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"THE ART OF GOOD MANAGEMENT"

MANAGERIAL CONTROL OF WORK IN THE BRITISH POTTERY INDUSTRY, 1900-25*

This paper is derived from a study of work and trade unionism in the British pottery industry in the first three decades of the twentieth century.[1] It is an attempt to open up the history of pottery management's labour strategies for debate, given the relatively slight attention the subject has received in general or with regard to this important period. Ceramic historians, in common with labour and social history, have neglected the detailed study of management, while contemporary writers on the Potteries often lapsed into a "demonology" when dealing with pottery manufacturers.[2] In contrast to the more famous volumes on social conditions in the Potteries by Shaw or Owen[3] and Warburton's examination of trade unions,[4] the early-twentieth-century pottery-owners have not been the subject of sustained analysis.[5] Yet an orthodoxy of sorts has developed, which sees the industry's management as typically crude and unchanging in technique. Economists such as B. R. Williams[6] or geographers like

[1] R. Whipp, "Potbank and Union: A Study of Work and Trade Unionism in the British Pottery Industry 1900-1924" (Ph.D. thesis, Centre for the Study of Social History, Warwick University, 1983). A potbank is the local term for a pottery factory.
[2] See for example F. Burchill and R. Ross, A History of the Potters' Union (Hanley, 1977); B. Wilson, "Victims of England's Industrial System", in: Young Oxford, II (1900); L. J. Williams, "The Coalowners", in: A People and a Proletariat, ed. by D. Smith (1980), p. 95. Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.
[3] C. Shaw, When I was a Child (1903); H. Owen, The Staffordshire Potter (1901).
[4] W. H. Warburton, The History of Trade Union Organisation in the North Staffordshire Potteries (1931).
[5] For an example of the attention given to the early pottery entrepreneurs of the eighteenth century, and their control of work, see N. McKendrick, "Josiah Wedgwood and Factory Discipline", in: Historical Journal, IV (1961).
[6] B. R. Williams, "The Pottery Industry", in: The Structure of British Industry, ed. by D. Burn (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 298-300.

Yeaman[7] have been unchallenged in their assertions that owners could almost dispense with labour-control strategies in the light of the work-force's passivity and the tranquility of industrial relations in the industry.

The aim here is to show, firstly, that management techniques in the pottery industry were far from crude or unchanging; rather, a variety of stratagems was used appropriate to the types of company form, product market and production process the industry contained.[8] Secondly, the received ideas regarding the benign regimes of the small firm in the past[9] do not hold true for pottery manufacture in this period. Thirdly, managerial strategy will be related to the main context of the social composition and organisation of the pottery firm, which help to account for the distinctive forms of direct, small-scale labour relations. A compar-ison will be made between the general conclusions which have been drawn on British management technique during this period with our findings on the pottery industry; managerial control used in the production of ceramics[10] will be contrasted against some recent typologies. Above all, managerial control grew not in isolation, but in relation to workers' opposing bids to regulate and determine the nature of their toil, either individually or collectively. Reconstructing managerial control in the industry therefore involves an exploration of its growth and immediate expression around the key foci of work organisation, the image and reality of the social relations of production, and the question of union recognition.

1. The pottery firm

It is necessary first to establish and explain what were the main character-istics of the pottery firm. In the early twentieth century the most important features were size, social composition and form of ownership. Each aspect was of direct relevance to the industrial relations of the potbank and the industry.

[7] W. J. Yeaman, "Geographical Factors Influencing the Major Changes in the Pottery Industry" (M.A. thesis, University of London, 1968), p. 150.
[8] The notion of managerial strategy used here derives from Chandler's definition, viz., "the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses for action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals", A. Chandler, Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the American Industrial Enterprise (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 13.
[9] See also G. R. Ingham, Size of Industrial Organization and Worker Behaviour (Cambridge, 1970), for a detailed study of the relationship between firm size and indus-trial relations.
[10] Ceramic will be used here to denote any article made of pottery. The pottery industry at this time had six main product types: earthenware, china, sanitary ware, jet and rockingham, electrical and chemical ware, and tiles.

In terms of firm size the pottery industry exhibited a wide range. At one extreme was a group of exceptionally large firms. By 1920, the firm of Cauldon had 14 factories employing 3,000 workers. The largest firms of Wedgwood, Johnsons, Minton, Doulton, Grindley, Maddocks, Meakins, Grimwades, Copeland and Cauldon were recognised as a "leading sector". These were international firms, who dominated certain markets and developed the "best practice" techniques of the industry. Numerically they amounted to under ten per cent of all pottery firms and employed under a quarter of the total workforce. Within these large outfits plant size was small, since production was based on craft skill and hence there was no necessary virtue in large unit size.[11] The period in question is generally seen as an era of growing concentrations of production, which stemmed from the logic of the development of capitalism. By that logic a firm strives to lower its unit costs and to do so has to create larger units of production. In this sense the pottery firm was an exception.[12]

Although the leading-sector firms had an influence disproportionate to their size, they were only a small part of an industry made up of around 500 firms in this period.[13] Pottery manufacture was dispersed among a large number of units. In 1911 the average firm employed 84 workers. In 1909 a local commentator complained that "one cause of weakness in the pottery trade is that there have been far too many manufacturers".[14] At the opposite extreme to Wedgwood or Johnsons were the back-street operations of men such as James Shaw. In 1924 he was in business on his

[11] W. Burton, evidence to Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (1906), Report [Cd 442], q. 17077; Staffordshire Advertizer, 28 April 1900; The Pottery Gazette (hereafter PG), 1 November 1906, p. 1298; 1 September 1923, p. 1670; 1 January 1926, p. 507; The Times Engineering Supplement, 21 April 1913, p. 8; The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., XXV, p. 951; J. Lovatt to Twyfords, 7 April 1913, for the differences between the larger and smaller firms, and 1924 Wage Inquiry, p. 48, both in the Ceramic and Allied Trade Union's Archive Collection (hereafter CATUAC), housed at the Union's head office, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent; Regional Development in Britain, ed. by G. Manners et al., 2nd ed. (Chichester, 1980), p. 234; History of the County of Stafford, II, ed. by M. W. Greenslade and J. G. Jenkins (Oxford, 1978), p. 44; United States Report on the Pottery Industry (Washington, 1915), p. 389.
[12] J. H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain (3 vols; Cambridge, 1926-38), II, p. 212; S. Pollard, Development of the British Economy (1962), pp. 10, 62, for the sectors where unit-size increase was important; E. Hobsbawm, Labour's Turning Point (1948), p. xv; M. Reich, D. M. Gordon and R. C. Edwards, "A Theory of Labor Market Segmentation", in: American Economic Review, LXIII (1973), No 2.
[13] Kelly's Directory of 1891 lists 499 firms, Staffordshire Census, 1901, p. 69, 445 (excluding bricks and tiles), Staffordshire Census, 1911, p. 49, 548, and Staffordshire Census, 1921, pp. 54-55, 491.
[14] PG, 1 February 1909, p. 321; British Labour Statistics (1971), p. 408, shows that in 1930, nationally, 87.98% of firms employed under 200 workers.

own, "modelled all his own creations, made his own moulds, and under-
took the pottery throughout, whilst he relied upon his two daughters to
undertake the decoration."[15] As today, the "penny-jack shop" provided a
continuous and very easy entry to the industry. These enterprises were very
short-lived with often four different occupiers of these rented premises,
within two years. This explains why the total number of firms within the
industry remains remarkably stable throughout the period, the periodic
trade depressions and bankruptcies notwithstanding.[16]

As in the nineteenth century, many firms were found between these
two extremes. The medium-sized unit employed from 100 to 500 workers.
These included many of the standard-brand names of the industry
such as Howson (450 workers), Edmund Leigh (500) or James Kent (300).
Moreover, while Minton or Doulton might win international awards for
their techniques and products, as in the Brussels fair in 1910, the small- and
especially medium-sized firms were the backbone of the industry. The
latter type of firm supplied particular product markets, and each market
had its own trade leaders and competitive structures. No simple distinction
existed in the industry between large and small firms with the former
employing high-quality technology and labour, the latter cheap techniques
and low-paid workers. Given the craft components of production, all firms
had to use skilled potters. Moreover, a number of small- to medium-sized
firms were leaders within their own markets. Therefore craft potters and
craft-union groups were not only found among the larger companies, but
across the range of firms. Craftsmen at Taylor-Tunnicliffe (who employed
under 500 and yet were one of the world's leading high-tension-porcelain
manufacturers) had just as much craft pride in their product as those in the
large units of Copeland or Doulton. Craft consciousness was therefore a
feature of industrial relations throughout the industry.[17]

