" model. Luc Broadbent was involved in the Miller Street centre from around 1982, after moving through from Edinburgh to Glasgow. She remembered knowing of the Glasgow Women's Centre even before relocating:

"The women's centre in Miller Street was already on my radar. Being a feminist in Edinburgh, you would know the women's centre in Miller Street…you could turn up and find like-minded women and organise amongst yourselves. In a fairly kind of spontaneous way. And yeah, looking back, it was really magnificent the things that we did." (Interview with Broadbent, 2021)

Luc's reflections here are interesting, given the difference between her and Esther's backgrounds. Luc had first been involved in WLM organising growing up in Oxford and identified women's centres as places for activists to meet and campaign. This was a different perspective to Esther, who been involved in the Scottish scene and articulated women's centres as part of a project to bring non-political women to the WLM. This perhaps speaks to a broader divergence between the role of women's centres in Scotland compared to the ones in England.

Despite being in a different city, Luc's testimony suggests she felt it was a given that women involved in feminist organising in Edinburgh would be aware of the Glasgow women's centre. This reflects the networks of feminist organising than ran throughout and between Edinburgh and Glasgow, and to varying extents, across Scotland. For example, women who were involved in setting up the early Rape Crisis centres talked about how they had joined a number of different collectives over the course of their time organising around violence against women (Maitland and Rape Crisis Scotland, 2009). Some of this was down to changes in their personal lives, such as moving from different cities for a new job, to be with friends and family, etc. At other times, this involved shorter trips with the explicit purpose that women from an established centre would travel to a city where the collective was in the processing of setting up a Rape Crisis centre, to offer training, support, and guidance. Rape Crisis women also often set up their initial premises in an established women's centre before finding their own premises, which was the case in Edinburgh (Maitland and Rape Crisis Scotland, 2009, p.25). These acts highlight the ways in which acts of solidarity can facilitate the mobility of particular ideas, in ways that produce new infrastructures of solidarity in new locations.

Consequently, it is understandable that in the midst of these flows and connections, Luc would have been aware of the Miller Street centre even before moving to Glasgow. What is notable, is how the tone of her recollections contrast with Esther's, given their different perspectives on how prominent the centre was with women across Glasgow and Edinburgh. This is further heightened by the two women's assertions of how important the centre (both the Miller Street centre specifically, and the concept of a specific, dedicated space) was to the broader landscape of feminist organising in Scotland. Esther wrote to me that:

"From my perspective, the fact of there being a specific space such as the Women's Centre was less important than the networks and groups that existed and were sustained over a period of time. Of course, it is the case that having some sort of formal organisation, and an office location would have been essential to the success of the women involved with the Centre in getting a grant from the EOC. So, without the centre, my research post would not have existed. But in terms of the movement's development, I don't think any specific space was crucial. More to the point was the

durability of groups and organisations such as Women's Aid and Rape Crisis, the growth of local government women's committees and the ability of women's organisations to respond to the changing political situation…there was a benefit to having the centre…but groups would have found places to meet even without the centre, as they did before it existed, and as they continued to do after it closed." (Breitenbach, 2021)

Esther places less of an emphasis on the physical, dedicated space itself than Luc does in her account of feminist organising during this period. For both of them, a meaningful politics of location appeared to mean different things. For Luc, the women's centre was an important locus of different trajectories of the women's movement in Glasgow, and even beyond. The centre acted as a meeting point, where relationships of solidarity were built in and around other events and campaigns that were ongoing. The care was embedded in through simply having the centre at all, for allowing a space of reprieve and connection. For Esther, this seemed to be less certain. Whilst acknowledging the practical usefulness of the centre in even securing her post, the importance of the centre as a focal point for building those networks of solidarity is perhaps less convincing in her account. Both of these contrasting views of the centre are further illuminated by the emotional experience wrapped up in the experience of being involved as activists in each space – as the place of each centre or bookshop within these fluid networks is emphasised by the emotions that rippled within and around them.

6.3 Emotion

6.3.1 Emotion as motivation; emotional burnout

"I felt really betrayed by the Labour party at the end [of the miners' strike]…hurt and betrayed…and I was looking for a group that wouldn't sell out, I mean, I was furiously incandescent with anger…about what had been done to the miners and their communities, but also what was going on in South Africa…what was going on in my own, the steel workers, because they…I feel quite emotional about this but, but they…before they took on the miners, they attacked the steel industry." (Interview with Goupillot, 2021)

For Bob, the path to getting involved in the Edinburgh unemployed workers' centre was an intensely emotional one. He cited his feelings of anger and frustration with the Labour party as the trigger that pushed him towards an alternative form of political organising. The use of the word "betrayed", and the way that he became choked up towards the end of this anecdote, reveals a deeper, historic layer of emotion running throughout this reaction. His explanation of his feelings towards the left are woven throughout industrial disputes, apartheid struggle, and political conflict – some of which he indicated a direct personal link to, others not. Bob experienced the emotions

produced by these events as woven across the temporal and spatial narrative of his life, as they compounded and accumulated round one another.

Kelliher (2018) usefully illustrates how taking a historical approach to the geographies of solidarity illuminates how these relationships form and maintain over time. By situating relationships of solidarity within longer-term and geographically broader historical process, geographers can assess how political disputes are shaped in more temporally expansive ways. From Bob's testimony, the same can be said for the emotions that shaped and continue to shape his political life and how these enduring relationships of solidarity felt. At the beginning of the above excerpt, Bob describes anger as a prominent emotion that propelled him towards getting involved in the unemployed workers' centre. This is in keeping with the literature on how emotion shapes a person's journey to joining protests, social movements, and similar. Eslen-Ziya et al. (2019) explore how different types of political spaces can also shift the emotions that are felt when activists arrive at particular political movements. Whilst Eslen-Ziya et al. acknowledge that certain feelings might not totally disappear, the setting of a protest space may transform these emotions into a point of connection.

Whilst this is a far more idyllic reading of the emotional interactions that sometimes played out in unemployed workers' centres, bookshops, and women's centres, this framework of emotional trajectories is potentially useful. For many, being involved in unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and/or bookshops, was a political project that was articulated in heavily emotional terms. This was particularly apparent when interviewees discussed how their participation in each space came to an end. Depending on which space they were involved in and for how long, some people saw the closure of centres and shops, whereas others left long before a space actually had to shut its doors. In many instances, the decision to leave a space, whether voluntarily or not, was an emotional one. This was intertwined with the material conditions that led to the closure of a space. Keith Stoddart, who was the coordinator of the unemployed workers' centre in Govan, recalled he thought one of the main reasons for the centre closing was that it just "died, it ran out of steam, because it ran out of money" (Interview with Stoddart, 2021).

