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STIR, BUSTLE AND WHIR!

A HISTORY OF THE NEW ZEALAND CLOTHING FACTORY
1873 - 1905

with particular reference to the labour process

Penelope Isaac

Presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for
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**ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>AJHR</td>
<td>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</td>
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INTRODUCTION

This essay has two purposes: to trace the history of New Zealand’s first and for a long time largest clothing factory; and to investigate within the context of this case study the working of the labour process in nineteenth century New Zealand. The Hallenstein Brothers’ New Zealand Clothing Factory was New Zealand’s first clothing factory and for a long time one of the country’s biggest employers of women. This essay is by no means an attempt to recount the factory’s total history. Instead, it provides the case study for an investigation into the working of the labour process in New Zealand in the nineteenth century.

The ideas in this work are the result of an attempt to use historical research to test the existing theories on the debate over labour process. As far as the sources allow, the labour process in the Hallenstein Brothers’ clothing factory before 1900 is examined and its activities placed within the broader social and economic context of its time.

Chapter One discusses the theory of labour process, in particular the works of Harry Braverman and William Lazonick. The empirical research is used to test the theory. The major strands of the debate on labour process are explained in their historiographical context, and the colonial economic and social context that was New Zealand in the late nineteenth century are then examined. Chapter Two begins with an overview of the establishment of the firm and the people behind its inception sketching the context for Chapter Three, an analysis of the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory. Factory organisation and management, layout and technology and the subdivision of labour emerge as key themes in the production process. Feminisation of the workplace is also evident in a factory made up predominantly of female workers. Workers and wages are the subject matter for the fourth chapter, which takes a closer look at who the workers in the factory were, and looks at the wage structure. This chapter also assesses the workers’ attitudes and responses to changes in the labour process. The final chapter investigates the New
Zealand Clothing Factory's occupational health and safety record, as this relates in an important sense to the labour process. The working environment is recalled, and state legislation affecting this environment is assessed. The concluding chapter summarises the findings. How the labour process operated and changed in the New Zealand Clothing Factory, the relationship between the workers and management, the impact of technology and the impact of the colonial gender order are assessed. Also considered are the consequences of establishment in a young and ambitious country determined to avoid the evils of the Old World.

The analytical method is historical. The resultant analysis is by no means the whole story. However, it does provide an insider's view of the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory in the period from 1873 to 1905. The case study provides an interesting illustration of the dynamic interaction between the forces and relations of production in one colonial factory. It should be noted at this stage that the Hallenstein Brothers' New Zealand Clothing Factory is by no means representative of all New Zealand clothing factories. On the contrary, as the 'sweating scandal' of 1889 exposed, the Hallensteins' factory was an exceptional example.
CHAPTER ONE
THE LABOUR PROCESS

The Hallenstein Brothers’ New Zealand Clothing Factory provides an opportunity to analyse the relevance of the body of literature relating to labour process to New Zealand’s first clothing factory. Many of the issues which have emerged as central in the debate over labour process, such as the introduction of new technology in the workplace, management and the role of culture and the state, can be explored in New Zealand. Moreover, a small colony which had been in existence only since 1840 allows us to analyse the central issues in labour process theory in a context where both the colonial state and a sense of national identity were still quite plastic. If we follow William Lazonick, and define the central issues in the debate as questions which the colony had to answer, we can hope to more clearly understand the evolution of the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

Although the labour process debate has generated a small library of literature on the subject, the two works relevant to this study are Harry Braverman’s *Labour and Monopoly Capital* (1974) and William Lazonick’s *Competitive Advantage on the Shop Floor* (1990). Contemporary historiographical debate on labour process was ignited in 1974 with the publication of Harry Braverman’s book. A Marxist critique of the history of industrial labour, Braverman’s work is a cornerstone in labour process theory. Since publication, Braverman’s work has been widely debated and is now

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largely accepted to have several serious flaws. Despite that - or perhaps because of it - most studies on labour process start with Braverman. Braverman's focus on the interrelationships between human effort, mechanisation, the subdivision of labour and the role of management can still be considered an essential starting point in analysing the impacts of the labour process in a capitalist society. Braverman's work provides an excellent base from which to analyse, question and assess the development of labour process in any particular case study. It is not, however, fully satisfactory. William Lazonick's study provides a revised approach to the labour process, tracing the development of capitalism in three separate trading nations (Britain, the United States and Germany), emphasizing the point that universal explanations for the role and aims of capitalism are inadequate. For Lazonick, the evolution of labour process needs to be conceptualised within its various social, cultural, political and economic circumstances. The strategies of business organisations, the internal structure of management, the relations among firms, the impacts of family and community structures and migration patterns are all factors Lazonick identifies as impacting upon the development of the labour force, as well as the developmental and regulatory roles of the state and relations among nation states. However, Lazonick also points out that

without an analysis of how firms organise their production workers to transform invested resources into saleable products, it is impossible to comprehend the social determinants and impacts of technological change, and without an understanding of the cases and consequences of technological change, one cannot hope to understand the dynamics of capitalist development.

It should be noted here that both Braverman and Lazonick neglect to discuss the impact of gender on the labour process. That gender is integral to the organisation of work and to social production has been explored by several scholars. This study follows the work of Raylene Frances on gender and the labour process, who, in her

2 Lazonick, p.3

3 Lazonick, p.3

4 See, for example, D. Knights and H.Wilmott (eds), Gender and the Labour Process, Aldershot, 1986
study of the Victorian clothing trades, confirmed the importance of this variable in any study of the labour process.5

I

There are three main strands to Braverman’s thesis - de-skilling, mechanisation and 'scientific management'. It is the first two which constitute primarily the basis of this investigation. Braverman finds capitalism guilty of systematically destroying the craft heritage by downgrading the work process and introducing scientific management and machinery in its quest for profit.6 According to Braverman, the labour process begins with a contract or agreement governing the conditions of sale of labour power by the worker, and its purchase by the employer. The worker is forced to enter the workforce under these conditions because society leaves him or her no other means to gain a livelihood. The employer is concerned primarily with the accumulation of capital. As a result, labour process is dominated and shaped by the need to accumulate capital.7

Braverman contends that human labour power is distinguished from other forms of labour power by its inherent capacity for conceptual thought. Animals too have the capacity to learn, but humans, unlike animals, are not driven by instinct.8 Because of this capacity for informed and directed thought humans can be said to have infinite potential in the labour process. This is the essential resource for the capitalist in the workplace. A problem is created for the employer, however, because what the worker


6 Braverman, p.6

7 Braverman, pp.52-53

8 Braverman, pp.47-51
sells (and the capitalist buys) is not an agreed amount of labour, but the power to labour over an agreed period of time. What the employer buys is infinite in potential but in its realisation it is limited by the attitudes and beliefs of the workers. By this logic Braverman contends: (original emphasis)

It thus becomes essential for the capitalist that control over the labor process pass from the hands of the worker into his own. This transition presents itself in history as the progressive alienation of the process of production from the worker, to the capitalist it presents itself as the problem of management.9

Braverman traces the origins of management to this imbalance between a worker's potential and actual labour power. A precondition for management became the workplace, where large bodies of workers can be gathered under one roof for easier control of the labour process. The manager then undertakes to extract from labour power the maximum advantage for the capitalist.10 This aspect of Braverman's thesis is problematic in that it denies the worker a bargaining role in the process. Lazonick's pay-effort bargain is perhaps a more accurate interpretation of the worker employer-relationship. Even with the introduction of technology and methods of worker control, workers co-operate with one another, formally in unions and informally on the shop floor, to control the relation between effort and pay, their purpose being to protect themselves from unremunerated overwork.11

Management's quest for control of the labour process saw three developments, according to Braverman's thesis. The first was deskilling. 'Every step in the labour process is divorced, so far as possible, from specific knowledge and training and reduced to simple labour.'12 The division of labour is said to begin with the separation of the work into its constituent elements, then assigning detail workers to each separate task.13 This subdivision has the effect of downgrading the skill levels

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9 Braverman, p.55
10 Braverman, pp.62-65, p.69
11 Lazonick, p.65
12 Braverman, p.82
13 Braverman, p.75
involved in the production process, which consequently removes the workers' leverage for collective bargaining. This has implications for society as a whole, 'creating that mass of simple labor which is the primary feature of populations in developed capitalist countries.'\textsuperscript{14}

The second factor in the capitalist's quest for control, according to Braverman, and closely linked to de-skilling, was machinery. Machinery could take some of the stress away from the managerial process. 'Machinery offers to management the opportunity to do by wholly mechanical means that which it had previously attempted to do by organisational and disciplinary means.'\textsuperscript{15} Machines afforded managers further control over the pace of labour, and enabled the creation of what Braverman called 'dehumanized prisons of labor.'\textsuperscript{16}

The third feature of Braverman's thesis is scientific management. Scientific management, widely considered by scholars as a product of the second industrial revolution (1890-1910), involved the transfer of knowledge from the shop floor to management.\textsuperscript{17} Systematic and scientific management enabled the manager to recognise, if not solve, the problems of directing and coordinating production in the modern factory.\textsuperscript{18} Scientific management was initiated by Frederick Winslow Taylor, when he realised that mechanisation alone did not increase productivity. The idea of scientific management inspired managers to ascertain specific details about the production process, such as, among other things, time and motion studies to determine exactly how long any task might take to complete. They could then use this information to ascertain exactly how much work could be done in the time given.