[15] PG, 1 August 1924, p. 1390.
[16] P. Gay and R. Smyth, The British Pottery Industry (1974), p. 42; H. Moisley, "The
Potteries Coalfield" (M.Sc. thesis, Leeds, 1950), p. 131; PG, 1 June 1899, p. 683; 1 April
1920, p. 541; HMI Factories Report, 1909, p. 50; 1911 Pottery Regulations Inquiry, p. 18,
CATUAC; National Society of Pottery Workers (hereafter NSPW), Reconstruction
(Manchester 1945), p. 4; M. Fogarty, Survey of Britain (Oxford, 1945), p. 328; Regional
Development in Britain, op. cit., p. 234.
[17] C. Bailey in PG, 1 January 1921, p. 97; Moisley, ibid.; PG, 1 July 1908, p. 826; 1
October 1910, p. 1125; 1 January 1911, p. 88; United States Report on the Pottery
Industry, op. cit., p. 389; The Times Engineering Supplement, 23 April 1913, p. 29; The
Times Imperial and Foreign Trade Supplement, Pottery Section, 1917; Williams, "The
Pottery Industry", loc. cit., p. 292. See also A. E. Musson, The Growth of British Industry
(1978), p. 292.

With smaller production units common the popular notion of employer and worker cannot be easily applied to the potbank. The clear separation of owner, management and labour had not been completed by any means. Many pottery firms were run by recently self-employed potters. For example, in 1898 the brothers William and Robert Stubbs raised enough capital by a sale of furniture to start up as china manufacturers in Longton. In 1906 William was drawing only £3 in salary, which compared unfavourably with the wages of most firemen or modellers. Owners such as the Stubbs were of necessity as personally involved in production as their employees. In the same year a visitor to Thomas Cone's works found him "actively engaged in the warehouse". These types of masters saw themselves as self-made men. William Bailey, aged 54, was described as "a concrete illustration of a self-made man" in 1913. He began at Broadhursts as an ovenman, then moved to Aynsleys as a fireman; in 1911 he set up his own firm. Edwin Wright established himself as a producer of decorated ware in 1905, was self-employed and initially sold £40 of ware per week. He was in business until 1924, when debts of £123 were sufficient to bankrupt him.[18]

Both contemporary and recent authors have maintained that small firms enjoyed less turbulent industrial relations. As Joyce argues for some of the smaller factories in textiles, "In a shared social environment, where craft status and the social relations of craft production were still substantial realities, feelings of class opposition were noticeably absent."[19] Admittedly, pottery-owners thought it was advantageous to be in personal contact with their employees.[20] Yet personal contact does not preclude conflict developing between master and worker. Shadwell noted that in Longton in 1905 "there are some ninety pottery or china works; every one of them was originally started by a workman, and some so lately that they are still carried on by their workman founders." However, he went on to say that "no men are harder taskmasters than such employers. They [. . .] have a

[18] Staffordshire Advertizer, 3 November 1906, p. 8; PG, 1 July 1907, p. 811 (T. Forrester); 1 October 1908, p. 1181 (F. Winkle); 1 June 1913, p. 668 (W. Bailey); 1 November 1914, p. 1313 (F. Heath). 24 out of a sample of 100 employers taken from the Pottery Gazette's "profile" articles in the period 1900-25 were recorded as self-made men, i.e. they had successfully founded and sustained their own firms. See also H. G. Gutman, Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America (New York, 1976), p. 211.
[19] E. Cadbury, M. Matheson and E. Shann, Women's Work and Wages (1906), pp. 205-06; P. Joyce, Work, Society and Politics (Brighton, 1980), p. 167, although he notes how the smaller factories contained feelings ranging between class conflict and camaraderie, p. 191; K. Burgess, The Origins of British Industrial Relations (1975), pp. 235-36, 245.
[20] PG, 1 December 1922, p. 1838.

hard struggle to succeed, and as they do not spare themselves they are not minded to spare those whom they employ." He concluded: "It is a delusion to suppose that workmen who 'rise' have a fellow-feeling for those they leave behind."[21] The very smallest pottery masters used some of the crudest methods of controlling production as a means of survival especially in the fiercely competitive cheap-ware sectors. Equating size of firm with the degree of conflict in master-employee relations does not work. It was not that the small units were less likely to experience conflict, even though the relationships between worker and employer were personal, and often limited to the individuals or working group involved.[22] Industrial relations admittedly operated on a very small scale and bargaining was highly sub-divided, yet they too could involve disputes.

An outstanding attribute of the pottery firm was its family base. Just as the pottery workers organised their working lives with strong reference to family and kin, so did the pottery-owners. In common with Britain's other staple industries the family business remained the typical form of enterprise down to 1900 and beyond.[23] In the Potteries it was regarded as self-evident that pottery companies were run by an owner and his family. By using a sample of 100 manufacturers' obituaries and portraits from the trade journal it was possible to test how extensive the family firm was in the period 1900-25. 56 per cent of the sample were members of a family firm. The continuity of pottery making withing families (though not necessarily in the same firm) is shown by the figure of 43 per cent of the sample having followed their father or grandfather into pottery manufacture. Concrete examples are ready to hand. The Wedgwood family enterprise is well-known, but two of the other largest firms were also run by families. Johnsons had three brothers at its head, while Meakins included grand-father, father, son and uncle in their business. The large firms were not unique in this respect, as the career of Ezra Bourne shows. He worked under his father from 1868 until 1882, whereupon he joined his uncle in

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[21] Author's interview with ex union collector, 10 December 1980; A. Shadwell, Industrial Efficiency (2 vols; 1906), II, p. 308; PG, 1 October 1910, p. 1165; H. Schloss, Methods of Industrial Remuneration (1907), p. 128.

[22] Ingham, Size of Industrial Organization and Worker Behaviour, op. cit., esp. pp. 141-43; Staffordshire Advertizer, 28 April 1900; Workmen's Times, 27 February 1892; Report of the Departmental Committee on the Use of Lead in the Manufacture of Earthenware and China (1910), q. 11905.

[23] See R. Whipp, "Aspects of Work, Home and Trade Unionism in the British Pottery Industry", paper presented to the Third Anglo-Dutch Labour History Conference, Maastricht 1982; G. C. Allen, British Industries and Their Organisation (1933), p. 12; P. L. Payne, British Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth Century (1974), p. 21. S. Pollard, The Genesis of Modern Management (1965), p. 266.

business. In 1890 his uncle died, and so Bourne's brother-in-law John Leigh went into partnership with him. A small firm like Allertons of Longton had relied on three generations of family management by 1906.[24]

The extent and persistence of the family firm in the pottery industry is explained first and foremost by its ability to supply sufficient managerial competence. Craft organisation and piecework were relied on heavily and management remained relatively unsophisticated. Bakewell Bros coped adequately with John looking after "the commercial side" and Wilfred appointed "manager of the works".[25] Secondly, four generations had been involved in many pottery companies by 1900, and had developed reasonably efficient methods of training and integrating their sons into the business. Albert Spencer began work in his father's firm when he was 13 in 1872, "learned the trade", and spent most of his working life as manager until his two brothers succeeded him in 1913.[26] Thirdly, it was logical to confine management to one's immediate family, if possible, in order to minimise the loss of recipes and technical knowledge, and to ensure the transmission of in-house trade secrets which made a firm's ware distinctive. Fourthly, just as pottery workers had little alternative employment but pottery, so the sons of potbank-owners (except for the more wealthy) enjoyed a very limited choice of career. Strong family-based management and ownership succession resulted in distinctive modes of control and labour relations.[27]

It has been claimed that between 1860 and 1914 the adoption of company organisation was one of the most prominent and widespread of all industrial changes. In the pottery industry this was not quite true. From a listing of pottery manufacturers of 1921, 120 out of the total of 278 or 43.17 per cent were limited companies.[28] The reasons for adopting the limited form elsewhere were usually connected with obtaining increased scale, facilitating the introduction of specialist managers, and separating

[24] The 100 manufacturers' obituaries and portraits were taken from the PG, 1900-24; Gay and Smyth, The Pottery Industry, op. cit., p. 36, confine the family enterprise to only the medium-size firm; J. B. Priestley, An English Journey (1934), p. 221; Wedgwood: PG, 1 Augusts 1908, p. 920, and A. Kelly, The Story of Wedgwood (n.d.), pp. 48-63; Johnsons: Sam Clowes's Scrapbook, 15 April 1907, CATUAC; PG, 1 March 1910, p. 399; 1 February 1923, p. 304; 1 March 1906, p. 291.