Much of the funding for unemployed workers' centres was felt to be precarious. Many, especially in Glasgow, were funded by the Urban Aid programme. Introduced in 1969, by 1980 it was subject to a UK government review, which left many concerned in spaces such as unemployed workers' centres about the amount of funding allocated to sustain and expand the programme. Around the time that Keith left in 1985/6, there had already been projections that Urban Aid funding was lessening in availability, with very few new project applications being approved (HC Deb, 13 July 1984). For some, this was another challenge of working in an unemployed workers' centre that

they were proud of being able to overcome. Jackie Baillie, who was the coordinator of the unemployed workers' centre in the Gorbals in the 1980s, an area in Glasgow on the south bank of the river Clyde, said that she "learnt how to be creative" when it came to securing money for the centre (Baillie, 2021). She presented this as an expected start of working in the unemployed workers' centre, recalling that, "I needed to just come up with the, the creativity to have the ideas, to enable that pot to flow, and it did, and you know. Was it uncertain? Yes. But did we do it...Absolutely."

Jackie's account presents the perseverance around funding as something that she was proud of in relation to her work in the centre. Being able to secure money for their work, learning how to navigate the different bureaucratic loopholes, was an important skill. There is a sense from her testimony that this was just something they *had* to navigate. This tone of inevitability was mirrored in other types of spaces during this period too, such as bookshops. For example, Lavender Menace opened as Scotland's first lesbian and gay bookshop in 1982. It remained in the same location, under the same name, until 1986 when it moved location and became West and Wilde. In my interview with Bob, Sigrid, and Raymond, who had all been involved in setting up and running both premises to different extents, we discussed the different considerations they had made in changing the shop name and location. This brought out some reflections from Raymond on how they discussed what they needed for the shop to run sustainably – particularly in relation to their relationship with capital. As a shop, they had a different function to unemployed workers' centres and women's centres, though these spaces at times did have bookstalls or very small bookshops within the premises. Consequently, Raymond recalled that:

"I think that's just one of those undeniable facts that the left has to grapple with, is that commercialism, is what gives you the energy to…not the energy that's the wrong word, it gives you the…I don't want to say energy because your energy is political." (Interview with Rose, 2021)

Raymond's and Jackie's reflections are useful when drawn together. There was a recognition among most of the people I spoke to in the research that money was a core part of being able to keep a space going, as evidenced by Keith's reflection that when the Govan unemployed workers' centre ran out of money, "it died." Some felt more uneasy about this than others. Raymond's point that it was an "undeniable fact that the left has to grapple with" suggests a degree of pragmatism, or perhaps a reluctant acceptance. He suggests that there are other ways in which to fill your "energy" when it came to the space, so aspects of funding should be less of a political concern. On the other hand, Jackie's view could be read as being less resigned. There was a sense of pride in being able to continually secure money for the centre and if that meant it enabled the space to

keep going, then it was a good thing. These vignettes emphasise the emotionality inherent throughout all of the infrastructural negotiations that were explored in chapter four of the thesis.

This account is reflective of the struggle for many radical bookshops that were operating throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Delap's (2016) work on feminist, LGBT, and other radical bookshops operating throughout this period, details the tensions many activists felt in working in these spaces. Whilst deep political commitments might spark a person's involvement in the space, this was not enough to sustain themselves alone. Often bookshop volunteers and workers spoke of poor conditions, low profits, and the precarious existence of these spaces as contributing factors to a sense of exhaustion (p.19). Greg Michaelson, who volunteered for a number of years in the First of May bookshop in Edinburgh, noted the marked difference between how he felt when he first got involved with the shop compared to how his emotions progressed after being active there for several years:

"I think there was probably, there was burnout as well. You know, you can't go on doing this open endedly, just when you're starting something up it's really exciting. When you're running it, it becomes a grind." (Interview with Michaelson, 2021)

Again, the way in which Greg articulated that the project would have always had an end point in sight is perhaps reflective of that same feeling of inevitability that is echoed throughout some of the other testimonies. This could be attributed to the particular space of our oral history interview. This was an opportunity to reflect on how the space had developed over time, including any emotional attachments that had shifted as the bookshop changed (Andrews et al., 2006). As such, it was an evaluative moment that may not have been exactly indicative of what Greg was exactly thinking and feeling at the time. Nevertheless, Greg's retrospective account echoes this section from the First of May's first newsletter, published on September 1st, 1977, just two months after opening:

"Very recently it's been gloomy; not [sic] point in trying to hide this. The main reasons have been a fall-off in sales and near-crisis with filling the Rota for staffing the shop during advertised opening hours. More and more work has been carried by fewer people, and jobs have gone uncompleted…Discussions will continue, but the basic problem is that someone volunteering to go on the Rota…does not have any clear idea what s/he is getting committed to…similarly the idea of rotating jobs at 2-monthly intervals has proved unsatisfactory for the people involved. Confidence with any job is hard to establish, and 2 months is far too short…and some jobs carry more 'glamour' or 'responsibility' than other jobs." (First of May Collective, 1977)

The use of the word “gloomy” is indicative of the emotional toll on the collective that those current conditions were having. Whilst only being attached to one bookshop in this anecdote, these spaces were situated as part of a broader left-wing political project. Thus, the emotional experience of being involved in a shop that was, or unfortunately was not, doing well was extrapolated to the hope for success for the left. Bob Orr, who was one of the founders of Lavender Menace, put it that, “lots of people on the left [at that time] really did think it wouldn’t take that much to overthrow the government, and…the bookshops fed into that trend” (Interview with Orr, 2021). Consequently, when interviewees discussed the closure of a space, this was often broadened out to an account of the fall of the left in the 1980s in general. Keith lamented that, “this was going to be, you know, we weren't, we were going in one direction. And [the left] just needed a final push. And [capitalism] would all fall down round about its ears. [But] Thatcher, capitalism was cleverer than us” (Interview with Stoddart, 2021).

The emotions that were wrapped up in the closure of these spaces were also wrapped up in the sadness, frustration, and anger around how the left fared under attack in the 1980s. In a sense, the spaces represented an opportunity to build something new, or at the least renewed. Those involved were acutely aware of how these spaces were affected by the same conditions that produced left-wing defeats – but the hope imbued in the accounts of organising in unemployed workers’ centres, women’s centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops represents a particular conjuncture of hoping new alternatives could be built. Toscano (2014) speaks of the “melancholy of reform”, as the same cycles of crisis produce the repeating economic conditions that order our response to those crises on depressingly similar terms. He refers to the resignation that develops as political solutions are repeatedly articulated within the same structures that have produced the problems in the first place. The sense of melancholia throughout Keith’s reflections speaks directly to this idea – an awareness of political limitation, but the hope there was a path to something different.