\textsuperscript{14} Braverman, p.83

\textsuperscript{15} Braverman, p.195

\textsuperscript{16} Braverman, p.233

\textsuperscript{17} E. Olssen, \textit{Building the New World: Work, Politics and Society in Caversham 1880-1920}, Auckland, 1995, p.4

taking away the workers’ discretionary control over the work they did. Braverman saw the role of scientific management as

to render conscious and systematic the formerly unconscious tendency of capitalist production. It was to ensure that as craft declined, the worker would sink to the level of general and undifferentiated labor power, adaptable to a large range of simple tasks, while as science grew, it would be concentrated in the hands of management.¹⁹

Before scientific management, management has been virtually ignored. Apart from specific and isolated examples, like Robert Owen, Cadbury’s and Lever in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, management as an articulated model of organisation has received little academic attention.

II

Braverman’s thesis has been widely debated. It has been said to be too sweeping, romanticising the traditional craftsman and ignoring the fact that 'skill', in part at least, is socially constructed. The impact of Taylorism on deskilling has been disputed, and Braverman has been accused of failing to acknowledge political and ideological aspects of class.²⁰

More seriously, however, Braverman’s analysis has been criticised for portraying the worker as a passive agent in the capitalist system. Braverman assumes that capitalism dictates courses of action regardless of the political or cultural context, imposing a predetermined structure that denies human agency to all but capitalists.²¹ If the growth of a revolutionary class and the consequent overthrow of capitalism is the only

¹⁹ Braverman, p.120


²¹ Olssen, Building, p.4
proof of agency then workers have never enjoyed agency. William Lazonick's work on labour process has shown the inadequacy of explaining change in terms of any single variable, let alone ignoring various social, cultural and ideological connotations. Raylene Frances, in her study of the Victorian Clothing Trades, has shown that to assume that conflict always constitutes the major characteristic of the relationship between labour and capital is misleading because the relationship is both 'ambivalent and interdependent.' The 1890s were a period of increased workplace resistance in capitalist societies on an international level. In Victoria, from where Hallenstein recruited his first manager, Graeme Davison has asserted that it was 'only in the early 1890s, as the material supports of their prosperity gave way, that the new trades jolted into a recognition of the "disparity" between masters and men.' However, responses to this recognition were inhibited by the workers' positions as tenants, clients and mortgagees. Still, workplace resistance did exist. In Britain, from where most Australian and New Zealand colonists have come, Price has gone as far as saying that 'no other working class has so tenaciously or successfully elevated the phenomenon of workplace resistance to a central feature of relations within the wider society.' Braverman's portrayal of the worker as passive in the labour process has been justly discredited. It is still valuable, however, to understand Braverman's logic in defining the relationship between worker and employer as central to the evolution of the labour process in capitalist society. While the capitalist desires control over the labour process so as to dictate the measure of surplus value he or she can attain, it is not always going to be possible given the levering potential provided by human labour's cognitive and physical capabilities.

Price has argued that historians need a better understanding of the labour process, and this understanding needs to 'fit in to the dynamic of labour history.' The Marxian

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22 Olssen, Building, p.5

23 Frances, 'Amazons,' p.102

24 G. Davison, The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne, Melbourne, 1978, p.71

25 Price, 'Labour process,' p.58
assertion that the transition of the labour process from a formal to a real subordination occurred at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century needs to be qualified. Rather than accepting this, Price argues that the transition was far more protracted and incomplete than has generally been recognised. National differences have varied, and Price questions whether subordination in Marx’s terms has ever truly been realised.26

Those working within Braverman’s tradition have usually distinguished between the resistance of skilled as opposed to unskilled workers. Organised skilled workers have been shown to be better able and more confident in their assertions of control over their working environment and conditions than the unskilled and unorganised.27 In the clothing industry the definition of the workers as skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled may have affected their desire and capacity to resist changes occurring in the labour process. How gender influenced the responses of the workers to the social and economic changes also comes into question, especially given the fact that skill is a category that has been considered to be enormously affected by gender and women constituted most of the workers in the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

Labour historians have paid little attention to the actual concepts of skill and the skilled. For the purposes of examining Braverman’s concept of deskilling, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of skill and the skilled. As a descriptive category, skill is difficult to define because of its subjective and ambiguous nature. Skill as a category must change over time and is affected by outside economic, political and cultural factors. Usually manual dexterity and knowledge are associated with the ‘skilled’, yet most workers have this and not all workers are considered skilled. By extension, ‘skill is defined as any combination of mental and physical qualities which [are] useful to industry and require considerable training to acquire.’28 Supervisory authority has also been shown to be an important element in the definition of skilled

26 Price, p.61
27 Price, p.59
28 Cited by Olssen, Building, p.7
Deskilling has occurred in various degrees depending on various circumstances. Rose asserts that many workers were able to retain their skilled status by restricting access to apprenticeships by which the skills of the trade might be learned. In the Victorian clothing trades Raylene Frances has found that there was definitely a continuous deskilling 'if one considers skill as a measure of the range of tasks to be done and of the workers' ability to determine how a task will be done.' Where Frances finds fault in Braverman's analysis is his neglect of the concept of gender and its effect on the labour process. Frances has criticised Braverman's thesis as being 'male oriented', exposing the need to look at the ways in which patriarchal values contributed to or undermined worker resistance. Other historians have also picked up on this omission. According to Phillips and Taylor skill is far from being an objective economic fact, and is instead an 'ideological category imposed on certain types of work by virtue of the sex and power of the workers who perform it.' For Phillips and Taylor, and many other feminist labour historians, skill definitions are 'saturated with sexual bias' - as defined, skill frequently bears little relation to the actual amount of training or ability required for a job.

III

The relationship between gender and deskilling has been examined by many feminist historians in an attempt to recover the economic history of women and to explain their subordinated position in the workforce. Phillips and Taylor have suggested that the

29 S.O. Rose, "Gender at Work": sex, class and industrial capitalism,' History Workshop, Issue 21, Spring 1986, p.121
30 Rose, p.121
31 Frances, 'Amazons,' p.111
32 Frances, 'Amazons,' p.96
33 Phillips and Taylor, p.79
sexualisation of skills followed the actual deskilling of the work process, and was closely connected to the battle between organised craftsmen and employers over the control of production. Women became useful to the capitalist as cheap, unskilled labour, and as a consequence they became a threat to the working man’s integrity and livelihood. It is important here to note that this was not the case in all industries. Indeed the asymmetrical nature of capitalist development meant that women were drawn into some forms of wage labour while at the same time finding themselves excluded from industries traditionally reserved for men. Women’s low wages, combined with an ideology supporting and reinforcing their lower pay rates, proved instrumental in this process. Employers transforming the labour process in order to maximise profits and minimise worker control were able to substitute the cheaper labour of women for the more expensive labour of men. Women’s productive and reproductive roles in society were closely connected to their downgrading upon entering the workforce. Rose maintains that a woman’s skill was

...based on her household responsibilities and her property in virtue of her person. Separated from the home, her family and domestic occupations, or outside the bonds of matrimony, a woman was assured of neither skill nor virtue.

The traditional relegation of women’s work to the domestic sphere had far reaching implications for women’s work outside of the home. By the late nineteenth century the definition of women’s work as ‘productive’ was becoming a misnomer. According to Olssen ‘the reclassification of domestic work as unproductive implicitly called into question not just its status as work but also any recognition that it might require skill.’ From here the concept of skill increasingly assumed a masculine identity.

Gender also has implications for class consciousness and the notion of the worker as an active or passive agent in the capitalist mode of production. Rose has investigated

34 Phillips and Taylor, p.85
35 Rose, pp.114 -115, 117-118
36 Rose, p.125
37 Olssen, Building, p.71
this issue and found that 'what is instructive is the possibility that class consciousness and class action may be generated differently for women and men because of their different experiences and life circumstances.' Additionally, women can be drawn in to class struggle through their associations with working men. Out-work was the dominant form of women's work in the clothing industry until the late nineteenth century. Women would work in the home where they could tend to their domestic responsibilities at the same time as they were contributing to the family income. The down side of this was the lack of contact made with other workers, resulting in isolated work with little opportunity to combine or unionise. Domestic workers were also difficult to unionise because of these factors. This trend seemed to carry over when women did enter the workforce. In Dunedin, for example, despite the advent of a good many tailoring workrooms and a few clothing factories in the 1870s, the Dunedin Tailoresses' Union was not formed until 1890. Phillips and Taylor claim that women workers carried into the labour force their 'status as subordinate individuals,' a status which came to define the value of the work they did. For example, one early textile manufacturer in Britain explained that he liked to employ married women who had 'families at home dependent on them for support' because they were 'attentive, docile... [and] compelled to use their utmost exertions to procure the necessities of life.'

IV

The mechanisation of the labour process - which is related to de-skilling and the gendered division of labour - was important in Braverman's analysis of the capitalist's quest for control over workers and the labour process. Lazonick sheds new light on the role of mechanisation in the labour process, concurring with Braverman that the effort-saving nature of machinery is skill displacing but departing from Braverman in his recognition that technological change is also skill augmenting. The development

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38 Rose, p.122
39 Phillips and Taylor, p.79
40 Lazonick, p.5
and utilisation of new technology requires new skills, both within the managerial hierarchy and on the shop floor. Lazonick goes on to argue that this skill augmentation goes some way towards negating the effort-saving impact of technological change.\textsuperscript{41} Other factors, such as politics and culture, help to determine the significance of machinery so that technology interacts with the organisation of work rather than dictating to it.