[25] HMI Factories Report, 1908, p. 143; PG, 1 May 1908, p. 564; 1 July, p. 828; 1 April 1916, p. 400; 1 April 1918, p. 324; 1 January 1926, p. 509; Gay and Smyth, The Pottery Industry, p. 36; Regional Development in Britain, p. 234.

[26] PG, 1 November 1913, p. 1289.

[27] PG, 1 July 1908, p. 810; 1 October, p. 1107; 1 November 1915, p. 1240; 1 February 1917, p. 163.

[28] Pottery Gazette and Glass Trades Review Diary, 1921, pp. 71-75.

ownership and management.[29] These reasons might apply to only some of the larger firms in pottery; to most, economies of scale and sophisticated management were not strictly relevant. The main reason why an increasing number of pottery firms took up private, as opposed to public, form was in order to obtain security through limited liability. It was a consolidation of traditional company form. Thomas Twyfords "went limited" in 1896, yet in 1906 the shares in the company were still held entirely by the family, and its factories were funded mainly by their own profits and reserves.[30] Indeed pottery-owners were anxious to assure the public that though they were limited companies they were private and retained the same ownership, and therefore the same reputations. A manufacturer anxiously pointed out in 1910 how many leading firms were now companies, but not public companies; in most cases control remained with the founding family.[31] The basic tenor of the statements of the Heath family or Sydney Malkin on the assumption of company form was their rejection of change.[32] Ironically, to some workers the mere appearance of the label limited was deeply disturbing, smacking of outside interference. As early as 1906 a Mr Edwards told the engravers' union that "the old private employers had been supplanted by limited companies, for whose shareholders profits had to be made".[33]

In effect the pottery firm, in terms of size, composition and ownership remained remarkably unchanged from its nineteenth-century form. A wide range of unit size continued to exist. The average pottery firm in the early twentieth century was still the small- to medium-sized factory or "potbank", run by a self-made entrepreneur, owned and operated by himself and his family in a partnership or private company. The manner in which firms of different size, status and power reacted to the events of the period diverged considerably, and helped to account for the variety of forms industrial relations took in the industry. However, for most potters the immediate context for their experience of industrial relations was the small-scale, face-to-face bargaining with the master who had established or ran his own potbank.

[29] W. Ashworth, An Economic History of England (1960), p. 93; Payne, British Entrepreneurship, op. cit., pp. 17-20; Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain, op. cit., III, p. 204; A. Marshall, Industry and Trade (1919), p. 315.

[30] PG, 1 April 1906, p. 469.

[31] PG, 1 April 1910, p. 434.

[32] Staffordshire Advertizer, 4 May 1907, p. 7; 10 July 1910, p. 5; PG, 1 April 1909, p. 445; 1 June 1915, p. 668; 1 February 1921, p. 251; Mr Entwistle in House of Commons Debates, 30 June 1927, c. 657.

[33] Staffordshire Advertizer, 29 September 1906, p. 5.

2. Management strategy

The following section is concerned with how ownership was translated into managerial strategy and control in the pottery industry. A number of conclusions have been drawn regarding the development of management technique during the period 1900-25. Pollard demonstrated that little attempt was made to generalise or rationalise the experience of industrial management into a science during the Industrial Revolution or until the beginning of the twentieth century. He also found it difficult to isolate the managerial role from the entrepreneur's until the later period. By 1919 Marshall claimed that the "wholesale transference of authority and responsibility from the owners of each business to salaried managers and officials" had occurred. Landes and others see the period as one of change following the increasing awareness of scientific management. Critiques of this view have stressed that Taylorism made relatively little practical impact: that British manufacturers were still operating with nineteenth-century *laissez-faire* principles, although trying to develop standards of professionalism.[34]

The received idea on management in the pottery industry is that it was undeveloped and of poor quality.[35] This view is far too sweeping. In the period 1900-25 a lively debate centred on the nature and quality of pottery management. In 1906 some manufacturers were advocating separate training for managers. Bernard Moore, in summarising the past decade in 1910, felt there had "been a good deal said about the application of scientific methods to business, and scientific methods in pottery in parti-cular". By 1914 it was contended that pottery manufacture was being transformed from a small hand-craft operation to a large-scale industrial undertaking. With hindsight one can see that the assertion was overstated, but it was indicative of important changes which have been overlooked. A more accurate assessment of the developments in pottery management was made by Sydney Malkin in 1922. He told the Pottery Managers and Officials Association that in the past when a manufacturer wished to cut down losses, he immediately reduced wages; now they looked more "to managers and scientific management".[36]

[34] Pollard, The Genesis of Modern Management, op. cit., p. 250; Marshall, Industry and Trade, op. cit., pp. 321-28; D. Landes, The Unbound Prometheus (1969), p. 322; E. H. Phelps-Brown, The Growth of British Industrial Relations (1959), ch. 2, section 8; R. Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry (New York, 1956), p. 435; J. A. Merkle, Management and Ideology (1980), p. 209.

[35] See Williams, "The Pottery Industry", p. 308.

[36] Reconstruction, op. cit., p. 4; W. Fishley-Holland, Fifty Years a Potter (Pendley Manor, 1958), p. 53; PG, 1 March 1906, p. 350; 1 June 1910, p. 78; 1 January 1922, p. 116.

Large parts of management action can be related to the desire and attempts to control production whether in the form of technology, motive power, materials or labour. Bendix realised that "Subordination and discipline are indispensable in economic enterprises". Braverman and others maintain that discipline or control was the essential human task for management during the process of capitalist development. Since labour was the least predictable element of production, it became necessary for management to construct regimes of discipline specifically for labour. However, given that the forces of production were closely linked, this meant that control had to be exercised over technology, power, materials and labour together.[37] The forms which production and therefore managerial control have taken in the past have varied widely. No simple unfolding of increased managerial control occurred. The progression has been uneven: the forces of production, especially labour, have proved difficult to control, and the relationship between these forces has not remained constant. Different variants of managerial control have emerged depending on the circumstances. A broad distinction exists between "formal control" and "real control". Formal control involves only the legal title of ownership and the claim to control production. Under real control management enjoys detailed direction and regulation of the forces of production. Real control may also appear in different degrees of sophistication. Edwards has outlined three main types: simple control by the use of foremen and piecework, technical control using machines and systems of work organisation, and finally bureaucratic control involving the construction of highly developed internal administrative hierarchies and rules.[38]

A reconstruction and explanation of the modes of control which developed in the pottery industry between 1900 and 1925 involves: firstly, identifying the main influences on managerial action and how they changed; secondly, evaluating the levels of control in the industry against the typology outlined above; thirdly, managerial control was not created in isolation. Control of production was attempted by both workers and management. In the period 1900-25 these opposing bids for control converged around a number of issues. These included the content and nature of work itself, the official and unofficial "welfare benefits" associated with work, and the thorny question of trade unions.

[37] Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry, op. cit., p. ix; H. Braverman, Labour and Monopoly Capital (1974).
[38] G. Stedman Jones, "Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution", in: New Left Review, No 90 (1975), p. 54; R. Edwards, Contested Terrain. The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century (1979), pp. 18-21.