These experiences of burnout were also compounded by how political developments and investment were intertwined with the personal lives of activists. For many, the personal toll was immense. As Keith explained his departure from Govan unemployed workers’ centre, he briefly told me that:

"I left in ‘86? Erm, my, maybe was it ’85, 86? I should ask my wife [Rosie laughs] I think it was around about then? I had, well, the other side of it was such was the emotional eh, and time investment that my then relationship broke up, you know? Yeah. And eh, yes. So, so there was a toll, you know, for activism, that was a toll for that investment" (Interview with Stoddart, 2021)

For some, the emotional repercussions of their involvement in these spaces were contained within their walls. However, Keith's testimony demonstrates that there was not always a neat boundary between centre and non-centre life, between the political organising that he was part of and the relationships that were built in and around that. The impact of centre work and building relationships of solidarity was perceived to have left a tangible mark on people's lives beyond the physical boundaries of infrastructures such as unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops (Pratt, 2008). George also left Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre in the early 1990s. Having been involved in building the aforementioned infrastructure around heroin use, this was one of the primary reasons that he cited for moving on:

"And I left Drumchapel, and I was talking about the implication of the moving in of heroin, and I left Drumchapel in my last year, and I just said I cannae, I cannae cope anymore. The number of funerals I went to in the last year, of young people, young people I'd known, under 20, who had died eh, and I just say I cannae face this anymair. Erm, so I left and went to work in Airdrie. Erm…so, so, aye there's some of they memories that are hard to deal wi. Are hard to deal with. Erm…aye the heroin thing was just…and down to Thatcher, down to Thatcher" (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

This quote encapsulates the experiences of burnout and the emotional fallout of the assault on working-class communities that characterised much of the interview testimonies. George positions the repercussions of Thatcherite policies as being literally deadly. Whilst collective networks of care were important, and inspired hope in many of those involved in the centre, those infrastructures were made from people whose physically and emotionally exhausted bodies struggled greatly (Andueza et al., 2021).

6.3.2 Interpersonal relationships

The impact of political burnout on personal relationships is important to consider in terms of what the emotional toll of being involved in these spaces could be, in view of the precariousness of these spaces and the lives around them. It is also integral to the crafting of networks of solidarity in and beyond any one given centre or bookshop – particularly across cities, the rest of Britain, and beyond. Personal relationships sustained many networks of solidarity, from picket lines to the centres of solidarity campaigns. They closed the physical distance between places and spaces, forging connections between striking workers, activists, campaign groups, and more (Kelliher, 2021a). Luc Broadbent recalled exactly this, in her accounts of travelling down from Glasgow to Greenham Common. She told me that the expeditions down to Greenham were organised via the Glasgow Women's Centre, using their Miller Street location as a base through which to collect the

money that would fund the bus. Despite being initially worried that they would not be able to fill the bus, they ended up having to organise more. She remembered that:

"So huge crowd of us went down to do the embrace the base and we did all the decorating of the, of the fence around Greenham Common and did all the holding hands around it and stuff and then started to go up and down quite regularly, some women stayed there all the time, some women got there, fell in love with other women who were there. And then the Greenham women went up to Glasgow and to and fro." (Interview with Broadbent, 2021)

Even when people did not initially meet through political campaigning, these personal relationships could still contribute to sustaining networks and connections of solidarity between particular spaces. Kate Fearnley recalled moving from Edinburgh to London to start a PhD but not feeling able to completely leave behind relationships she had forged with people at university. Kate later got involved in Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners in London, whilst also struggling with the lack of organising and spaces for bisexual people within lesbian and gay liberation. Consequently, she became involved with the London Bisexual Group. As she described the continued back and forth between Edinburgh and London, she was embedded enough within each city to continue organising in both. Noting the continued lack of bisexual organising in Edinburgh, knowing it was happening in London, she started the Edinburgh Bisexual Group. What started as an interpersonal connection that provided a mechanism for her to travel between two cities, shifted into a channel for her to translate those infrastructures of solidarity within and between those cities.

However, whilst interpersonal relationships could strengthen networks of solidarity, relying on these could also create spaces of closure, where decision-making and affinities were reserved to smaller and smaller groups of people within a particular space or network. George reminisced on this at length, seeking to position himself well away from that model of organising.

"If you're in a position where you're managed by a committee, the easiest, a great thing to do would be to have that committee made up of friends and supporters, likeminded people. And I always seen that as, two things, I've always seen that as a cheap way of doing things and the wrong way of doing things. The other was getting a pool table in, they wanted to, let's get a pool table in to get people. I think you get, a group of people that like playing pool, everything else dies, no women come into the centre, no families come into the centre cos they, the pool table gives an aggressive male… And I remember I started in Drumchapel, and I said, if I, if I ever suggest, we get a pool table for this, I'll gie up this job because I've failed, in what we're trying to do here. Because it gave that macho…stuff. So, so in Drumchapel and I'm only speaking for there, we encouraged a whole range of new, community, and to some extent, political activity. And activists, in other places I think

they relied, and that's just by observations so don't quote me on that, in other places they seemed to rely on…more old-fashioned, the more old-fashioned, the people they knew. Erm that's the best way I could put it." (Interview with Kirkpatrick, 2021)

Later in the interview, George disappointedly told me that once he had left the centre, he returned to find a new pool table in one of the main rooms. This decision was narrated in the same retelling as the criticisms of a "closed ranks" view of organising. As such, the gendered implications of this sort of approach are notable. The spatial politics of the centre could be impacted by the personal relationships that formed those infrastructures, in ways that had particularly gendered connotations. This did not mean that sexist behaviour went unchallenged. Linda Biggerstaff, who was a community education worker that regularly organised classes in Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre, noted that:

"If you went along to the unemployed workers' centre, you had to be careful…because although you had a good time, you couldn't, you couldn't be saying the things you would say working in the shipyard, right…there'd be women roundabout you, there'd be kids roundabout you." (Interview with Biggerstaff, 2021)

With this perspective, the care and solidarity were conditional on each centre user committing to fulfil an established set of spatial politics. George and Linda both position those interpersonal relationships as something that is integral to maintaining that. They were not willing to take it as given that those networks would suit the centre they were trying to build, without the active intervention and participation from those involved in the centre. Therefore, whilst not diminishing the importance of personal relationships in sustaining and enriching those networks of solidarity, this account highlights the importance of not taking such an account as given.