In the Victorian clothing trades, Frances has found that the association between mechanisation and subdivision of the labour process was complex. 'Subdivision of the tailoring trade into the making of individual garments predated mechanisation. Subsequent subdivision occurred both in association with mechanisation and independently of it.'\textsuperscript{42} However, this is not say that mechanisation did not impact greatly upon the clothing trades. Clothing manufacture is well suited to mass production and mechanisation. The need for skilled workers in clothing factories decreased with the advent of machines capable of performing basic and more complex tasks at speed. Machines also increased the volume of ancillary handwork - 'by performing certain basic tasks more work was created for a larger number of workers in the subsequent stages.'\textsuperscript{43} The ancillary work could be subdivided to further reduce the need for skilled workers, lowering wage costs for the employer. Gender is also relevant when assessing the association in the clothing trades between the subdivision of tasks and the mechanisation of the trade. Phillips and Taylor have found that where machining in clothing factories was done by men it was classified as skilled and where it was done by women it was classified as semi-skilled.\textsuperscript{44} The connection between mechanisation and subdivision is indeed complex. Rather than one leading to the other, or vice versa, it seems they were mutually co-dependent in their impact.

\textsuperscript{41} Lazonick, p.9


\textsuperscript{43} C. Brown, 'Aspects of the Clothing Industry 1900 - 1920,' HIST 452 Essay, University of Otago, Dunedin, 1985, p.2

\textsuperscript{44} Phillips and Taylor, p.85
upon the labour process in clothing factories, as Frances noted. Whether this was the case in the Hallenstein Brothers' New Zealand Clothing Factory is one question to be addressed in the course of this investigation.

The role of government in the labour process can also be assessed with reference to empirical analysis. Frances has found that in Victoria factory legislation played a small role in determining the developments in the labour process, finding the labour market to have a far greater influence on the actions of employers.\textsuperscript{45} Davison has found that to some extent government protectionism was supported by both 'masters and men' in the Australian colony, supporting the idea of class harmony in a new society. Social conventions lagged behind changing economic circumstances, however, helping in the formation of a wedge between worker and employer.\textsuperscript{46} The colonial context was unique in the role government played in the labour process, as governments attempted to avoid mistakes made in the colonising land. This tended to conflict, however, with the development of the new colonial economy, which tended to be prone to economic crisis.

V

The central issues in labour process theory can be linked to the colonial context. As a small, young colony, New Zealand's national identity was still being determined, and the colonial state was to play a significant role in its evolution. Manufacturing played an important role in this process. Inspired by Julius Vogel's eagerness to expand the market for New Zealand products to 'shrink the vast distances that separated the colony from the great centres of population and capital,' the colonial government undertook the task of promoting New Zealand's commercial empire.\textsuperscript{47} Demands for greater trading autonomy coincided with a vigorous policy for developing local industry. Many prominent business men, like Bendix Hallenstein and

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\textsuperscript{45} Frances, \textit{Politics}, p.21
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\textsuperscript{46} Davison, pp.41, 52
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{47} R. Dalziel, \textit{Julius Vogel: Business Politician}, Auckland, 1986, p.131
\end{flushleft}
William Larnach, involved themselves in the political life of the colony, in the interests of themselves and wider colonial development.48 Angus Ross has identified the period between 1870 and 1877 as a time of a 'quickening of New Zealand interest in politics,' where government leaders joined with 'ambitious business men in forecasting an important and lucrative future for New Zealand'.49 The vision of New Zealand as the 'Britain of the South Seas' also saw the government of the 1870s offer financial incentives. Many secondary industries began in the 1870s in New Zealand and bonuses were offered by the government to industries seen to be important to the country's commercial development.50

The impact of this commercial ambition can be linked to developments in the labour process in New Zealand. The issues identified in the debate on labour process were often addressed in the 1870s within the larger context of debates about the nature of the 'ideal society.' Miles Fairburn has found that contemporaries cherished an Arcadian idealisation of New Zealand society, and visualised New Zealand as a land 'happily spared from vertical relationships', such as master-servant and landlord-tenant.51 The enemies of this ideal society were class divisions and oppressive status conformity, all rampant in the Old World.52 Exploitation and abuses of the workforce through the labour process were incompatible with the new society and were to affect the development of the labour process within it. Striking the balance between the ideal society and the competitive market was a task left largely in the hands of the employers. Millen argues that the colonial 'spirit of independence' was fostered by a 'favourable employment market that encouraged equality rather than servility' in

48 Dalziel, p.224


52 Fairburn, Ideal Society, p.77
worker-employer relationships. While this is unlikely to be true of every worker-employer relationship, New Zealand’s status as a colony working hard to establish a sense of national identity is one factor that needs to be considered when assessing the development of capitalism and its impact upon the labour process in New Zealand. The period 1870 to 1890 was a period of considerable economic and social change in New Zealand. By following Lazonick in identifying the uniqueness of the New Zealand setting and Braverman in his theoretical conception of the labour process, we can hope to more clearly understand the development of the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

As a case study, the Hallenstein Brothers’ New Zealand Clothing Factory provides a setting within which Braverman’s theory of labour process, as modified and qualified through the work of scholars like William Lazonick and Raylene Frances, can be applied and tested. While Braverman’s theory is widely agreed by scholars to be flawed it still provides a theoretical base from which analysis can begin. By tracking changes to the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory we can assess the relevance of these theories to the colonial context while at the same time discovering the early history of New Zealand’s first clothing factory.


H.B. stands for 'Hard to Beat'
Quality finish and style
H.B. is a guarantee of value all the while
In Hats and Clothes, Boots and Hose,
Rugs, Collars, Shirts or Ties.
The H.B. branch of Maori land
All other brands defies.

Jack Stewart; winner Hallenstein Bros. Best Poem competition for school boys,
c.1903. ¹

CHAPTER TWO
BACKGROUND AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NZCF

In 1873 Bendix Hallenstein established New Zealand's first clothing factory. Dubbed a 'colonial capitalist' by his biographer, Bendix Hallenstein was integral in the factory's general development and oversaw all major decisions in it.² In order to examine the labour process within the factory it is necessary to establish the economic context, the nature and development of the factory, and the relationship to the community and the government. It will also be helpful to have some understanding of the people behind it. Although Bendix Hallenstein, the company's founder, has been the focus for several studies, and the Hallenstein Brothers' retail operations the subject of Louise Shaw's thesis, the history of the New Zealand Clothing Factory has been largely ignored.³ This chapter will focus on the factory's origins and establishment, providing the background from which the labour process can be better understood.

¹ 'Miscellaneous items', AG295 35/11


Bendix Hallenstein has been described as 'a man of extraordinary energy, great vision, and humane qualities.' Born 24 January 1834 in Bisperode, Brunswick, Germany, Hallenstein moved to England in 1852 with his two older brothers, Isaac and Michaelis, to live with their uncle, Moritz Michaelis. While in England Bendix worked for a large shipping company. Of Jewish and entrepreneurial stock, the brothers were soon drawn to the gold fields of far lands. In 1857 Michaelis and Bendix joined Isaac in Australia, where they established a general store. The Victorian rushes were over, however, and when the Otago gold rush began in 1861 the brothers quickly followed, establishing a general store in Invercargill. After a year and little success Isaac returned to Melbourne and Bendix shifted to Queenstown. Here Bendix Hallenstein was to find his niche, providing goods and services to the local gold mining and farming community, and opening branches of the store in Arrowtown, Cromwell and Lawrence.

Hallenstein was an active member of the Central Otago community and soon found himself working in local politics. He became the second mayor of Queenstown in 1869, serving three terms, and was elected Councillor for the Lakes District on the Otago Provincial Council 1872, attending four sessions for the Provincial Council between May 1873 and May 1874. He was also a Member of the House of Representatives from 1873 to 1874. Evidence in his letterbooks indicate an active involvement in community issues, such as petitioning for a post office at Gibbstown in 1873. Hallenstein linked his political and commercial views, and was involved in

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5 Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist,' pp.5,8,9

6 Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist,' p.9

7 B.H. to Julius Vogel, 11 June 1873, Bendix Hallenstein Letterbook 1866-1875, pp.334-336, AG 296/1
Bendix Hallenstein

Source: Hocken Library
many commercial ventures.

Bendix Hallenstein's business spirit is evident in his record of commercial activities. In 1866 he became partners in the Brunswick Flour Mill at Frankton with Peter Robertson, a member of the Queenstown Borough Council and Queenstown's first mayor. Robertson's death in 1876 gave Hallenstein the opportunity he needed to sell the mill. He was also directly associated with the early beginnings of Glendermids Ltd. and the Bristol Piano Company. The New Zealand Clothing Factory was a major venture in 1873, and in 1884 he founded the D.I.C. The Hallenstein brothers continued their close business relationship throughout their lives despite living so far apart, merging interests in England and Australia as well as New Zealand. Hallenstein kept in close contact with his family and his brothers were often involved in his ventures. In 1873 a number of factors contributed to the Hallenstein Brothers' decision to invest in and establish a clothing factory.

Between 1873 and 1891 deflation dominated the world economy. Prices fell unevenly, commodity prices dropped, rates of interest dropped as did profits. New Zealand, however, experienced an economic boom in the 1870s as new local industries sought to replace expensive imports and substantial government borrowing was used to stimulate the failing economy. In 1873 and 1874 Julius Vogel's public work scheme resulted in an increase in immigrants and in turn increasing demand for material goods. Hallenstein seized the opportunity in 1873 to provide New Zealand with a clothing factory. Having stocked his general stores with imported men's clothing, Hallenstein had experienced the nuisance of irregular shipments and little

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8 Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist,' p.9

9 C. Hardie, The Hallenstein Legacy 1863-1988, Hocken Library Dunedin, 1988, p.4


guarantee that the product being imported was going to satisfy the local market. There was a gap in the market. New Zealand lacked a men's clothing factory that could regularly supply ready-made, inexpensive, quality clothing. Not one to avoid an opportunity or be scared of a risk, Hallenstein set about filling this void.