The characteristics of pottery manufacture which had the most immediate influence on managerial control were capital availability, profit levels and relative costs. Pottery-owners found great difficulty in attracting investment. Instead they relied on re-invested profits, which led them to be labour- rather than capital-intensive. Control of labour, given its importance, became a prime concern. In the smaller works control was imperative, since those firms could only survive by carrying as little capital as possible tied up in stock, and turning their capital over many times a year. In 1924 the average firm had to produce and sell approximately £900 worth of goods a week before profit was earned. This meant around 3,000 units of ware per week had to be made and sold in order to realise a profit. In the smaller firms, selling much cheaper ware with very tight profit margins, the figure was much higher. Secondly, the intensive local competition for the period 1900-19 lowered prices and profits, thereby increasing the need to direct production and control labour.[39] Thirdly, the necessity for controlling labour grew as manufacturers became increasingly aware of relative costs. By 1914 cost analyses of pottery manufacture showed that the traditional division of a third each to wages, material and standing charges was no longer valid. Materials by then accounted for 33.53 per cent of total costs, fuel and power 13.11 per cent, overheads 5.7 per cent, and labour 47.63 per cent. Clearly there were strong reasons why management had to establish control over production, but labour especially. These reasons also help explain why potbank customs such as "good-from-oven" were fought over so intensely throughout the period.[40]

Management control of production or labour was relatively simple compared to other industries. Given the small average unit size, personal

[39] See Warburton, The History of Trade Union Organisation, op. cit., pp. 197-98; Gay and Smyth, The Pottery Industry, pp. 37ff.; Lawton Hall Conference Report, 1917, Manufacturers' Point III, CATUAC; PG, 1 February 1909, p. 321; 1 April 1922, p. 585; F. Celoria, "Reports of the US Consuls on the Staffordshire Potteries 1883-1892", in: Journal of Ceramic History, No 7 (1974), p. 58; Staffordshir eAdvertizer, 18 April 1908, p. 5; G. E. Stringer, New Hall Porcelain (1949), p. 62; Board of Trade, Working Party Report: Pottery (1946), p. 3. The rate (percentage) of profit before tax, but allowing for depreciation and management expenses, was as follows: 1913 – 6.23; 1914 – 3.12; 1915 – 4.76; 1916 – 5.68; 1917 – 6.13; 1918 – 11.23; 1919 – 12.22; 1920-22 – not known; 1923 – 11.50; 1924 – 9.64; 1925 – 8.29; 1926 – 5.94. Based on the firm samples in the records of the manufacturers' associations in National Council of the Pottery Industry, Minutes, 20 July 1922, p. 17; 1924 Wage Inquiry, Accountant's Report, pp. 3-5; 1931 Wage Inquiry, p. 21, CATUAC.

[40] Stringer, New Hall Porcelain, pp. 62-63; National Council of the Pottery Industry, Minutes, 7 October 1925; United States Report on the Pottery Industry, pp. 405-07; Board of Trade Report, 1946, p. 17; PG, 1 December 1924, p. 2000. "Good-from-oven" was the custom whereby workers were only paid for producing ware which emerged good (unblemished) from the oven firing.

control was common. Joseph Gray, proprietor of the Brittannia Works, Hanely, supervised the production process from buying materials right through to selling his ware to factors. Many potbanks did not possess an office even in 1921. The census of the same year did not separate the category of employer from manager, and was indicative of the lack of bureaucratic structures of control in the industry.[41] Pottery-owners admitted in 1920 that in their industry "there is the closest possible touch between the employer and worker." Whilst we should be aware of the positive image which the manufacturers might wish to present, it does seem that even the largest companies did not have elaborate supervisory hierarchies or rules of procedure. In 1913 Thomas Watkin, one of the directors of Grimwades, wrote how he personally worked out (with the mould-maker Mr Patterson) the shapes and prices for a new range of wares and flower pots.[42]

Apart from small unit size, simple control was the logical form since the family firm could comfortably supply the necessary personnel. In 1907 Robert Lewis Johnson, head of the multi-plant company of the same name, used his sons to manage the Tunstall and Cobridge factories. On a smaller scale Reuben Floyd, in 1914, divided supervision of his potbank between his three sons.[43] In spite of the debate around scientific management only the larger and more innovatory companies possessed the key to twentieth-century management techniques, a sound costing system. W. G. Fox told the English Ceramic Society in 1916 that "there is abundant evidence that cost taking was a minus quantity with many firms". In 1940 it was estimated that only a third of pottery manufacturers kept cost accounts that informed them of labour and material costs for each sub-process of production.[44] While outsiders castigated the pottery firms for "want of system", management relied on more implicit forms of control. Piece-work was used since the piece price was a crude mechanism for ensuring worker

[41] PG, 1 April 1921, p. 643; 1 December 1923, p. 2002; H. Williamson and Son to S. Clowes, 8 November 1913, CATUAC; Census of England and Wales, 1921 (1925), Industry Tables, p. 215.
[42] H. B. Greene, TUC Meeting and Potteries History (Longton, 1905), p. 22; Committee of Inquiry into the Workmen's Compensation Act, Vol. II [Cmd 909] (1920), q. 18706; Grimwades to J. Lovatt, 30 October 1913, CATUAC; PG, 1 July 1910, p. 803; Lawton Hall Conference Report, 1917, Operatives' Point IV.
[43] PG, 1 September 1908, p. 1074; 1 June 1909, p. 701; 1 June 1914, p. 710; HMI Factories Report, 1908, p. 143.
[44] PG, 1 March 1916, p. 283; 1 November 1915, p. 1218; 1924 Wage Inquiry, p. 75; Board of Trade Report, 1946, pp. 17-21; C. J. Noke and H. J. Plant, Pottery. Common Commodities and Industries (1924), p. 131.

output: a worker could only earn a given wage by producing a set amount. Potters developed counter-strategies to piece-work, and so internal sub-contracting was used as a complementary but still simple type of labour control. Contracting had the advantages of saving managerial time, removing the need to control all workers directly, and also dispersed the risks of production from owner to sub-contractor. Given the pivotal role of craftsmen in the production process, it was sensible for employers to rely on craft organisation. Overall managerial control was retained by ensuring that craft control was limited to very specific parts of production and therefore fragmented.[45] As will be shown, the use of sub-contract and piece-work was highly risky for management, since their bases and terms were being continually questioned and challenged by the workers who operated them.

There were changes in the contexts in which pottery management operated during this period. Foreign competition for certain sub-industries increased, and prices fell in the period 1900-10 and during the 1920's, whereupon internal competition in the industry intensified. The greater need for increased productivity and cost control led some manufacturers to rationalise methods and attempt to increase their real control of production. As new technology was introduced, women workers were put on the new jobs as directly paid employees of companies. Sub-contracting was diluted. In order to retain the benefits of the new technology, management had to become more systematic than previously. How far this process had gone by the 1920's is suggested by the view of B. Wethered and H. Clay (advisers to the National Council of the Pottery Industry) that the old personal touch between master potters and operative potters had been lost owing to the organisation of modern business in large liability companies.[46]

Whilst it is difficult to quantify the increase in managerial supervision and control, the opinions of the potters were broadly in agreement. In the larger or technically more advanced companies, ceramic consultants were used, and the role of managers and supervisors developed and became more specialised. By 1919 pottery managers were being told by Sydney Malkin that "the art of good management [. . .] was being able to quell efficiently and consistently control the workers". In 1921 a manufacturer noted that the responsibility of the manager's position was being in-

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[45] A. Wilkinson to J. Lovatt, 24 April 1914, CATUAC; PG, 1 January 1909, p. 58; 1 May, p. 579. See Whipp, "Potbank and Union", op. cit., pp. 74ff. See also Schloss, Methods of Industrial Remuneration, op. cit., p. 197.
[46] 1924 Wage Inquiry, p. D.

creasingly recognised. The difficulties of labour and raw-material supplies during the 1914-20 period led to re-designs of production and control.[47] Admittedly these changes did not occur uniformly across the industry, but the demonstration effect on workers of new managerial practices was clear. Trade unionists complained in 1924 that now they saw "too little of the master and rather too much of the jacket men".[48] There was no sharp break in management technique. Traditional forms of control coexisted alongside the new. The result was a range of managerial-control methods, which matched the differences in unit size, knowledge of ceramics, market location and labour supply.