6.4 Conclusion

The emotional and care-full politics of unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops explored throughout this chapter are integral to uncovering how acts, relationships, and infrastructures of solidarity are sustained over time. Building on chapters four and five, I set out why unpacking the ways in which these spaces were built and maintained across difference is enhanced by an analysis of the relationships of care threaded throughout each site. As established in chapter five, constructing solidarity was interwoven with the personal networks and relationships that connected difference spaces and different groups to one another. This provoked complex emotional reflections, which I argue should be a central site of study for engaging with how solidarity is negotiated across diverse political groups. It nuances our

understanding of what might initially seem to be contradictory solidarities, by revealing how political actors negotiated different emotions in pursuit of particular goals.

Consequently, I contend that care is an integral relation to factor into an analysis of these emotional relationships of solidarity. The empirical material I engage with throughout this chapter evidences the thoughtful care-full solidarities that sustained those organising within these infrastructures and ultimately the spaces themselves. From this, I propose deploying a framework of care that is generously defined, yet that maintains a contextual specificity in engaging with how different actors infused care throughout their political work (Jupp, 2022; Tronto, 2015). The efforts of maintaining and organising within infrastructures of solidarity was articulated and felt in deeply emotional terms. The emotional support needed to run a space was equivalent to the material resources necessary to keep infrastructures of solidarity open. Therefore, I argue that our analyses of the historical geographies of solidarity must account for the emotional contours of these relationships.

The emotional work of being involved in infrastructures of solidarity was particularly acute as those I interviewed realised they were going to leave a space or that it was going to close entirely. Reflecting on what happened or might have happened after the closure of a space prompted a new set of emotional reflections in the oral history interviews I conducted. As I conclude this thesis, I reflect on the legacies of these spaces and what the practical implications of this work could be for practising solidarity today.

Chapter 7.

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has presented unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops as infrastructures of solidarity that are vital to an understanding of the left in 1980s Scotland, and of the historical geographies of solidarity more broadly (Kelliher, 2018). Having argued that a more substantive discussion of these sites was largely missing from existing analyses within historical and geographical literatures, I have sought to remedy this by producing an account of their infrastructural, spatial, and emotional politics. By critically engaging with the left through the lens of these spaces, I have offered up new ways of understanding the politics of solidarity across difference, across emotion, and across dynamic temporalities. Crucially, conducting oral history interviews was a constitutive part of my analysis and overall thesis argument. The contributions I have made in this thesis are contingent on the uniqueness of oral history theory and practice. Centring oral history has enabled this thesis to excavate the emotionality and care-full solidarities that were built across spaces of political organising in this period. I contend that this in itself is a novel contribution to geography's engagement with oral history as a methodology.

The first section of this conclusion captures the key contributions of the thesis to historical and geographical literature. I reassert the key arguments of this thesis, grounding my work in ongoing debates on how researchers can understand the temporal and spatial dimensions of solidarity. The second section demonstrates my central methodological intervention. I outline the ways in which we geographers can advance our emotional understandings of solidarity through a politically grounded use of oral history theory and practice. I suggest some ways that researchers can utilise and continue this work, both in practising solidarity and engaging with scholarly work on the subject. The primary theoretical and empirical interventions of this research – the contested and generative labour of constructing spaces of solidarity, the emotional contours of this work, and the spatialities of solidarity across diverse political subjectivities – continue to resonate with contemporary geographical theorising and struggle. Third, I propose some ways in which this research opens up new avenues for research in historical geography that might be taken up beyond this thesis. Finally, I reflect on the ongoing relevance of this research for contemporary and future collective left-wing organising, and the ways in which I hope some of these reflections can aid those of us on the left's understandings of practically enacting solidarity. Practically, the pursuit

for space for left-wing political organising remains an ongoing issue. Emotionally, I take stock of the methodological contribution this thesis has made, in producing a politically grounded, collaborative practice of oral history interviewing, that is embedded in the movements that I and some of the interviewees remain a part of.

7.2 Addressing research objectives.

At the outset of this thesis, I set out how I would attend to three core research objectives. This section details how I have addressed each one in turn.

My first research objective was to assert the centrality of infrastructures of solidarity to understanding the historical geographies of left-wing organising in the 1980s in Scotland. This was set out at the start of the thesis by situating them as unique sites emerging at a particular political conjuncture in 1980s Scotland. For many activists, Thatcher's consecutive victories, often compounded by discontent with the national Labour party, consolidated the need for grassroots organising that could be sustained outwith the bounds of party politics. Infrastructures of solidarity, like unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops, were an integral part of that vision. I then further addressed this research aim in chapter two by outlining the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis, further emphasising the case that these sites are uniquely well-suited to an analysis of the historical geographies of solidarity in 1980s Scotland. Using Massey's key theorisations on space, as a product of social relations and as a domain of multiplicity, I have demonstrated the ways in which infrastructures of solidarity were produced by *and* constitutive of various political trajectories. This centres their spatial relations in the constitution of the political culture and organising that these infrastructures located, emphasising their integral place in analyses of the left during this period. To evidence this, I empirically substantiated this claim in chapter four through a discussion of how each space was originally constructed. Interrogating the ways in which activists found premises for, funded, and ran different infrastructures of solidarity foregrounds the spatial in the constitution of the political project of each site and of the wider 1980s Scottish left.

The second research objective was to critically engage with the emotional geographies of these sites through an exploration of the relations of care that constituted and sustained the solidarities built within them. In chapter five, I located this within a discussion of solidarity across difference, considering how the different forms of networked politics informed the spatial articulations of solidarity. I proposed that by analysing the negotiation of difference across unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops, we can argue for a generative and fluid articulation of solidarity. This argument is grounded in theorisations of solidarity that go beyond it as a relation between similar groups or those with similar experiences (Featherstone, 2012;

Gilmore, 2007; Mohanty, 2003). Viewing these relationships through the prism of infrastructures of solidarity reveals their capacity to house the tensions of organising across difference as something generative, rather than as something to overcome or surmount. This coexistence of difference opens up a more expansive terrain of organising across diverse political movements and subjectivities, rather than reinscribing narratives of competition (Massey, 2022b). In chapter six, I further evidenced this by attending to the relationships of care that were interwoven throughout the complex emotionality of such coexistence of difference (Massey, 2004, 1999). I located the care-full solidarities that were integral to the maintenance of each space. The ideological project of Thatcherism had a profound emotional impact on those organising within each space, articulated as inherently destructive and sometimes deadly. The need to build alternatives from the grassroots was a core reconfiguration of the left through these spaces (Hall, 1988; Hall and Jacques, 1989). The activities and relationships of care that were produced within different spaces were therefore identified as crucial ways to fight back on a day-to-day level. I contend that these are inseparable from any understanding of how these infrastructures of solidarity maintained over time (Kelliher, 2018).