The New Zealand Clothing Factory was established in Dunedin in 1873 as a partnership between the three Hallenstein brothers, Bendix, still in Central Otago, Isaac, still in Melbourne and Michaelis, who was then operating from London. Bendix Hallenstein was a practising Jew, and obtained much of his business support from his family. Family members supplied capital at times of crisis and also played a large role in managing the firm. Hallenstein distrusted strangers, and all of the original management staff except Anderson were related by blood or by marriage. The Hallenstein family followed a pattern Olssen has described as typical of members of Otago’s 'mercantile financial elite,' whereby marriages were common between the daughters and sons of business partners. For example Hyam Hart, a partner in the firm, and Jacob Isaacs, who later invested in the company and became warehouse manager, married daughters of Moritz Michaelis, Bendix Hallenstein’s uncle. In 1881 Hallenstein’s eldest daughter married Willi Fels, a cousin who would later become one of the company’s managing directors.

For the initial setting up of the factory each of the Hallenstein Brothers invested ten thousand pounds in capital and Bendix raised most of his share as a loan against his home, Thurlby Domain. His brothers gave him reciprocal partnership in their enterprises, (chiefly the tanning firm of Michaelis, Hallenstein and Company, Melbourne,) and J.F. Anderson, an experienced clothing manufacturer from

12 Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist,’ p.16


14 For an intricate breakdown of the Hallenstein family tree and its business connections see Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist,’ pp.81-82

15 Brasch and Nicholson, Hallensteins, p.36
Melbourne, took the final quarter share in the business.\(^{16}\) In a letter to Anderson, Bendix expressed his belief in the enormous potential of the factory, stressing that 'pulling well together our business can be made one of the largest and most profitable in New Zealand. This should be our aim.'\(^{17}\) Despite his large investment in the factory, Bendix Hallenstein had not intended to take an active share in its practical management and development. Anderson was to conduct the business to begin with. He was to draw £400 per year for the first two years in expectation of profit as well as being paid a salary of £250.\(^{18}\) Hallenstein's intention was to leave the entire running of the firm to Anderson, leaving himself free to attend to all his other business and political concerns. Hyam and Maurice Hart were also involved in the factory's administration, as accountant and traveller respectively.\(^{19}\) Anderson did not want to have Hyam Hart as a partner in the business and only agreed, reluctantly, on the condition that he (Anderson) retained full control in the absence of the Hallenstein brothers. Anderson eventually agreed to Hyam obtaining a fifth share after two years, out of which he was also to pay Maurice Hart, Hyam's son, who was working as a traveller for the firm.\(^{20}\) Hallenstein increasingly became more directly involved in the business but Anderson remained general manager of the factory until an illness led to his death in 1884.\(^{21}\)

Although Bendix Hallenstein had no desire to be involved in the factory's daily management he made all the major planning decisions. Hallenstein purchased a property on Customhouse square from William Larnarch on which to house the

\(^{16}\) Brasch and Nicholson, *Hallensteins*, p.16

\(^{17}\) B.H. to Anderson, 19 January, 1874, B.H. Letterbook 1866-1875, p.387, AG 296/1

\(^{18}\) Brasch and Nicholson, *Hallensteins*, p.17

\(^{19}\) Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist', p.26


\(^{21}\) Shaw, 'Hallenstein Brothers,' p.6
Cyril's ..................................will have the pleasure of calling on
you over about the ................................when the favor of your orders is requested

The Original Factory, Customhouse Square, established 1873.
Dunedin, 1973, p.15
It was in Rattray Street, opposite the Cargill monument and next to the Bank of New Zealand, which was situated on the corner of Princes and Rattray Streets, in the heart of Dunedin. In 1874 a new warehouse was needed, and was duly built alongside the factory. Hallenstein again used Thurlby Domain as collateral for the eight thousand pound loan he was granted from the Otago and Southland Loan and Investment Company to finance the building. Hallenstein was extremely pleased with the new warehouse site, marvelling over its centrality in a letter to his brother Michaelis in 1875. Hallenstein believed the new site to be in a 'superior position to any other warehouse in Dunedin, all the people coming into Dunedin either by steamer or railway must pass by our door.' Hallenstein's awareness of the importance of location reflected his experience in business and his awareness that Dunedin was a rapidly developing town. Graeme Davison's thesis that clothing manufacturers clung to their central location because of the proximity of exploitable female labour among the uneducated girls, widows and housewives of the inner suburbs may also explain the choice of location. Anderson's evidence, given to the 1878 Royal Commission of inquiry into the working of the Employment of Females and Others Act, indicated that many of the workers did live quite close to the factory because many chose to walk home for the midday dinner hour. Despite Davison's argument, it seems as if Hallenstein wanted a central location more because of its access to the market. Proximity to the port and the railway station allowed easy access to the transportation systems that would distribute and deliver the factory's goods to their respective buyers, it was close to the raw materials needed in the factory's operation and it was also right in the heart of the city.

22 Brasch and Nicholson, Hallensteins, p.15

23 B.H. to Michaelis Hallenstein, 2 June 1874, B.H. Letterbook 1866-1875, p.437, AG296/1

24 B.H. to Michaelis Hallenstein, 30 August 1875, B.H. Letterbook 1875-1877, p.7, AG296/2

25 G. Davison, The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne, Melbourne, 1978, p.45

26 AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.11
According to the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* Hallenstein provided the ideas for the design of the factory. There is little evidence available to establish exactly how carefully Bendix Hallenstein designed the factory or even to ascertain what knowledge he had of clothing factories. In 1876 the *Otago Guardian* described the building occupied by the various branches of the factory as extensive; the old portion consisting of three flats, each measuring 92 feet by 26 feet, and in the building recently erected there are four flats, measuring 80 feet by 30. Of the latter only one, the top [floor] is used for factory purposes, the next being a clothing showroom, the one below a hosiery room and the basement is used for packing and entering department. The bottom flat in the old building is utilised as a showroom for the woollen goods...

The new development aroused the interest of the community. Both the *Otago Witness* and the *Otago Guardian* took an interest in the establishment of the factory, running articles on its progress and offering words of praise and encouragement. It may also have provided the necessary spotlight to ensure the factory was of a high standard, given that many of Dunedin’s young women would soon be working there. Prior to the factory opening in 1873 the *Witness* ran a small article informing the public of the new establishment:

We are informed that Mr M. Hallenstein, the Melbourne partner of the firm which is largely involved in commercial pursuits both in Victoria and New Zealand, has completed arrangements to start shortly in Dunedin an extensive clothing factory, equal to the largest establishment of a similar nature in Melbourne. The manager, with a complete and experienced staff of hands, will shortly arrive in Dunedin from Melbourne... The firm intend to use largely New Zealand made tweeds, thus stimulating in various ways native industry. In the hands of an experienced, energetic, and wealthy firm, this new industry ought to prove a great success.\(^\text{28}\)

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\(^{28}\) *Otago Witness*, 29 November 1874, p.20
The New Zealand Clothing Factory was established at a time when local industries were important in defining growing communities and society was provincially, rather than nationally, oriented. The relationship between entrepreneur, industry and community was close as settler society worked towards the building of a society that was brighter and better than the ones they had come from. Growth and prosperity was desired by all and the community was largely supportive of the development of industry. Small communities and a provincial society created close relationships between individual firms and the communities which identified with them. As the business experienced difficulties Hallenstein appealed to the community for backing.

In 1875 the factory ran into financial strife, and in October of 1875 Bendix Hallenstein considered selling the business. Hallenstein had moved to Dunedin from Queenstown in 1875, leasing Thurlby Domain and moving into a more modest Dunedin home. The crisis was due to the market being flooded with cheap imports during 1875 and 1876, which left the New Zealand Clothing Factory overstocked and undervalued. In 1876 the Supplementary News reported that the Hallenstein Brothers' New Zealand Clothing Factory had experienced "persistent opposition on the part of the larger houses glutting this market with imported goods, and, no doubt, the retailers found it to their advantage to push these in preference to local manufacturers." Bad debts from retailers also contributed to the factory's difficulties. Hallenstein was also

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30 B.H. to Isaac Hallenstein, 26 October 1875, B.H. Letterbook 1875-1877, p.40, AG296/2

31 Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist', p.28

32 Supplementary News, 24 May 1876, p.1 Miscellaneous Historical Items File, AG295 35/10
becoming impatient with Anderson, believing him to have overstocked the warehouse. Hallenstein’s increasing perception of Anderson as incapable led him to take an even greater interest in the factory’s day to day management. In December 1875 Hallenstein made the decision to become his own middleman by opening retail stores. Hallenstein sold several of his properties in Central Otago and Dunedin, and sold the factory to the National Insurance Company in Dunedin, arranging a seven-year lease on the buildings. The money from these sales provided the finance for the establishment of the retail stores. As Louise Shaw concluded, ‘the beginning of New Zealand’s first clothing store was a response not to market demand [as the factory was] but to an oversupply of goods and a liquidity crisis.’

In 1876 Otago Guardian reported on the firm’s progress, offering praise and reporting:

the members of the firm are to be congratulated on the enterprising manner in which they have organised, and are carrying on, an important industry. They deserved success, and appear to have secured it.