3. The control of work, 1: Production

The forms which managerial control of work assumed were not only the result of managerial choice. Control of production and labour, especially, was the product of the interaction of management and workers. The precise nature of control emerged day by day from specific issues and contests. There were three broad areas where managerial control was focused during the period. The first concerned the issues which arose directly from work, the second centred on paternalism, and the third on the question of trade unions.

The major issues which the work process yielded were wages, technology, the stratification and movement of the workforce, and health. Wage payment provided a constant test of control. Pottery, being labour-intensive, made control of the size and movement of wages imperative. Manufacturers were acutely aware of the high cost of the potter's skilled labour. For example, as one master recognised in 1908, "the disadvantage of hand-making saggars is the large amount of skill needed", whereas "little or no training is needed for a man to become clever at casting [saggars], and consequently the wages of the saggar maker can be considerably reduced".[49] In the depressed trading of the 1900's and 1920's wage costs were an important area of adjustment for manufacturers wishing to maintain profit margins, especially if they were unable to reorganise production. Management used every possible method to control wages. They

[47] PG, 1 November 1914, p. 1311; 1 October 1915, p. 1107; 1 November 1919, p. 1240; 1 February 1921, p. 272; S. Clowes to Mycott & Co., 23 September 1914; National Executive Committee Minutes, NSPW, 24 November 1915, CATUAC; G. Wilcox, Notes on White Alkaline Casting Slips (n.d.), p. 27.

[48] A. Hollins, Improperly Pugged Clay (1924), passim; Wilcox, Notes on White Alkaline Casting Slips, p. 29.

[49] PG, 1 August 1908, p. 940.

fought to maintain complicated lists of allowances or deductions, and consistently opposed minimum-wage proposals. Companies would often ignore arbitration awards, and take unilateral action in order to retain their control over wage costs and profit margins. In a 1920 survey of 53 earthenware firms, 34 per cent of the operatives had not received the five-percent wage advance for their trade of 1900, and 26 per cent had never seen the five-percent rise of 1911.[50] Wages, argued manufacturers, were to be fixed primarily by the market. In the 1908-10 disputes "lifeless trade" and the strength of competition were cited by manufacturers as adequate reasons for lowering wages. Numerous forms of wage cutting were used such as not allowing apprentices to become journeymen, increasing ware sizes while leaving the piece price unchanged, or packing ovens more tightly.[51] It was precisely because wage control was so central to managerial cost techniques that wages remained the central area of dispute and conflict.

New technology had direct impact on the detailed organisation of work, its intensity, the levels of skill, pay and status involved. The contests over new technology were not only about costs, but control. During 1908 Twyfords attempted to introduce casting to a section of their sanitary works. The issues raised during this episode, as workers contested the nature of casting, are instructive. Technology involved new technical knowledge, and therefore the pressers would have to pay, *via* reduced wages, "the cost of their acquiring knowledge of a business which at present they do not understand". Craftsmen's authority was to be reduced and "the whole of the men to be under the control of Parkes [a new foreman] who shall have power to suspend any man". Compared to the previous forms of craft control over working times and recruitment, there were now to be "set hours of work", and "that only young men shall be selected and that we entirely control the selection of such men".[52] In particular where craft potters proved obstructive, new technology was used by management to

[50] PG, 1 March 1906, p. 334; F. Jackson to S. Clowes, 30 May 1913; J. Stiff & Sons to J. Lovatt, 3 January 1912; Copelands and NSPW Negotiations, 18 May 1920, CATUAC; HMI Factory Report, 1909, p. 55. An allowance was a deduction from a wage rate.

[51] PG, 1 June 1908, p. 706; 1 September 1910, p. 1043; J. Ridgway to National Amalgamated Society of Pottery Workers, 14 October 1912, CATUAC. The NAS changed its name to NSPW in 1917. Cf. TUC General Council Manifesto, 1923, in Trade Union Documents, ed. by W. Milne-Bailey (1929), p. 415; G. D. H. Cole, The Payment of Wages (1918), p. 28; A. Freeman, Boy Life and Labour (1914), p. 166; Merkle, Management and Ideology, op. cit., p. 225.

[52] Cf. T. Bruland, "Industrial Conflict as a Source of Technical Innovation: Three Cases", in: Economy and Society, II (1982); Twyfords to J. Lovatt, 11 February 1908; J. Lovatt to Outram and Co., 8 September 1911, CATUAC.

de-skill aggressively. Mr Corn the manufacturer freely admitted during a strike of his hollow-ware pressers in 1911 over casting that he substituted "colliers, farm labourers and others who had not served any apprenticeship in the potting trade".[53]

Manufacturers also sought to control production by structuring and separating their workforce. One of the easiest ways for the medium- or large-sized firms to structure their labour was by constructing internal labour markets. Primary workers such as the highly-skilled designers, modellers, firemen and department heads were treated quite differently from the less-skilled.[54] They were often put on "the staff" and made permanent salaried employees as opposed to piece-rate workers employed on a weekly or monthly basis. Various attachment devices were used to tie these workers to the firm. Twyfords, as early as 1896, issued shares to their "chief staff". Skilled workers were often prevented from moving freely between firms, given their knowledge of the companies' recipes and methods. The Central Pottery in Burslem had employed Samuel Williams since he was a 17-year-old apprentice. As the proprietor wrote to the secretary of his manufacturers' association in 1913, "there is plenty of work for him but he wants to go journeyman somewhere else and we don't think it is the right thing to allow him to do so as he is now useful to us. We shall certainly not give our consent for him to leave."[55] By contrast unskilled workers received little of the "staff" benefits and were often subject to instant dismissal. C. T. Maling & Sons in 1912 did not accept or give their female employees a week's notice.[56] The workforce would also be divided on gender lines. Women were clearly used as cheap labour. Manufacturers were often able to disassemble craft jobs and increase control of work by substituting unskilled women jolliers and casters for traditional pressers and throwers. Some women were treated as casual workers with very few contractual privileges. The Doulton firm was prosecuted in 1908 for making deduction from certain of their girls' wages without any written notification or contract.[57]

[53] PG, 1 September 1911, p. 1016.

[54] Reich et al., "A Theory of Labor Market Segmentation", loc. cit.

[55] PG, 1 April 1906, p. 469; 1 February 1922, p. 279; John Sadler and Co. to Mr Llewellyn, 1 August 1913, CATUAC; 1911 Pottery Regulations Inquiry, Occupiers, p. 36; National Executive Committee Minutes, NSPW, 14 October 1916. See also Ch. More, Skill and the English Working Class, 1870-1914 (1980), p. 149.

[56] J. Booth to the Grindley Company, 15 January 1912; C. T. Maling and Sons to their solicitor, 16 September 1912, CATUAC. See also C. T. Maling and Sons to S. Clowes, 25 November 1912; Staffordshire Advertizer, 11 January 1908; PG, 1 August 1918, p. 641; 1 March 1926, p. 595.