The final research objective was to produce a framework for deeper geographical engagements with oral history theory and practice. In chapter three, I established my methodological contribution which demonstrated the centrality of oral history to this thesis' overall argument. My analysis of the inter-subjective relationships across the oral history interviews, between the narrators and myself, and between interviewees, was paramount to my overall analysis. I draw from work on the "shared authority" between interviewer and interviewee to outline the collective political vision the interviewees and I were invested in (Frisch, 1990; Sitzia, 1999). I continue to address this research aim in this final chapter, as I reflect on the contemporary relevance of this thesis in the political organising I remain part of. The process of conducting oral history interviews enabled periods of reflection on perceived failures in a way that remained open to the potential of the future. I think through how we can best continue to capture the historical geographies of political organising as we live them, building on the reflections of those like the interviewees in this thesis. The empirical material contains a number of vignettes that mirror the obstacles my comrades and I face in our contemporary organising. Therefore, the practical implications of my final research aim remain a relevant political project.

7.3 Constructing infrastructures of solidarity: theoretically situating the emotional histories and geographies of the left in the 1980s.

Doreen Massey proposed that "the most crucial aspect of the dimension we call 'space' is that it is the dimension of multiplicity, of the more-than-one" (2004, p. 14; 1999). To examine a space is to

reveal a myriad of trajectories, coalesced and reshaped within a particular site. This means going beyond reinscribing these sites as passive endpoints, as outcomes of the politics of the left during this period (Browne, 2016; Bruley, 2013). I have argued that these sites are deserving of a fuller engagement, that accounts for the overlapping and contested political trajectories produced and reproduced within these infrastructures. Each stage of opening a space produced new considerations for those involved, that became interwoven through the political meaning of each site. The ways in which they shaped, and were shaped by, the dynamics of the left over the 1980s, excavates the intricacies of everyday life in political organising over this period (Brooke, 2014).

This, I have demonstrated, enables a dynamic understanding of politics, that positions the ways in which solidarity can hold, and be enriched by, difference and different subjectivities (Kelliher, 2014b; Sundberg, 2007). In chapter five, I draw out the relevant formal and informal networks that connected particular sites together. These networks opened up the boundaries of each space, pulling the relations and encounters that linked them into sharper focus. This was true for extending out the map of left-wing activity, but also in terms of who was working together, and how they were doing so. The day-to-day encounters within each space revealed a negotiation of difference at the everyday level, complicating accounts that suggest that the lines between particular subjectivities, where articulated spatially, were always rigidly enforced (Lockyer, 2013; Owen, 2013). This is not to flatten difference nor to romanticise these negotiations as without tension. Rather, I contend that it challenges a sense of inevitability around difference, which is crucial for a genuinely generative and expansive framework of solidarity. Crucially, to advance this as a political position has important implications for contemporary political organising. It gives us a history to situate ourselves in, as we resist calls to “avoid division” across the left for the sake of a reductive, artificial unity around taking only material and class-based concerns forward. Taking space not as a surface produces a renewed understanding of the role particular spaces can play in shaping broader relations of solidarity across difference, opening up new and renewed political possibilities (Massey, 1999, p. 8).

To consolidate this latter point, through my attention to the emotional geographies produced by their construction, this research has offered new insights as to how relationships of solidarity can continue to endure across diverse political groups and social movements, situated within longer-term historical relationships (Featherstone, 2012; Kelliher, 2018). Griffin (2023) usefully illuminates the ways in which the “intangible” or “imagined solidarities” were of equivalent importance in sustaining those on the People’s March for Jobs, alongside material resources in each locale where marchers would take a break (Bayat, 2005). The imaginary of solidarity was an important emotional resource that Griffin posits might offer useful insights as to how solidarities maintain even when a physical presence is not there. This point was an integral site of development for

examining spaces such as unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay bookshops. Therefore, I have sought to demonstrate that capturing and historicising "infrastructures of solidarity" necessities engaging with the emotional politics of these different sites through a relational approach – and a framework which takes the emotional contours of solidarity as often *constitutive* of the material acts.

This is evidenced in particular in chapter six, as I foreground the emotional historical geographies produced as many of these spaces closed. I argue that foregrounding the emotional trajectories circulating throughout these sites is vital. It enables an understanding of the ways in which their infrastructures were built that centres the embodied labour of crafting and sustaining particular spaces. This builds on work that interweaves an emotional analysis into articulations of solidarity. This is imbued throughout work such as Copestake's (2023a, 2023b) on the shared emotions of particular moments of solidarity. Her work similarly asserts the value of centring the emotionality of historical demonstrations of solidarity. In this spirit, developed through Massey's thoughts on space as a product of social relations, this research has demonstrated the ways in which we might consider emotional solidarities beyond singular shared emotions. It considers the circulating emotions and emotional trajectories that shape particular spaces, considering the emotional bases to solidarity that move beyond a particular shared emotion as the basis for collective action in pursuit of political goals (Brown and Pickerill, 2009). In practical terms, I offer this as a counter to masculinist accounts of political organising that position emotion and tension as a distraction, as something to be dealt with outside the realm of where the real action happens – aligning with accounts that problematise what exactly this "real" political work should constitute (Askins and Swanson, 2019; Bishop and O'Connor, 2023).

In attending to the construction of these spaces, I have engaged with the various ways in which that unemployed workers' centres, women's centres, and lesbian and gay centres were structured, funded, and staffed intimately shaped their spatial politics. This contested process illuminates and nuances hard boundaries between what work was conducted within the arms of the state, and what was outside (Beveridge and Cochrane, 2023; Wheeler, 2021; Joubert, 2023). Through conducting oral history interviews with a range of people engaging with particular segments of the left across a variety of spaces, I have captured the fluidity of acts of solidarity across these different sites. This is evidenced in chapter four, as I engage with the various ways in which people fought for funding, space, and labour to run different sites. The meaning assigned to these three components was continuously reconfigured, and often mapped unevenly onto how solidarity was enacted through the practical work of setting up a space – in that disagreements over form did not necessarily restrict different actors from showing solidarity, albeit critically. I have therefore revealed that a more intricate examination of these spaces is necessary for fully understanding

their role in rooting the left in non-rigid ways (Kelliher, 2021a). This dynamic picture enriches accounts of the various projects of “local socialism” during this period and their complicated state entanglements, particularly in a Scottish historical-geographical context (Cooper, 2017; Lent, 2001; Payling, 2014). To examine each space’s engagements with their adjacent regional authorities (notably, Strathclyde Regional Council), complements work on this phenomenon beyond the boundaries of the GLC.