In 1879 Otago entered the 'long depression'. As the factory began to feel the effects of the depression, Hallenstein appealed to the community for support. In an open letter, presumably sent to a number of addresses, Hallenstein outlined the seriousness of the 'unprecedented financial crisis and restricted assistance of the banks,' saying this was 'threatening the prosperity of our Manufacturing Industries to an extent which has already made itself known to many a hitherto successful producer.' Hallenstein went on to plead:

The proprietors of the New Zealand Clothing Factory, employing as they do the largest number of hands in New Zealand and having [retail] branches from one end of the Island to the other, now more than ever require the support and co-operation of the Public, especially as they offer unparalleled advantages [in the superior quality and value of the HB product]... With these advantages I confidently look to all classes now more than ever to give their support to an undertaking which has already produced a great boom [sic.] to many a Family.

33 Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist,' pp.28-29
34 Shaw, 'Hallenstein Brothers,' p.8
35 Otago Guardian, 13 May 1876, p.2
but which at the present time, like all other Industries, is passing through an ordeal of a severely trying kind.\textsuperscript{36}

The issue of government protection was central to the crisis faced by manufacturers in the 1870s. The question of the tariff divided business and rural communities in the 1870s. According to Keith Sinclair, government protection was a radical issue in the circumstances of the time.\textsuperscript{37} Protectionism would encourage a diversified economy and therefore social change - free trade was a conservative policy, involving opposition to socio-economic change.\textsuperscript{38} The clothing industry in New Zealand was without protection from 'foreign' producers whose goods were imported into New Zealand almost free from duty. Hallenstein supported the protective tariff, believing it to be essential to the industrial development of the colony.\textsuperscript{39} The lack of government protection also left workers vulnerable to exploitation, as local manufacturers sought to maintain their profits at the expense of the labour force by paying low wages and forcing their employees to work faster. The issue of protection was addressed in a Colonial Industries Commission Report in 1880, which concluded that a protective tariff was unnecessary, despite protests from some manufacturers.\textsuperscript{40} In 1887 Hallenstein was encouraged to stand for parliament on the protection issue but withdrew after realising he had a good chance of winning the seat. By 1888 the issue had raised enough interest to warrant changes to tariffs protecting boots manufacturers, clothiers, machinery makers and workers in brass and iron. The existing tariff on imported clothing was raised from fifteen to twenty per cent.\textsuperscript{41} Tariffs may also have had an adverse affect on clothing manufacturers who relied on imported materials to produce their goods. Hallenstein's use of mainly local tweeds

\textsuperscript{36} B.H. to Sir, 5 June 1879, Miscellaneous File, AG295, 35/10

\textsuperscript{37} K. Sinclair, 'The significance of the "Scarecrow Ministry", 1887 - 1891,' in R. Chapman and K. Sinclair (eds), \textit{Studies of a Small Democracy}, Auckland, 1963, p.113

\textsuperscript{38} Sinclair, 'Scarecrow', p.114

\textsuperscript{39} Vickerman, 'Colonial Capitalist,' p.14

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{AJHR}, 1880, H-22, p.119

\textsuperscript{41} Shaw, 'Hallenstein Brothers,' p.51
The New Zealand Clothing Factory, Dowling Street, Dunedin.
Source: *Cyclopedia of New Zealand 1905*, vol. 4., *Southland and Otago*, Christchurch, 1905, p.306
would have largely eliminated this problem for the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

By 1882, despite financial troubles in the late 1870s Hallenstein confidently planned for the future. Following the expiry of the lease on the Rattray Street premises, Hallenstein had David Ross, one of the Dunedin's leading architects, design a new factory. David Ross was originally from Victoria, and is likely to have had some knowledge of factory architecture from his experience there. The grand new factory was opened in 1883, three storeys tall, on Dowling Street. The factory proper was situated on the second and third floors, with light being admitted by large skylights extending the entire length of the building as well as a number of side windows. The first floor was accessed by a grand staircase leading to the offices of the partners, which were divided by glazed partitions, and the Head Office of the firm where the administrative work was carried out. The ground floor was accessible from Macandrew Street, and housed the bulk store used for packing and receiving goods. The building had production advantages which are discussed at length in the following chapter.

The lack of surviving records on the logic behind the design of the factory allows for little more than speculation on where Hallenstein and his partners obtained their ideas for the design and layout of the factory. The idea of a 'model factory' in the nineteenth century seems relatively undocumented. Inferences from British factory legislation and Robert Owen's provisions for a 'model factory' indicate a preoccupation with certain features of the British factory system in the early nineteenth century. From 1802 the first protective legislation was passed. The widespread perception of factories as 'dark Satanic mills' led to concerns over many of the undesirable facets of factory life. Factors such as overcrowding, poor

42 S. Brosnahan, *Dunedin: New Zealand’s First Great City*, Dunedin, 1992, p.15


ventilation, night work, child labour, women’s work and poor sanitation led Robert Owen to declare that such conditions

cannot be expected to produce any other than a population weak in bodily and mental faculties, with habits generally destructive of their own comforts, and of the well being of those around them.45

Owen spelt out a vision of a 'model factory' as the heart of a co-operative community. The growth of a co-operative ideology in Britain was founded in ideas of community management and paternalistic welfare, as was found in Owen’s model village at New Lanark. Owen foresaw that:

On a territory agriculturally rich enough to support about 1000 or 1500 people, a new village will be built. The buildings will be constructed around gardens. They will include living quarters with common kitchens, dining-rooms, and recreation rooms, but providing separate apartments for each family. A school, community hall, and other necessary buildings will complete the parallelogram... each community will manufacture in model factories what its resources best provide it with... 46

Having arrived in England in 1852 Hallenstein was probably well aware of the new co-operative philosophy and the political debate on factory conditions. Moreover, the idea of a co-operative community fits into the colonial context. The relationship between company and community is highlighted in an environment characterised by new growth and the development of a new and fair society. New Zealand in the nineteenth century demonstrates this well.

The 'long depression' had begun in Otago in 1879. Government borrowing in the early 1870s served only to delay economic crisis - 'in attempting to get itself out of debt, the colony got further into debt.'47 The period was characterised by low wages, unemployment, poverty, low prices for primary exports and a fall in real incomes.48

45 Cole and Filson, British Working Class, p.12


47 Gardner, 'Colonial', p.71

48 Gardner, 'Colonial,' p.75
The Hallensteins' clothing factory managed to survive the crisis. This was due to the constant flow of business supplying its various retail outlets throughout New Zealand.

Family members continued to provide Hallenstein with a secure and inexpensive management team. In 1883 a new deed of partnership was signed to include Hyam Hart, Willi Fels and Emil Hallenstein (son of Michaels).  

During the 1890s Hallenstein gave Willi Fels and Isadore de Beer, who had both married Hallenstein's daughters, increasing control of the business. Bendix Hallenstein remained involved in the running of the company in an advisory capacity until his death in 1905. His dedication, ambition and hard work had seen the successful establishment of the New Zealand Clothing Factory and what was to become New Zealand's largest retail chain.

III

From the time Bendix Hallenstein arrived in New Zealand in 1862 he played an active role in New Zealand's commercial development. After his initial work in general stores providing goods and services to gold miners his commercial interests rapidly developed and diversified. He was also involved in local and national body politics, serving three terms as Queenstown's second mayor. Sensing a gap in the market for men's clothing, Hallenstein set about establishing the New Zealand Clothing Factory with his two brothers. Within two years cheap imports and bad debts spurred Hallenstein to establish a retail chain to sell of garments produced in the factory. The retail chain was very successful and grew rapidly. By 1882 Hallenstein was able to invest in and build a new factory in Dowling Street, which was well planned for effective use of space and labour. Family remained central to the management structure, and by 1893 Hallenstein was able to bequeath direct control of the factory. Bendix Hallenstein died in 1905, and in 1906 the company became incorporated as a limited liability company. Having gained an understanding of the economic context and the nature and development of the firm we shall now turn to labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

49 Shaw, 'Hallenstein Brothers,' p.12
CHAPTER THREE
STIR, BUSTLE AND WHIR:
LABOUR PROCESS IN THE NZCF

'Some little girls, about twelve to fourteen apparently, sew on buttons; they do nothing else. What lucky men their brothers must be now, and their husbands will be bye and bye - never to know the want of a button!'

Labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory evolved over time as Hallenstein and his managers sought to effect the labour process so as to increase productivity, as most employers do. In examining changes to the labour process and the impact of external factors such as technology, we can assess the development of the nature of work in capitalist society. Labour process formations are produced by the operation of many factors. Product markets, technological developments and human labour all impact upon the labour process to varying degrees. Moreover, ideologies and conventions also affect the way in which work is designed and performed. Attempts to increase labour productivity in New Zealand in the nineteenth century were affected by the provincial and community spirit that linked the worker and employer together as settlers in a new land. Evidence of close community interest in the conditions of work in the New Zealand Clothing Factory may well have affected labour process development there. In the clothing industry Raylene Francis had identified three important changes in manufacturing in the late nineteenth century: the subdivision of work, mechanisation and feminisation. These three factors can be identified as operating within the New Zealand Clothing Factory from its inception in 1873. Organisational structure and management were integral to these changes, and were well considered by the managers of the factory. This chapter identifies the key factors operating in the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

1 Otago Guardian, 13 May 1876, p.2

The need for employers to increase labour productivity is perennial but not constant. External economic factors as well as internal production requirements affect the urgency with which employers attempt to increase productivity. However, a successful business will always be attempting to reduce costs so as to increase profits. In any production period, Lazonick has identified three major costs incurred by the employing firm. Firstly, fixed costs of investments in the plant, such as equipment and organisation. Secondly, the variable costs of materials that enter into each unit of the product and thirdly, the labour costs incurred in employing the skills of, and eliciting effort from, workers. In the clothing industry in the nineteenth century the fixed and variable costs included fabrics, fuel, electricity, dyes, chemicals and machinery, not to mention storage, maintenance and the cost of land and buildings. Some of these costs could be reduced by using competitive markets to find the best deals but in general they were necessary costs and difficult to reduce. Labour costs, on the other hand, could be considered a more flexible variable. Wages accounted for up to one third of a factory’s costs in 1880. However, labour, that which is sold for wages, is not passive like other agents in the production process. As Braverman put it:

The distinctive capacity of human labour power is... its intelligent and purposive character, which gives it infinite adaptability and which produces the social and cultural conditions for enlarging its own productivity, so that its surplus product may be enlarged.