[57] HMI Factories Report, 1906, p. 244; 1912, p. 157; 1919, p. 10; Hanley District Committee to Central Office, 16 September 1915, CATUAC; Evidence of Staffordshire

Given the strong presence of industrial disease, the attempts by workers and trade unionists to remedy their predicament had important ramifications for profit levels and the control of work. The private and public definition of illness and its causes became an area of fierce contest. Manufacturers strove to re-direct the explanations for the potters' ill health from the working conditions of the potbank towards personal, individual responsibility.[58] The relationship between health and profit for some owners was shown in the technical manual which stated that "a strong [and heavier] saggar as a rule lasts longer than a very light one and it is better to tax the muscles of the kilnmen than the purse of the proprietor." William Callear was asked at the 1911 inquiry why manufacturers had not introduced the protective regulations for their industry. It was put to him that it was a "question of time and money"; he replied that it had never been anything else. William Burton's arguments for the manufacturers against lower oven-working temperatures was entirely commercial. He maintained that if the men's reduction was granted, "they would inflict a very severe blow on the economic conditions of the industry".[59] In 1920 the factory inspectorate highlighted how pottery-owners refused to take responsibility for the illness generated by their manufacturing process, and instead treated "the factory only as a financial scheme". Manufacturers frequently used the argument of foreign competition for not changing their methods. As one owner put it, "so long as foreign and continental potters are allowed to use lead, our potters must do the same, or be left behind". At the same time the blame for lead poisoning was passed from owner to worker. In 1925 Ashly Myott could still publicly assert that lead poisoning was related largely to a worker's personal hygiene.[60]

Underlying the arguments over health was the question of control. If it could be shown that pottery making led to ill health, the implications for management's ability to control costs and their authority to direct their workers was immense. Reorganising production, admitting liability, paying compensation and allowing the State to regulate production were seen by manufacturers as major erosions of their authority. Pottery-owners continually opposed the protective legislation for silicosis which workers

pottery manufacturers in Committee on Women in Industry [Cmd 167] (1919), pp. 120-25; PG, 1 February 1908, p. 211; Minutes of a Meeting of Manufacturers and Operatives, National Executive Committee Minutes, NSPW, 20 October 1916; A. Amsden, The Economics of Women and Work (1980), pp. 11, 29.

[58] See K. Figlio, "Chlorosis and Chronic Disease in Nineteenth-Century Britain", in: Social History, III (1978), pp. 196-97.

[59] C. F. Binns, Ceramic Technology (1898), p. 48; 1911 Pottery Regulation Inquiry, qq. 636, 938, 966, 1063.

[60] HMI Factories Report, 1920, p. 57; E. H. Werner, Leadless Glazes (1924), p. 16.

demanded. One manufacturer told the Samuel Commission in 1906 that if medical inspection was implemented it would paralyse their business. Even when manufacturers were forced to accept a measure of government legislation, they did their utmost to ensure that its detailed implementation affected their control of production as little as possible.[61] John Ridgway tried to shift the problem of health away from his manufacturing materials and technique to the physical and mental traits of his workers. He argued that women were subject to many slight ailments and were likely to give "all sorts of fancy reasons for them".[62]

4. The control of work, 2: Social relations

The second main variant of managerial-control strategies involved the use of less direct and more subtle devices. Pottery-owners attempted to construct a dominant image of the social relations of the potbank, and thereby establish norms of behaviour for their workers to follow. Historians have recognised that conflict was not universal in industry, and that management has often worked hard to elicit the co-operation and consent of workers to the pursuit of profit. Writers have been quick to use the term paternalist for this kind of management activity, which was to lead to social stability. The term has been used rather loosely. It has often led to a model of social relations viewed from above; the workers' part in the relationship has been underestimated. Paternalism has been confused with general ideals rather than identifying what happened, and the label has been applied irrespective of the specific historial context. In so doing writers have minimised the importance of paternalism as an ideology of work and as a critical force in the relations between master and worker.[63]

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[61] HMI Factories Report, 1906, p. 218; 1912, p. 44; Werner, Leadless Glazes, p. 12; Ch. Wedgwood in House of Commons Debates, 26 June 1911, c. 291; W. Burton to Home Office, 8 June 1900, Home Office Papers 45/1018/B12393P, Public Record Office, London; Meakins to employee, 15 May 1913, CATUAC; Report of the Samuel Commission [Cd 2826] (1907), q. 6929 (W. Burton); Copelands and NSPW Negotiations, 18 May 1920, p. 3; Staffordshire Advertizer, 30 March 1907, p. 7; PG, 1 February 1906, p. 188; 1 January 1910, pp. 55, 88; A. Meikeljohn, Silicosis (Handley, 1933), p. 5.

[62] Staffordshire Advertizer, 23 June 1906, p. 7; Burton to Home Office, 8 June 1900.

[63] See for example A. Fox, A History of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives 1874-1957 (Oxford, 1958), p. 315; P. Spaven, "Main Gates of Protest", in: Independent Collier, ed. by R. Harrison (Hassocks, 1978), p. 225; J. Reynolds and K. Laybourn, "The Emergence of the Independent Labour Party in Bradford", in: International Review of Social History, XX (1975), p. 316. For detailed examinations of paternalism see D. Roberts, Paternalism in Early Victorian England (1979), pp. 2ff.; E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class?", in: Social History, III.

In the Potteries the existence of paternal forms of management was often noticed. In 1908 one observer remarked of the industry: "like master like men is an established maxim here". In 1920 a Captain Sydenham from the Ministry of Labour thought employers in the pottery industry, unlike other industries, were still in direct personal contact with their workmen.[64] However, the exact relevance and forms of paternalism in the pottery industry from 1900 to 1925 require a reconstruction of both management assertions and action, along with the response of pottery workers.

Apparently certain employers did seek to build up personal relations with workers. The depth of that relationship could be quite shallow, no more than the occasional exchange of a greeting. Employers certainly made use of the appearance of those relationships. W. Bishop of Bishop & Stonier, after an accident to his miller George Beaumont in 1909, drew the tension out of the situation by publicly proclaiming his "high regard for the deceased and his relations, whom they had known for many years".[65] Frederick Parkin found that such relationships with owners could also be vehicles for exploitation. Masters' provision of worker housing was double-edged. On the one hand this fits in well with Roberts's notion of obligation within paternalism, yet besides binding workers to a company housing provision could also be used as a sanction. J. Bowden after a dispute at his potbank was forced to leave his company house on 15 January 1920.[66] Employers also made individual arrangemnts with workers during stoppages and lay-offs to pay part of their wages in advance. But during the 1921 coal strike it was noted how owners made use of this device "to look after skilled craftsmen", not their total workforce.[67] Clearly, these personal relations alone could not guarantee worker co-operation.

More grand were the public rituals which manufacturers used to display their ideology of "common interest" with the employee as the provider of work. Bendix saw manufacturer ideologies as vital in his model of British paternalism. He argued that masters constructed ideologies which interpreted management authority in a positive way and neutralised conflict.[68]

[64] Priestley, An English Journey, op. cit., p. 202; V. Brittain, Testament of Youth. An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925 (1978), p. 19; PG, 1 September 1908, p. 1065; 1 February 1920, p. 191.

[65] Entry by William Owen, 22 November 1879, Lord Hatherton Papers, Staffordshire Record Office, Stafford; Staffordshire Advertizer, 7 August 1909, p. 5.

[66] F. Parkin, "Autobiography of a Trade Unionist", p. xii, Hanley Reference Library, Stoke-on-Trent; J. Bowden to NSPW, 15 January 1920, CATUAC; Roberts, Paternalism in Early Victorian England, op. cit., pp. 2-4, 173.

[67] PG, 1 June 1921, p. 940.

[68] Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry, p. 13.

In the pottery industry the manufacturer's images of work were exhibited in two main ways: the social events of the potbank and especially in the long-service presentations. The object of these exercises was to minimise the contradictions within the wage bargain and instead highlight the moral duty of worker to employer. Mr Fielding told his workforce while presenting 19 employees with presentations for 21 years' service in 1911 that these were people who appreciated loyalty and were "above simple money making".[69] Some owners tried to establish the appearance of a natural succession of family workers. The managing director of Bullers in 1919 spoke to his workers of how many instances there were of three generations working together on his works. He remarked that "when people had been with them through all their boyhood and manhood, girlhood and womanhood, that they had the desire to bring their children and their children's children there". Presentations were routinely made for 25 to 50 years' service with the same company. The family atmosphere of the potbank was fostered with certain workers' weddings, promotions and retirements marked by employer gifts and collections among the workers.[70]

The social events organised by owners symbolised what they saw as the acceptable codes of worker behaviour. Almost 60 firms were publicly recorded as organising a range of social activities for their workforces in the period 1900-25. These included celebrations of employers or their family marrying, marking the majority of an owner's son or the wedding anniversaries of the master, and a mixture of works outings, concerts, whist drives and so on.[71] The ideological component of these activities was striking. The foreword to the programme of T. C. Wild & Co.'s party at Longton Town Hall in 1919 read:

> A bond of comradeship and sympathy happily exists among us, which is most gratifying to those whose duty it is to guide the policy and manage the affairs of our various businesses [. . .]. so long as we all work together harmoniously, and with the same spirit of mutual respect and goodwill we may look with great confidence to the future.[72]

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[69] PG, 1 October 1911, p. 1155; 1 July 1919, p. 743; 1 April 1922, p. 607; 1 March 1908, p. 349.
[70] PG, 1 January 1911, p. 89; 1 August 1916, p. 849; 1 July 1918, p. 562; 1 October 1919, p. 1109; 1 January 1920, p. 94.
[71] Marriages: PG, 1 March 1906, p. 353; 1 July 1909 (local correspondent). Outings: PG, 1 October 1906, p. 1179; 1 October 1908, p. 1181. Anniversaries: PG, 1 July 1910, p. 804. Whist drives and concerts: PG, 1 January, p. 520; 1 March 1926, p. 595. See Whipp, "Potbank and Union", table 16, "Social Activities of Pottery Firms 1900-1924", p. 235.
[72] PG, 1 January 1919, p. 64.