This thesis has explored how these spaces were situated in a variety of left-wing networks, facilitated by both the material and emotional infrastructures of these spaces. The ways in which solidarities were carried from space to space enables a more dynamic understanding of both the formal and informal transmissions of solidarity. The mobilities produced by acts of solidarity were produced by connections between particular spaces, which reconfigured where particular politics could take place (Kelliher, 2023; Sheller, 2018). Through opening up this expansive terrain of engagement, infused with the simultaneous richness and complications of inter-personal connections, this reasserts the centrality of understanding the personal within the political of acts of solidarity (Binard, 2017). Therefore, I have sought to demonstrate that analysing these networks through spaces like unemployed workers’ centres, women’s centres, and bookshops reveals how tensions and solidarities could be, steadily or unsteadily, held together in space, in a way that is generative of new possibilities, past, present, and future. As Massey contends, “(b)oth space and history are ‘open’ – […] these two opennesses are really two sides of the same coin, each essential to the other” (1999, p. 4).

7.4 Oral historical geographies of collective struggle – new methodological directions

Through the research practice of this work, I have produced a novel methodological contribution - that oral history is uniquely well placed to capture both the emotionality and spatiality of historical narratives (Hampton, 2022). The interviews were an opportunity for participants to reflect on what the spaces *were,* but also what the spaces enabled them to do, in ways that would have been more challenging to replicate through solely written sources. The privileging of what the spaces did or enabled was present in a number of the conversations I had with interviewees, as they linked what the absence of these spaces meant for political struggle today. Rather than missing the space for space’s sake, they imparted upon me what is to be done through the walls of left-wing political space. Thus, in the third chapter of this thesis, I have illustrated a methodology for exploring emotional historical geographies of solidarity through conducting oral history interviews with those involved in political struggle past and present. I have pointed to some ways in which geographers can engage with oral history more fully, as I argue its full potential as a research practice in geography could be captured more substantially. This contribution has been deeply informed by

my own subjectivity, as someone active in the tenant and trade union movement in Glasgow. I have contributed to the work of feminist oral historians in asserting the value of the inter-subjective relationship in producing and analysing historical geographical narratives on solidarity (Abrams, 2016; Borland, 2018; Summerfield, 2000). I have taken inspiration from existing accounts that embed historical geographical research into their contemporary organising (Tubridy, 2023). How a number of the interviewees engaged with the research process was shaped by our collective intersubjectivity as people invested in a left-wing political project. This inter-subjectivity was not a foregone conclusion – I do not mean to argue that a shared politics between researcher and participant automatically produce a fruitful interview encounter. What I argue is that the work that both parties put into the interview was woven throughout our broader political goals, which was usually made explicit as the conversation flowed. I sought to be transparent with the ways in which I was able to learn and benefit from speaking to the oral history interviewees, beyond the objectives of the PhD research. Both the process and the resulting record of the oral history interviews I have conducted have been instrumental in how I have developed my theoretical understanding of solidarity, and how I practice it in contemporary political organising, and I credit that significantly to those that I was able to speak to throughout the research process.

As explored in chapter three, I conducted both one-on-one and group oral history interviews. This political inter-subjectivity was present in both modes of interviewing, but the group oral history interviews were a unique coalescence of the collective politics of organising and remembering even at a small scale. In both instances, the groups I interviewed were made up of participants who had organised together during the 1980s. This was present throughout both of the interviews and my analysis accounts for the importance of the *process* of collective oral history interviewing, as well as the outcome. Often, the focus in oral history theory with respect to group interviews is how it affects which memories are reconstructed, and whether such collective memories are at all accessed in such a unique environment (Cordonnier et al., 2022; Coupland, 2015). The practicalities of interviewing more than one narrator at once are often engaged with, as oral historians and oral historical geographers have reflected on the challenges of this work (Halbwachs, 1992; Layman, 2009; Smith, 2015). I argue that to go beyond thinking of these as points to overcome, and beyond the interview as a potential for revealing collective memories, illuminates the possibilities of the *how* and the *why* in group interviewing. The act of coming together, as oral history participants, as those who organised together, and continue to do so, is revealing of a rich political inter-subjectivity that is present throughout all of the resulting transcripts.

The methodological implications and future directions of this research owe much to the ongoing efforts of those I interviewed in their own archiving and oral history projects. Bob and Sigrid, involved in Lavender Menace, continue the work of the shop in name through their archival project,

and collecting and preserving queer books, alongside hosting events. Their website states, “We not only collect queer history, we are queer history! We go all the way back to 1976, when our co-founders Bob and Sigrid first started selling LGBTQ+ books” (Lavender Menace, n.d.). They explicitly situate themselves in that longer-term history of their organising together, leading up to the opening of the Lavender Menace bookshop in 1982. These connections are crucial. Interviewed as the curator of the Sexual Minorities Archive, Ben Power Alwin reflected that:

“The archive was started in 1974 as part of the Lesbian Feminist Centre, which was a storefront that was rented by a collective of lesbians. That was a very bold thing to do, literally coming out of the closet and onto the streets by renting this big, windowed storefront on the north side of Chicago to have a bookstore and then this little nascent library in the back.” (Rawson, p.179, 2015)

These spatial histories of conserving liberatory histories are crucial to our broader historical narratives of struggle. The reconstruction of these sites, through new ways of archiving and coming together, are important parts of our political and methodological stories – often beyond the reach of the university. This continued work, for me, will go on to be a crucial part of the research that has embedded itself in my everyday practices of political organising. In Living Rent, I credit the work of Joey Simons in holding archival history workshops for Living Rent members, often when needed most – breaking up the business of our Annual General Meetings with a reminder of the ongoing lineage we create through our organising. In addition to this, I have been in touch with a number of interviewees regarding follow-up conversations, in the context of the trade union spaces we share. I hope to arrange to record them, but the move to make space to have these reflections at all is a hopeful first step in bringing forward this work more regularly in the spaces where I take part in collective political organising.

7.5 Future research avenues and building solidarity now – a historical contribution to our present struggle.

Unemployed workers’ centres, women’s centres, and bookshops in 1980s are an important vehicle through which to historicise the contemporary left’s struggles for space to organise (Anderson, 2018; Bresnihan and Byrne, 2015). Govan unemployed workers’ centre appears to have closed in the early 1990s. Drumchapel unemployed workers’ centre stayed open until around 2007, now remembered as part of the long-term decimation of broader community infrastructure in the area (Glasgow Times, 2021). At their peak, there was approximately 250 unemployed workers’ centres across the UK. Recent work estimates that this has fallen to just 18 active centres (Griffin, 2021, p. 162). The Miller Street premises of the Glasgow women’s centre closed in the early 1990s. The Women’s Centre Glasgow opened in Maryhill in 1994, arising out of the Maryhill Joint Women’s

Action Group's formation in 1991. This centre is still open today on Shawpark Avenue, offering a range of childcare and wellbeing services. Lavender Menace closed in 1986, and its successor West and Wilde closed in the 1990s.