The flip side of this intelligent and purposive character is that workers are capable of resistance. In understanding the labour process it has become essential to understand the relationships within it: relationships within the working class, between employer

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3 W. Lazonick, *Competitive Advantage on the Shop Floor*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990, p.6


and employee and between agency and organisational structure. The task of assessing the success of attempts to improve labour productivity can therefore become clouded because of the problematic nature of separating skill, effort and initiative from the effects of organisation and supervision. John Bartlett has found other factors which are likely to have decreased incentives to increase labour productivity in nineteenth century New Zealand:

...the prevailing attitudes of New Zealanders to work and the relationship between the workers and the bosses. They were keen to avoid the evils of "old world" industrialism. The companies, although wishing to increase labour productivity, may have therefore felt constrained in the manner in which they went about increasing it.

This attitude was not always evident among employers in New Zealand in the nineteenth century, as the debate over 'sweating' revealed in the late 1880s. The founders of the New Zealand Clothing Factory would have had difficulty finding a competitive market in New Zealand where they might locate the resources needed to establish a clothing factory. They were, after all, the first clothing factory to be established here. Markets for the specialist goods required were found in England and in Australia, and imported to New Zealand accordingly if the goods could not be obtained here. Wages and hours were set according to both legislation and convention, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter will investigate the relationships between organisation, technology and skill relative to labour productivity in the New Zealand Clothing Factory, as well as exploring the impact gender has on an industry so dominated by female workers.

In its first years the factory was very successful. In 1874 the Otago Guardian reported that the 'orders are already in excess of the present machinery power of the

6 E. Olssen, Building the New Word: work, politics and society in Caversham 1880 - 1920, Auckland, 1995, pp.3-4

7 Bartlett, 'Woven,' p.23

8 Bartlett, 'Woven,’ p.24
factory’. When the Hallenstein retail outlets were opened the factory went into top gear. Profits were sufficient, bearing in mind the fact they were employing the cheapest forms of labour - females, children and a good many they classed as 'unskilled'. It was not until the depression of the 1880s that the cost of wages became a matter of consideration to the managers of the factory.10

The partners of the New Zealand Clothing Factory directed their attempts at increasing efficiency toward reducing costs where they could. In 1874 the factory started buying materials from the Mosgiel Woolen Mills, in 1875 they began purchasing from the Kaikorai Woollen Mills and in 1880 the Kaiapoi Woollen Manufacturing Company became a major supplier to the factory.11 By using local products and utilising the growing competitive market, Hallenstein and his managers were able to ensure they were getting the best value and prices for their tweeds. Expanding their product lines and keeping up with fashions was another element relevant to profit-margins, which saw the factory establish a general hosiery department in 1876 and later a waterproof clothing department.12 Fashions in clothing could sometimes upset the production process but generally the process was the same. One worker recalled working in the factory when moleskin trousers were popular. The fabric was so thick only two pair of trousers could be cut at a time, slowing down the rate at which moleskins could be produced.13 Moleskin trousers and the crimean shirt were 'the invariable outfit of the working man' in the 1870s, so this may have caused some problems.14 The firm also secured contracts for large orders. The New Zealand Clothing Factory was making New Zealand volunteer uniforms and caps in 1876, and turned out an estimated 10

9 Otago Witness, 11 April 1874, p.20

10 J.T. Paul, Our Majority and the After Years, Dunedin, 1910, p.8


12 Otago Guardian, 13 May 1876, p.2, and Letter from 'Archibald' to Halsted, c.1920, p.4, AG295, 35/10

13 Letter to Halsted, p.4, AG295, 35/10

14 Making New Zealand: Pictorial Surveys of a Century, vol.2, no.23, 1940, p.20
000 volunteer uniforms between 1884 and 1888. Secure contracts meant guaranteed profit. A bespoke department was also established and operated via the retail chain, providing made-to-measure suits. This was a popular venture that resulted in hiring more staff for the purpose of executing the orders more rapidly. By 1905 the factory was producing between 1800 and 2500 garments each week, and the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* reported that it was providing every convenience for producing its goods both cheaply and well.

II

The New Zealand Clothing Factory was organised into various departments and rooms which performed different functions within the production process. Hallenstein considered the need for efficient management as the New Zealand Clothing Factory took shape. In 1874 Bendix Hallenstein wrote to Anderson, from his home in Queenstown, stressing the importance of efficient management. Hallenstein told Anderson he believed that for the company to be a success it would require three 'heads'.

The first whose sole study and attention will be required for manufacturing, the second one who has full charge of the counting house and can if necessary take customers in hand [and a] third one who is the principal salesman and traveller and who would perhaps in conjunction with number one do the ordering and buying.

In short, Hallenstein wanted a factory manager, an accountant and a chief of sales. Despite his initial status as a 'silent partner', Hallenstein, an experienced businessman, kept a close watch on the development of the factory and was concerned with its


16 Hastings, *Plea*, p.77

17 *Cyclopedia of New Zealand 1905, vol.4, Otago and Southland*, Christchurch, 1905, p.307

18 B.H. to Anderson, 19 January 1874, B.H. Letterbook 1866-1875, pp.386-387, AG296/1
control and management. Michaelis Hallenstein, Bendix’s brother, also took an interest in the overall running of the factory and made recommendations via the post from his home in Melbourne. On the hiring of Hyam Hart, Bendix Hallenstein quoted Michaelis Hallenstein as saying 'Hyam Hart is fully competent to take the entire management of the office in all its branches... and to relieve Anderson as far as the office is [concerned] from all the responsibility, and as far as his honesty, integrity etc is concerned we should be safe in his hands.'19 Graeme Davison, referring to Melbourne industries, has described the factory as the manufacturer's personal domain:

At least in his own eyes the manufacturer’s success flowed directly from his "energy and activity," "inventiveness" and "ability to take spirited advantage of opportunity" as well of course as the kindliness that fostered a "spirit of faithful attachment’ among his employees. 20

As manufacturers the Hallenstein brothers took a keen interest in the organisational focus of the New Zealand Clothing Factory. Each department in the production process was controlled by a supervisor, and in some cases several supervisors. The supervisors were under the authority of the factory manager, who in turn came under the authority of the general manager and the directors.21 Discipline was considered important. In 1874 the Otago Witness reported:

We are assured that a strict watch is kept to see that all in the factory conduct themselves respectably... a special reason for a strict enforcement of good conduct, and the proper doing of work, is that it is proposed to increase the number of hands gradually, yet as quickly as possible, to three times the present number, and great importance is attached to the introduction of a good system from the beginning.22

An efficient system was essential to ensure the effective use of time, the key to increased labour productivity. Also, as the factory became increasingly mechanised,

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20 G.Davison, The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne, Melbourne, 1978, p.41

21 Otago Guardian, 13 May 1876, p.2

22 Otago Witness, 11 April 1874, p.20
cooperative and organised shop-floor relationships allowed management to ensure that investments made in the new technologies resulted in increased productivity. Cutting, pressing, finishing and machining were the main processes in the New Zealand Clothing Factory, but the subdivision of labour went much further than this.

III

By the late nineteenth century the subdivision of the men’s suit into three individual garments was standard practice in tailoring. Clothing factories, in pursuit of the ready-made suit and efficient use of labour time, had been making suits in this manner long before the practice became standard in tailoring. Dividing the suit into separate garments meant employers could utilise cheaper, less skilled workers, who could learn to make one item adequately much more quickly than the whole three. The suit comprised of coat, trousers and vest, each garment requiring the three main processes: cut, press, sew. This division and subdivision made ready-made garments cheap to make and consequently cheap to buy. In turn this cheapness meant an expanded demand for the product, which made further subdivision a practical and cost-effective option. The process of sewing was able to be further subdivided into tacking, machining and buttonholing. The division of labour was effectively utilised at the Hallenstein Brothers’ clothing factory from its initial opening in 1873, and the evidence suggests that subdivision evolved and expanded over time.

The geography of the factory was important in this evolution, as factory layout contributed to over-all efficiency. The sequence of operations in any factory are important in determining the organisation of the factory, and factory layout at the Hallenstein factory was altered over time as the importance of work flow was

23 R. Frances, 'No more Amazons': Gender and work process in the Victorian clothing trades, 1890-1939,' Labour History, vol.50, 1986, p.97


25 Frances, Politics of Work, pp.27-29
Increased mechanisation affected both factory layout and the subdivision of labour, and was another important element in the development of the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory. By the late nineteenth century most manufacturers believed that the surest way to increase output and efficiency was to introduce more and better machinery. In the New Zealand Clothing Factory mechanisation provided the catalyst to changes in the production process, both by creating and eliminating work.