Similarly at a Gibson's social evening in 1906 it was declared that "the firm recognised that they were supported in their efforts by reasonable work-people." The workers of A. Harley-Jones were told during their day trip to Chester that "the way in which they could best repay their employer for his generosity was to do their duty at the works." The images involved in these events were important. Some of the largest manufacturers invited workers to the grounds of their home as an annual treat, where the owners "presided" over the "guests". These occasions often reinforced the larger firm's internal labour market, as separate events were held for managers and officials, distinct from the production workers.[73]

The pottery-owners' paternalism did not remain unchanged during our period. Joyce asserts that paternalism broke down by 1900.[74] In the Potteries paternalist policies still operated in the 1920's. The change occurred in the content and emphasis of such strategies. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries paternalism was based on largely individual, informal employer benevolence and workers' duties. By 1920 the use of paternalism as a tool of managerial control had become more rational and formally defined. Instead of being based on the traditional responsibility of the rich to the poor the guiding notion became one of rational efficiency: the need was for more efficient production and enhanced productivity. As in other industries, the shift in approach was labelled welfarism.[75] As one pottery-owner argued in April 1920, there was now a need "to devote a very real attention not to the mechanics of industry, but to its humanics". The potters' campaigns over industrial illness and the need to reorganise production during the war led to a recognition by manufacturers that efficiency and welfare were closely related. Many of the larger works built "Rest and Health" recreation clubs, and "welfare institutes" run formally by rules and committees.[76] Moreover, welfarism was used by manufacturers to prevent government intervention in their industry. The retention

[73] Staffordshire Advertizer, 13 January 1906, p. 4; PG, 1 August 1920, p. 1075. Booth's "Staff Dinner" of 1908 was at the Sneyd Arms Hotel for "management and officials only", PG, 1 January 1909, p. 93.

[74] Joyce, Work, Society and Politics, op. cit., pp. 186, 338-39.

[75] Shadwell, Industrial Efficiency, op. cit., II, p. 173; Merkle, Management and Ideology, op. cit., pp. 229-30; J. Melling, "Employers, Industrial Welfare and the Struggle for Workplace Control in British Industry, 1880-1920", mimeographed (1981); K. Coates and T. Topham, Workers' Control (1968), p. xxxvii.

[76] R. G. Hyde, speech to National Council of the Pottery Industry, PG, 1 May 1920, pp. 650, 664; 1 August, p. 1052; 1 July 1919, p. 741 (Grimwades); 1 March 1922, p. 406; HMI Factories Report, 1917; National Council of the Pottery Industry, Minutes, 2 October 1922; H. J. Plant, contribution to discussion reported in Werner, Leadless Glazes, p. 12; "Rules of Sick Club", Copeland Archives, Stoke-on-Trent, Wallett No 788.

of managerial control over welfare schemes runs throughout the pottery manufacturers' responses to government inquiries. John Ridgway therefore opposed the National Insurance Bill in July 1911 on the grounds that his own sick-club scheme was better suited to his company.[77]

Whilst it is possible to construct a picture of strong attempts by pottery manufacturers to develop paternalist or welfare-based strategies as a means of securing worker co-operation and a stable workforce, the crucial test is the actions of the pottery operatives. Some workers did respond to paternal acts with deference.[78] It is noticeable how employer gifts were repaid. In 1906 the employees of William Morley entertained his son Gordon on the occasion of his majority in the potbank warehouse, where workers made speeches regarding the esteem in which they held Mr Gordon and the goodwill which existed between them. Though owners might wish to magnify these events, the actions of workers towards their employers are well-recorded. In 1910, the workers at Bain and Co. celebrated the homecoming from a world tour of Elijah Bain's son. The female operatives presented Mrs Bain with a gold brooch, and the oldest male employee made the gift of a gold-topped walking stick to William Bain. The inscriptions on such presents are indicative. The lettering on a gift to the Jarvis family from their workers recorded that it was to mark "the cordial relationship which existed between them". Workers even supported their masters in rejecting the national health schemes and asking for their own sick clubs to be returned.[79]

Owners expended great energy to legitimate their ownership and authority in the workplace, and tried vigorously to ensure an identity of interests between master and worker. Yet these are not sufficient reasons why they should inevitably succeed. Firstly, as we have seen, manufacturers used less subtle means of control such as wage cutting and the increasing use of foremen, which could not be masked by whist drives and presentations. Secondly, many casual and unskilled workers were omitted from these events. Thirdly, above all, the ideologies and imagery offered by management were often just that; workers could still make an independent

[77] Report of the Departmental Committee on the Use of Lead, q. 14995; Report of the Samuel Commission, qq. 2034, 6929; Commitee of Inquiry into the Workmen's Compensation Act, Vol. II, q. 18641; PG, 1 July 1911, p. 812; 1 February 1923, p. 308. See also R. Hay, "Employers and Social Policy in Britain: The Evolution of Welfare Legislation, 1905-14", in: Social History, I-II (1976-77).

[78] Meacham, A Life Apart, op. cit., p. 21.

[79] PG, 1 April 1906, p. 566; 1 June, p. 706; 1 October, p. 1164; 1 November, p. 1278; 1 May 1909, p. 569; 1 September 1910, p. 1044; 1 June 1915, p. 783; 1 September, p. 1011; 1 April 1917, p. 409; 1 August 1923, p. 1339.

choice and interpretation of these activities. Whilst it was clearly in the interest of workers to co-operate with employer paternalism, the sources of conflict arising from work remained plentiful. The experience of the struggles for family survival in the 1900's could not be easily wiped out by an owner's tea-party. In September 1919 the New Hall Porcelain Company took its workers to Blackpool for the day. During speeches that evening much was made of the longevity of service of women employees (one was 80 and still working). Two months later, in December, the entire workforce came out on strike over the stoppages made by the company out of the women workers' wages; the women won the strike.[80]

5. The control of work, 3: Trade unions

The third main area where managerial control was tested and modified was in the relations between companies and unions. The concern here is with the manufacturers at the individual-firm level. Pottery management did not simply reject the rights of unions to represent workers. On the contrary, there were ways in which management accepted certain union activities as complementary to their own policies. Proprietors' attitudes towards unionism varied according to the areas of union activity involved and the changing contexts in which they occurred. As Walker put it, union recognition is a "habit of mind and a continuous relationship as much as a once-for-all and publicly confessed capitulation to trade union pressure".[81]

There were very specific ways in which pottery management rejected union activity on their potbanks. The obstruction often derived from managers or supervisors whose ability to control their workers was especially hampered by union agents. Owners were often quite prepared to deal with union representatives. For example, in January 1911 a union organiser visited Furnivals over a disputed payment to Charles Poole. The manager, S. Rowley, officially refused to recognise the union although personally he respected their leaders, according to a letter by Joseph Lovatt.[82] Similarly, Johnsons met the union leadership, but would not allow organisers on their works. Management apparently did not reject the union as a general spokesman for the pottery workers, but objected to

[80] PG, 1 October 1919, p. 1109; 1 January 1920, p. 94. Cf. R. Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh (Oxford, 1976), pp. 1-6. See Whipp, "Potbank and Union", ch. 5.1, for worker-employer relations in the wider Potteries culture and the attempts at social control.