Ultimately, none of the specific spaces I examine in this thesis exist today in the same form, on the same streets, as they did in the 1980s. During the empirical research, I spent a substantial amount of time mourning this fact. They were not spaces I had the chance to visit, as much as the vitality of the oral history interviews made me want to will them back into existence. With all their complexities, I am often nostalgic for these sites in the relative absence of contemporary alternatives. Dedicated space for left-wing organising is an ongoing problem. In our Living Rent branch, we pay £35 to rent a room in the Partick Free Church (Continuing) on Thornwood Terrace for 90 minutes once a month for our local branch meetings. This makes up nearly half of our yearly branch income, which poignantly reflects the amount of our personal income many of us spend on renting in the private sector. In between, we hold all the branch materials across our own homes, scattered across Partick in cramped, rented flats. If we hold meetings outside of this, we rely on the local cafes and pubs, the homes of branch members, and our trade union connections. Our monthly member defence sessions are facilitated by our affiliation to UCU Glasgow, of which some of us are members, and so we use their office on Oakfield Avenue. Living Rent Glasgow has one office in St Enoch Square. It has 4 desks, and we often test the limits of how many members it can hold comfortably for city-wide forums and campaign planning sessions.

Within the branch, we periodically discuss the pros and cons of using a local church for monthly branch meetings. Whilst members who live near it would assert that it is *definitely* in Partick, it is around a 10–15-minute walk to the local train and bus station and importantly, our favourite post-meeting pub. A walk of 10-15 minutes might not be insurmountable for some, but as we build our local membership, we have discussed finding a space as central and accessible as possible – not least because there is another Partick Free Church on Crow Road that is more central than ours, that new members often mistakenly go to the first time they come to a meeting. We have looked at different local community centres (though there aren't many) and have previously decided they were outside of our meagre branch budget, or that they did not stay open late enough for our monthly meeting starting at 6.30pm. In December 2023, the Council of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) reported that the Scottish Government's promise of £144 million investment still represented a significant slash to local authority budgets in light of their proposal council tax freeze (Bol, 2023). The funding for spaces like community centres and other local hubs is increasingly under threat, restricting the options for finding space for left-wing organising.

Despite a lack of space to organise, it doesn't mean that we don't win. At a branch level, we've won countless member defence cases where we come together to take direct, collective action against landlords, letting agents, and other opposing forces in defence of branch members. In December 2021, we took action against Scottish Power in defence of Partick branch member Irene, who was being harassed and intimidated for a false debt of over £1,500. We staged an action outside their offices on St Vincent Street, Glasgow, where we delivered a letter of demands. Our action got national media attention, which embarrassed Scottish Power into finally contacting Irene, and then totally erasing her false debt (Living Rent Glasgow, 2021). We've also won local campaigns in Partick. In March 2023, we marched on Partick Housing Association (PHA) after they announced that they would be increasing their rents by 7%, which made the most of the fact that the Scottish Government's rent cap of 6% in the private rented sector did not apply to them. Our local show of strength increased our membership among PHA tenants by over 50% in just three months. As we build strength in branches locally, we consolidate our power nationally. This has culminated in the introduction of rent controls in the private sector with the Housing (Scotland) Bill, something that Living Rent has been organising around and demanding since our inception in 2016 (Scottish Government, 2024). The struggles we face in finding space to organise can be difficult. But much like the challenges faced *within* infrastructures of solidarity in 1980s Scotland, they are not insurmountable. We can draw from our collective political pasts to win, while imbuing hope for the future as we situate our contemporary victories in this longer-term lineage of solidarity.

This research has informed my own practices of solidarity as someone involved in collective organising, in the trade union and tenants' movements. It has been a generative process, one that has linked contemporary and historical left-wing organising in Glasgow and Edinburgh through the practice of conducting oral history interviews. With this methodology, I do not intend to romanticise the past, nor pretend that it holds all of the answers to our current challenges in organising. Yet the threads that we might be able draw from our shared historical geographies of political struggle, produce pathways towards alternative futures, away from the rhetorical inescapability of defeat that is deployed against the left, from outside and within. I lean on Beveridge and Cochrane's (2023) approach, that asserts the importance of capturing the significance of such historical political moments, rather than maligning them as deviations in the "inevitable" route back to a more comprise-heavy, moderate politics. Traverso (2016, p. 9) laments that "the obsession with the past that is shaping our time results from this eclipse of utopias: a world without utopias inevitably looks back." I believe that this thesis demonstrates a more emotive and dynamic possibility in this "looking back", beyond a left-wing melancholic lens (Proctor, 2024). In that, engaging with the historical geographies of solidarity and struggle allows us to look both back *and* forward simultaneously. Doreen Massey (1999) proposed that engaging with the multiplicity of space insists

on the genuine openness of the future (p.3). It is this hopeful position that can inspire the (re)configurations of our current liberatory politics.

Appendix 1: Archives and Research Libraries Visited

Archive	Main collections consulted	Reference abbreviation
Black Cultural Archives	Stella Dadzie papers; Pagnell papers; Papers of Ansel Wong; Various books and pamphlets	BCA
British Library	Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project interviews; theses on organisational structure of women's centres	BL
Carol Thomson personal papers [Interviewee material – accessed with permission]	MsPrint; Scottish Women's Liberation Movement Journal	CT
Feminist Archive North	Correspondence and ephemera of various local chapters of the Women's Liberation Movement; newsletters from Glasgow Women's Centre	FAN
Gales' Archive of Sex and Gender via Hall-Carpenter Archives.	Papers and accounts of the Scottish Minorities Group/Scottish Homosexual Rights Group	GALE/HCA
Glasgow Women's Library	Speaking Out: Recalling Women's Aid in Scotland oral history project interviews	GWL
National Library of Scotland	Correspondence and pamphlets relating to the setting up of the bookshops Lavender Menace, West and Wilde, and Open Gaze, by Bob Orr (special collections);	NLS