**Mechanisation**

Mechanisation of the clothing industry had major implications for its organisation. Machines were instrumental in the removal of apprenticeships from the trade, as garment construction was divided into simple, repetitive tasks that were easily learned by even a novice sewing machine operator. Isaac Singer first produced a machine for clothing factories in 1851, and had developed a lighter weight domestic model by 1859. The advantage in the size of the Hallenstein’s factory was its access to capital allowing for the purchase of machinery. Initially, Hallenstein’s sewing machines were worked by treadle, which was the common method in clothing factories in Britain and Australia from the 1860s. Increasingly the trend was for clothing-factory machinery to be powered by steam, so that by the 1890s most clothing factories were steam powered.

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27 Nelson, p.17

28 Frances, 'No more Amazons,' p.91


30 Letter to Halsted, p.2, AG 295, 35/10, and Frances, 'No more Amazons,' p.97

31 Frances, 'No more Amazons,' p.97
technical organisation of the factory. The standard method of distributing the power between the source and the individual machines was by metal shafting attached to the ceiling of the factory and converted to the machinery by belts. This encouraged multistorey buildings, like Hallenstein’s, and it also meant that the machinery had to be arranged in lines parallel to the shafting. \textsuperscript{32} In the Dowling Street factory the machinery was positioned right down the centre of the second floor of the factory on a raised platform, and steam power was conveyed to the machines by shafts and belts. In 1876 the \textit{Otago Guardian} excitedly reported that the New Zealand Clothing Factory had forty sewing machines of various makes and models, 'including Singer’s Number Two, Singer’s Noiseless, Howe’s Wheeler and Wilson’s, Bradbury’s Lancashire and the American Combination’. (The latter 'took a prize at the Vienna Exhibition, and can do anything including stitching, binding, and working buttonholes.') \textsuperscript{33} The \textit{Guardian} was suitably impressed with the machinery, commenting that 'the most interesting portion of the premises is the flat on which the machine room is, for here all is stir, bustle and whirr.'\textsuperscript{34} By 1905 there were eighty machines, and the power source had been changed to accommodate 'a six horse power Otto gas engine' which conveyed the power by shafts and belts. \textsuperscript{35} Gas also powered the lighting. \textsuperscript{36} It seems entirely possible that increased mechanisation had a direct influence on the move to a better power source, which allowed the utilisation of bigger and better machinery.

Machinery played a large role in the production process at the New Zealand Clothing Company and contributed significantly to the labour process, yet the work was still labour-intensive and repetitive. A ratio of hand workers to machinists needed to be calculated for the manufacture of all garment types, and because machines could generate more garments than previously the amount of ancillary handwork increased.

\textsuperscript{32} Nelson, p.17

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Otago Guardian,} 15 May 1876, p.2

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Otago Guardian,} 15 May 1876, p.2

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Cyclopedia,} p.307

\textsuperscript{36} Letter to Halsted, p.7, AG295, 35/10
The nineteenth century economist and political philosopher, John Stuart Mill, questioned the labour saving capacity of machines, writing 'it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being.'

Many of the tasks in finishing a garment, such as sewing on buttons and making button holes, continued to be done by hand. Increasingly, however, the ability of machines was expanded. As early as 1861 the Hawkes Bay Herald described a button hole sewing machine designed for industrial use, and in 1874 the Otago Witness described a 'complicated and ingenioso' machine which made button holes 'with great rapidity' at the New Zealand Clothing Factory. It is unlikely that this machine was in regular use at the factory at this time - the first finishing machines were of limited appeal because a better finish could be achieved by hand. However, by 1888 D.H. Hastings reported that the button hole department, housed on the third (mezzanine) floor of the Dowling Street factory, employed a 'large number of hands' and 'several of the latest machines... making a very slightly serviceable button hole.' By 1905 the New Zealand Clothing Factory had five button hole machines and one 'bachelors friend', which sewed on buttons at speed.

The quality and usefulness of these machines had increased significantly by the 1890s, when machines were able to perform these tasks at great speed. This reinforced the existing subdivision of labour, removing yet another level of skill from the labour process. In 1895 Grace Neill, New Zealand's first female factory inspector, noted the steady increase in the number of women in the tailoring trade, 'whilst at the same time labour-saving machinery is multiplying. Machines for cutting out, for making both coat and shirt button holes, for sewing on buttons... are in use by several of the larger

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37 Cited in Lazonick, Competitive Advantage, p.14
38 Malthus, 'Dressmakers,' p.90, Otago Witness, 11 April 1874, p.20
39 Frances, Politics of Work, p.31
40 Hastings, Plea, p.77
41 Cyclopedia, p.307
42 Frances, 'No more Amazons,' p.97
Dowling Street Factory Interior: Second Floor and Gallery, late 1880s.
firms. Neill’s observation illustrates the connection between mechanisation and human labour in clothing factories: more workers could be taken on at less cost, because the skill level was considered minimal when machines did most of the ‘work’, thus companies could to produce more goods more cheaply, increasing demand and overall profit. The maintenance cost of machinery is always a consideration; Hallenstein employed a full-time mechanic in charge of all the machines in the factory, who he supplied with a workshop and the necessary appliances.

**Factory Layout**

The geography of the New Zealand Clothing Factory was important to the labour process within it. Both the Customhouse Square factory, where the business was centred until 1883, and the Dowling Street factory thereafter were three storeyed buildings. The sales department, the entering and packing room and the cutting and pressing rooms were situated on the first and second floors of the original factory, while the tacking, machining, finishing and buttonholing took place on the third floor. Bendix Hallenstein provided the ideas for the building of the Dowling Street factory, which was designed specifically with the labour process in mind. The ground floor comprised of a bulk store for packing and receiving goods, which was accessible from MacAndrew Street by vehicle. The back portion of the first floor was where the warehouse was situated, and the front portion, accessible from Dowling Street, housed the Head Office and the offices of the partners. The factory itself was situated on the second and third floors. The third floor was a gallery, which looked down over the second floor, enabling the shared use of light from the skylights in the roof. The machines, as mentioned earlier, were positioned right down the centre of the second floor. Side rooms on the second floor housed the various sections, such as coat-makers, trouser-makers, and light stuffs (for example shirts and vests). A large drying room, the finishing room, the mechanics’ workshop and the dining room were also

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43 *AJHR*, 1895, H-6, p.10

44 *Cyclopedia*, p.307, Letter to Halsted, p.5, AG295, 35/10

45 *Otago Witness*, 11 April, 1874, p.20
situated on this second and main floor of production. The cutting and pressing departments were on the third floor.\textsuperscript{46} Incoming tweeds from the packing and receiving room would be sent up to the third storey by a lift to the cutting room and the garment descended as it neared completion.\textsuperscript{47} Once cut the materials would be distributed to their various divisions and the production process would begin. In-house transportation was an important factor in the efficiency of the factory. There were no conveyor belts or labour saving devices even in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{48}

Mechanisation slowly rendered the layout inappropriate. One ex-employee of the factory reported that by early 1900 it was realised that there was a 'waste of time in the layout of the factory':

The button hole work was collected [from the second floor] and carried up to the pressing room ... when pressed it had to be carried the whole length of the factory to the finishing room. When the goods were folded they had to be carried back through the factory and downstairs to the warehouse. The cutting room and the finishing room were at the wrong end of the building. All the tweeds had to be carried from the lift to the cutting room.\textsuperscript{49}

The appropriate adjustments were made to solve this time wastage. Awareness of the new scientific management and Taylorism may well have influenced this move. Obviously the management were aware of the problems of efficiency and the importance of the layout of the factory in its organisation.

\textit{Sub-division of tasks}

There were several different departments in the factory. Each department carried out a different task in the production of a garment. By dividing the making of the garment into a number of small tasks the managers were able to mass produce the

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Cyclopedia}, pp.306-307

\textsuperscript{47} Hastings, \textit{Plea}, pp.76-77

\textsuperscript{48} Bartlett, 'Woven together,' p.53

\textsuperscript{49} Letter to Halsted, p.4, AG295, 35/10
items quickly. The level of skill in each task was also reduced - a worker would become expert in a simple task, allowing it to be done quickly and properly, at minimal cost to the employer. A description of the making of a coat illustrates the subdivision of labour in the New Zealand Clothing Factory (emphasis added):

The cloth is first shrunk, then it goes to the cutter-out, next to the tacker, who makes it ready to be stitched by the machine; from the machinist it is handed to the feller, who sews it by hand; then the button hole takes it, and she hands it to the presser, who smooths out the seams; and next it reaches the buttoners, who sew on the buttons. The last process is known as "cocking", that is, the coat is examined by a man who, in the trade, is known as the "cock of the shop," whose duty it is to carefully examine each article, to see if all the work is properly finished. Finally the brushers and folders take possession of it, and after they have done it is declared fit for sale.\footnote{Otago Guardian, 13 May 1876, p.2}

Even as early as 1876 there were, therefore, at least eleven different stages and workers involved in making each coat. Subdivision was alive and well. Trousers required even more attention. Tasks were further complicated by differences in styles, colours, fabrics and sizes - Hallensteins made suits down to a size that would fit a three year old boy. One department specialised in stitching or stamping the brand of the firm.\footnote{Cyclopedia, p.307}

\textit{Feminisation}

The clothing industry provides a model example of what Raylene Frances has identified as the feminisation of manufacturing in the late nineteenth century.\footnote{Frances, Politics of Work, p.16} Cutting and pressing were considered to be within the male domain, and despite increased mechanisation, and the fact that it would have been cheaper for factories to hire women to perform these tasks, men continued to be the cutters and pressers. Raylene Francis has located part of the reason for this in outwork. Cutting and pressing were not tasks that lent themselves to outwork. Cutting was more easily done close to the supply of cloth, which was supplied in heavy bolts. Cutting also
required long tables to lay out pattern pieces on, and mass production meant special equipment was required to cut several layers of fabric at once. Pressing required supervision, large ovens to heat the irons and minimal travel between supplier and outlet to prevent spoilage. These factors meant that cutting and pressing were more suited to a factory setting than a worker’s cottage. With the development of large clothing factories women factory workers were sent to work in factories doing work they had been accustomed to doing at home. Also, the fact that cutters and pressers had worked in organised settings and not in the home meant they had greater opportunity for organised resistance, as when women entered their trades. Male workers generally had more control over their working environment.  