[81] W. M. Walker, Juteopolis. Dundee and its Textile.Workers 1885-1923 (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 292, 313. Cf. Phelps-Brown, The Growth of British Industrial Relations, op. cit., p. 279; R. Price, Masters, Unions and Men (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 193-94.

[82] J. Lovatt to A. Llewellyn, 16 January 1911, CATUAC.

direct union intervention in the questions which directly affected control of production. In 1916 H. J. Plant recognised the National Amalgamated Society of Pottery Workers, yet wrote to Sam Clowes indignant that a union canvasser had set foot on his works. As Mr Plant put it, "personally, I consider it to be a case of impudent interference in our private business."[83] Bakewell Bros in 1926 saw no reason for the union to be involved in the dismissal of a saucer tower. Wileman's of Longton wished to preserve the direct contact and control of their workforce with no intervening union representative. Only the most extreme of the well-established firms totally rejected the unions, as with F. Benham, who wanted all disputes between master and worker settled by law.[84]

Against these rejections of union legitimacy it is possible to set the varieties of acceptance. Three main sources were used in order to draw up a measure of the extent of union recognition. The union's correspondence files indicate who officially dealt with the National Amalgamated Society. The union price-count records were derived from access to firms: the union's records of official notices received from firms indicate the companies who dealt formally with the union. Clearly these sources do not capture the fullest extent of the firms involved, but they do provide an estimate. In broad terms it appears that around 30 per cent of the firms in the pottery industry had recognised the potters' union, by establishing bargaining procedures by 1920. The three sets of records also indicate that the medium to large, well-established firms (with notable exceptions such as Cauldon) had individually accepted, even in a limited way, the presence of the potters' union.[85]

From around 1910 onwards, in the context of expanding trade, individual companies increasingly recognised the use of trade unions. By the 1920's some of the larger companies were frequently exchanging information with the NAS. Meakins and the Campbell Co. were routinely sending the union's central office schedules of price changes and copies of settlements in their workshops.[86] Certain firms believed they could use

[83] F. Jackson to S. Clowes, 30 May 1913; H. J. Plant to S. Clowes, 7 January 1916, CATUAC.

[84] Bakewell Bros to NSPW, 10 December 1926. A "tower" smoothed the surface and edges of a clay article by using a wad of tow. F. Wileman and Co. to S. Clowes, 26 October 1915, CATUAC; Royal Commission on Trade Disputes (1904), q. 4979 (F. R. Benham).

[85] A. Johnson to NSPW, 20 February 1923, CATUAC. This letter collection shows that 116 (29%) firms recognised the union in this period out of 400 pottery firms (excluding brick companies) or 41% of the 1921 Pottery Gazette and Glass Trades Reivew list of 278 officially recorded companies.

[86] Minton Company to NSPW, 26 April 1923, stated: "we enclose herewith a copy of the settlement arrived at in respect of various departments in our factory", CATUAC.

the union officials to help control their workforce. The manager of the Midland Pottery Co. wrote to Lovatt in June 1913 over the irregular attendance of his workers, asking him "to take your members in hand". As the union grew in size during the period, it became one of the best sources of specialist labour as the Peake Company found in 1911, when they were short of jiggerers.[87] Edmund Leigh, one of the more prominent manufacturers, felt that weak trade unionism was dangerous for the industry.[88] Only a united, recognised trade union could carry out what it agreed with manufacturers and therefore provide a stable basis for industrial relations. It is noticeable that employers rejected unions from outside the Potteries almost entirely. Moreover, the recognition of the union often came to depend on quite personal friendships between manufactueres and officials, as the correspondence of Frank Williamson and Sam Clowes show.[89] One distinction remained between the smaller firms and the rest. The smallest potbanks could not afford to operate under union regulations and did their best to avoid formal bargaining commitments. Finally in times of trade depression and over major issues of change, as in the 1900's and 1920's, all manufacturers were capable of demolishing existing relations and tearing up union agreements.[90]

Conclusion

This study of managerial strategy has suggested some initial conclusions for the pottery industry in the early twentieth century. The cost structures, market characteristics and labour-intensive production techniques made control of production and labour especially imperative for the extraction of surplus value and the realisation of profit.[91] Yet the way control was expressed and maintained was shaped by the distinguishing features of the pottery firm, namely size, social composition and mode of organisation. Company structure did not simply follow company strategy:[92] the policies of the pottery manufacturers had to take account continuously of the size

[87] Midland Pottery Company to J. Lovatt, 19 June 1913; Melling Pottery Company to J. Lovatt, 12 July, CATUAC.

[88] PG, 1 July 1906, p. 920.

[89] National Council of the Pottery Industry, Minutes, 17 October 1917; H. Williamson and Son to S. Clowes, 8 November 1913.

[90] PG, 1 October 1910, p. 1165; 1 September 1923, p. 1501; negotiating notes S. Clowes, 2 November 1921, CATUAC.

[91] On the difficulties of "extraction", see W. Lazonick, "Class Relations and the Capitalist Enterprise. A Critical Assessment of the Foundations of Marxian Economic Theory", mimeographed, Harvard, April 1983.

[92] See A. Chandler, "Management Decentralization: An Historical Analysis", in: Business History Review, XXX (1956).

and capabilities of their firms. Given the long-term development of the industry and the age of many individual firms, company culture and traditions critically influenced the precise form of control devices and their representation. Therefore a range of differing types of control may be observed across the industry appropriate to specific market, production and social contexts.[93] Generally, managerial control was relatively simple and direct, as befitted the small unit size and craft basis of production. However, it was not unsophisticated or archaic. Indeed the vigorous debates and contemporary uncertainty over technique prompted by, *inter alia*, new market formations and government intervention are indicative of the dynamic process involved in the generation of managerial control.

Although management control was essentially personal and direct, these features coexisted with implicit means of control embedded within the potbank's employment and payment systems of piece-work and sub-contract. The construction of internal labour markers, the stratification of the workforce by skill, age and gender, and the attempts to use the potters' union to regulate workplace relations were only some of the less obvious means of indirectly controlling production and labour. These and related mechanisms should inform the historical analysis of the control of work. The pottery-industry example highlights how employers could make combined use of traditional and novel methods of control, employing direct and indirect means: the shift from formal to real control was never easily accomplished or completed in a single chronological process, as Edwards's model for the USA suggests.[94]

Moreover, control of work was not unilaterally constructed by management alone, but was instead the outcome of attempts made by employer and employed. Necessarily this struggle for control was contested over a diverse mix of issues which arose constantly for the organisation of work. These included not only the commonly noted problems of wage payment, but the intricately related questions of status and the social construction of skill and technology; they extended to the definition and interpretation of disease and illness. It is also legitimate to discern attempts at managerially created social control within the range of social activities which attended the act of labour in the pottery industry. However, in spite of the energetic pursuit of paternalist and welfare schemes as attachment devices and as means of ensuring worker co-operation it is clear that such efforts were

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[93] For a similar attempt to relate managerial control to market, production and social imperatives see W. Lewchuck, "The British Motor Vehicle Industry, 1896-1982. The Roots of Decline", mimeographed, Harvard, September 1983.
[94] Edwards, Contested Terrain, op. cit., pp. 18-21 and passim.

uncertain of attaining their goals and impermanent in terms of achievement. Recent research on the textile industry[95] has shown how paternalism could not operate by employer fiat alone: it could only work when consciously accepted by those it was intended to influence. In pottery that influence, even among the most respectable firms, was never complete nor easily sustained, but was instead continuously being re-negotiated. As elsewhere, the "terrain of compromise" was always unstable ground to walk on.[96]

[95] H. Dutton and J. King, "The Limits of Paternalism: The Cotton Tyrants of North Lancashire, 1836-54", in: Social History, VII (1982).
[96] Cf. B. Elbaum, W. Lazonick, F. Williamson and J. Zeitlin, "The Labour Process, Market Structure and Marxist Theory", in: Cambridge Journal of Economics, III (1979).