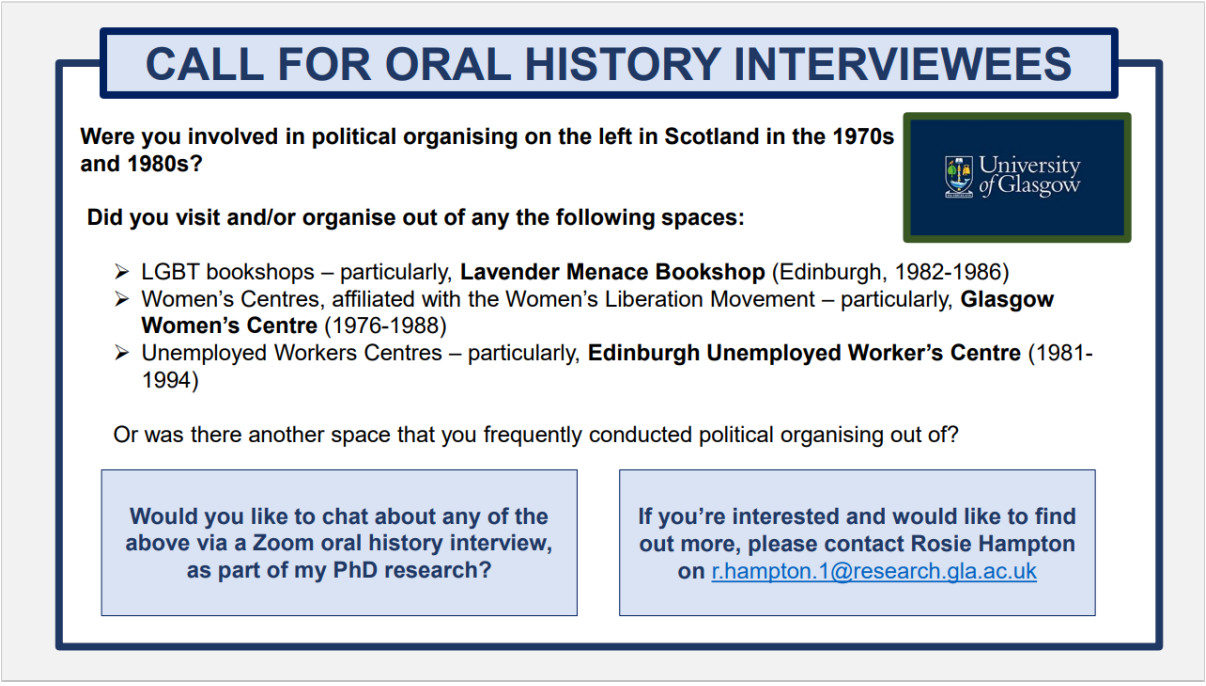
	Womanzone trust papers; First of May ephemera; the Raw Edge journal	
Spirit of the Revolt, The Mitchell Library	John Cooper collection – material on claimants' unions, Glasgow solidarity centre, and unemployed workers' centres	SotR
Working Class Movement Library	Newsletters and other ephemera of the Leeds and Manchester women's movements; Accounts, reports, and other correspondence of the Federation of Radical Booksellers	WCML

Appendix 2: Interview Information

Name	Description	Date of interview	Location
Greg Michaelson	Volunteer in the First of May bookshop	14th May 2021	Zoom
Keith Stoddart	Coordinator of Govan unemployed workers' centre	28th June 2021	Zoom
Bob Goupillot	Involved in Edinburgh unemployed workers' centre	8th July 2021; 22nd July 2021	Zoom
George Kirkpatrick	Coordinator of Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre	15th July 2021	Zoom
Hugh Maguiness	Researcher in various Scottish unemployed workers' centres	15th July 2021	Zoom
Jen Marchbank	Involved in student activism, spent time in Lavender Menace	19th July 2021	Zoom
Colin Hampton	Worked in Derby unemployed workers' centre	21st July 2021	Zoom
Jan Macleod	Involved in Glasgow women's centre	9th August 2021	Zoom
Jackie Baillie	Coordinator of the Gorbals unemployed workers' centre	20th September 2021	Zoom
Group interview with Bob Orr, Sigrid Nielsen, and Raymond Rose	Co-founders of Lavender Menace, involved in Scottish Minorities Group/Scottish Homosexual Rights Group	29th September 2021	Regent Bar, 2 Montrose Terrace, Edinburgh
Lucinda Broadbent	Involved in Glasgow women's centre, Edinburgh unemployed workers' centre, and Lavender Menace	8th October 2021	Zoom
Linda Biggerstaff	Adult education worker, involved in Drumchapel unemployed workers' centre	13th October 2021	Linda's home, Glasgow
Group interview with George Kirkpatrick,	Involved in various Glasgow unemployed workers' centres	15th October 2021	Unity Books, 72 Waterloo

Hugh Maguiness, and Keith Stoddart			Street, Glasgow*
Bob Thomson	Trade union official, involved in Lothian trade union resource centre	27th October 2021	Bob's home, Glasgow
Esther Breitenbach	Involved in Glasgow women's centre	17th November 2021	Comments exchanged via email
Carol Thomson	Involved in Glasgow women's centre	6th December 2021	Carol's home, Glasgow
Kate Fearnley	Volunteer in Lavender Menace, involved in London and Edinburgh Bisexual Groups	24th January 2022	Zoom
Goretti Horgan	Involved in Derry unemployed workers' centre	6th February 2022	Zoom

Appendix 3: Call for oral history participants.



Appendix 4: Ethical approval letter.

Institute of Neuroscience and Psychology

School of Psychology

Prof Lawrence W. Barsalou

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Phone: +44 (0) 141 330 3035

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19 Apr 2021

Ethical approval for:

Application Number: 300200161

Project Title: Infrastructures of Solidarity: The spatial politics of the left in 1970s and 1980s Britain

Lead Researcher: Rosie Hampton

This is to confirm that the College of Science and Engineering Ethics Committee has reviewed the above application and **approved** it. Please download the approval letter from the Research Ethics System for your records.

Please note that if your proposal involves face-to-face research, approval to carry out this research is only granted when one of the following two conditions has been met:

(a) You have a performed a risk assessment of your research protocol in your research facility, had it approved by your Head of School / Director of Institute, and received permission to proceed with this specific research project, or

(b) The University has generally lifted its social distancing restrictions on face-to-face interaction, including research.

In either case, your approval for this project lasts for 6 months from the date you are allowed to proceed with data collection.

If your research collects data in a format that **does not require social contact** (e.g., online research), you may begin data collection now.

Also please download and read the Collated Comments associated with your application. This document contains all the reviews of your application and can be found below your approval letter on the Research Ethics System. These reviews may contain useful suggestions and observations about your research protocol for strengthening it. Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Lawrence W. Barsalou

Ethics Officer

College of Science and Engineering

University of Glasgow

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