There were other reasons why women were excluded from some occupations. Cutting and pressing were considered too heavy for women. Irons in the Hallensteins’ factory weighed between 14 and 18 pounds. An interview with Laura Boulton, a Dunedin shop tailoress born in 1911 supports this. Boulton said that pressing off a coat was ‘quite a job’. Cutting was also considered to be too heavy for women, as it required lifting heavy bolts of cloth and cutting through many layers of cloth with a knife. Cutting and pressing did not lend themselves to further subdivision. It may also be that to have employed women as cutters and pressers may have confused the system of paying women significantly less than men. At least when women performed different tasks levels of skill could be assessed separately. For women to have been paid significantly less than men for the same work might have raised an issue that was to lie dormant for some years to come.

Cutting evolved through several stages at the Hallensteins’ factory, from the use of shears, to knives, and in time electric cutting machines were utilised. In the late

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53 Frances, *Politics of Work*, pp.27-28

54 Letter to Halsted, p.3, AG295, 35/10

55 Carol Brown interview with Laura Boulton, Dunedin, 1985

56 Frances, *Politics of Work*, pp.28, 30
1880s about four suits or a dozen shirts could be cut at one time, with shears; the cutting machine allowed up to fifty suits or garments to be cut at one time. In 1905 the *Cyclopedia* reported there were 'about a dozen expert cutters and trimmers' engaged at the New Zealand Clothing Factory. Effective cutting machines did not become available until the 1910s.\textsuperscript{57} Throughout the early period of the New Zealand Clothing Factory's development the cutting and pressing part of the production process, as was the trend globally, remained a male domain.

\section*{IV}

With the development of industry in the colony came a concern for the avoidance of the 'evils of the Old World'. Newspaper articles of the time seemed to express a broad community concern at the effects of factory labour on both the community at large and the individual workers. It is interesting to note that local medical and moral authorities toured the factory, perhaps indicating a latent community anxiety about its presence. In 1874 the New Zealand Clothing Factory was visited by the Right Reverend Doctor Moran, the first Roman Catholic Bishop in Otago, and representatives of the press. The *Otago Witness* reported on the tour, which was guided by Anderson, managing partner, and Fox, then factory manager. The *Witness* described the various departments in detail and reported that:

> Before leaving the factory Dr Moran expressed to his cicerones his gratification at the respectable appearance of the operatives, and the evident order and regularity which pervaded all, and remarked on the great importance to the place of a flourishing industry which gave profitable employment to so many.\textsuperscript{58}

It is as if the Bishop was inspecting the factory and reassuring the community that the activities within it were acceptable and beneficial to the community at large. In 1876, two years later, a reporter from the *Otago Guardian* made a similar tour. The effect of routinisation on the workers seemed to worry the journalist. After noting that the

\textsuperscript{57} Frances, "No more Amazons," p.98

\textsuperscript{58} *Otago Witness*, 11 April 1874, p.9
division of labour is adopted to a great extent,' and that in the process 'a suit goes through a lot of hands', the journalist provided a detailed account of the various departments and the organisation of the factory.\textsuperscript{59} The labour intensive work at the New Zealand Clothing Factory came under scrutiny as the reporter realised that each worker was trained in a specific area and would carry out that work and nothing else. The \textit{Guardian} reported on this practice in a concerned tone.

For instance, one makes button-holes - makes them all the year round; sews nothing else - and the quality of the button holes she produces in a year, and the monotony of the occupation, are things that no-one but herself could estimate.\textsuperscript{60}

The \textit{Guardian} described other parts of the labour process at the factory as being equally repetitive and restrictive. For example binders, who each had a particular part of a suit to bind, performed the same task on the same part of the suit 'all year round.'\textsuperscript{61} There were those that sewed on buttons, finished trousers and made buttonholes, all by hand. One ex-employee's first job at the firm was pasting the bands of trousers on to canvas, and keeping the fire for heating the irons going.\textsuperscript{62}

The routinisation the \textit{Otago Guardian} reporter witnessed was an integral part of the labour process. The amount of skill involved in each task might be considered minimal, justifying low wages. The difficulty of the work is hard to gauge, as each worker's perception of the task would be different and influenced by social evaluation of the task.\textsuperscript{63} Also, completing the task repetitively would lead a worker to become somewhat expert at it. This was good from the employer's perspective - work would be completed quickly, adding to the productivity of the firm. Workers were also paid by the piece, increasing their incentive to work quickly. Yet the firm's need for community support also gave the community the right to oversee the factory and the

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Otago Guardian}, 13 May 1876, p.2

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Otago Guardian}, 13 May 1876, p.2

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Otago Guardian}, 13 May 1876, p.2

\textsuperscript{62} Letter to Halsted, p.3, AG295, 35/10 and Hastings, \textit{Plea}, p.77

\textsuperscript{63} Bartlett, 'Woven,' p.54
consequences of factory work on the operatives. Nobody, it seems, wanted to see England’s 'dark Satanic mills' duplicated in the colony.
CHAPTER FOUR
WORKERS AND WAGES

'Mothers may storm and argue but sweet seventeen loves her liberty and will have none of the drudgery of domestic service while there is a pocket to be sewn into one of Mr Hallenstein's waistcoats.' Otago Daily Times, 1878

Structural factors affected workers in the New Zealand Clothing Factory from the 1870s to the 1890s and the labour process. Basic data on who and how old Hallenstein's workers were, why they were working in the factory and what sort of wage system they were operating under will help us to establish some idea of how much these workers were being controlled by their employers. This information can then be assessed, as Lazonick suggests, within its various social, cultural, political and economic circumstances. The role of the colonial gender order and its impact upon the price of female labour will also be investigated.

While domestic work was traditionally the main occupation undertaken by women, factory work soon became an attractive option. Increasingly women opted for factory employment over domestic service. In the factory women could work shorter hours, earn higher wages and continue living at home. The work was less isolated, allowing women greater opportunity to make friends and socialise. In a letter to the Otago Daily Times in 1899, Beatrice Tracey said that factory work was preferable to the 'humiliation, loneliness and infinite monotony' of domestic work. Factory work, she said, offered some amusement and social life, a chance for promotion and a certain freedom and independence not found in domestic service. It also left her evenings

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1 Quoted in J. Millen, Colonial Tears and Sweat: The Working Class in Nineteenth Century New Zealand, Wellington, 1984, p.147

2 S. Robertson, 'Women workers and the arbitration court,' in R. Frances and B. Scates (eds), Women, Work and the Labour Movement in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, Melbourne, 1991, p.31
free and allowed her to continue living at home with her family. The clothing industry was particularly inviting for the young female worker. Skill with a needle and thread was learned early in life, when women of all social classes were required to contribute to the family economy by sewing, mending or finishing garments for themselves and their families. Dressmaking or needle work as an occupation was considered to be one of the least disruptive ways a woman could supplement the family income; women could work at home so that the family’s domestic routine could be maintained. Immigrants were advised to bring their sewing machines with them so that they could not only make clothes for themselves and their families but also earn extra money by doing work for wealthy settlers and shops. Moving to clothing workrooms and factories was an extension of work which the women were already familiar with. For the young, urban, single woman work in a clothing factory or workroom was perhaps not too distasteful an option. By 1890 the Weekly Graphic’s dressmaking column was recommending that the best way for a girl to learn to sew was to 'give her services in a workroom for a week or a month... and it that time she could acquire a practical knowledge of the art not to be obtained in a year’s reading.'

As a new colony desperate to avoid the evils of the old world, many immigrants to New Zealand were aware of labour ills and worked toward creating a higher standard of work and working conditions for their new society. This awareness in New Zealand created circumstances advantageous to women entering the workforce. Women in factory employment had been singled out for protection in early factory

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3 Cited in C. Brown, 'Aspects of the Clothing Industry 1900-1920,' HIST 452 Essay, University of Otago, Dunedin, 1985, p.2


5 Millen, Colonial Tears, p.130

6 Malthus, 'Dressmaking', p.85
legislation inspired by notions of women as the weaker sex. While many argued against women working in factories some did stand in their defence, such as J.L. Richardson, a member of the Legislative Council, who in 1881 said ‘women are not to be debarred from the free exercise of their powers of mind and body. They have a natural right to provide a living for themselves or their families.’ Richardson went on to point out that some women had to work and it would be cruel to prevent them from doing so.

In 1878 some Dunedin clothing factories reported a shortage of female labour; Ross and Glendinning could have employed twenty more, indicating there was plenty of factory work available for women workers. The number of women entering the paid workforce increased steadily after 1874, coinciding with a decline in the numbers of women entering domestic service. By 1901 the clothing industry was employing 27% of Dunedin’s workforce, 80% of whom were women. Women became a valuable commodity for employers as their labour was less expensive than the male alternative. The clothing industry exploited this fact particularly well in the nineteenth century, especially since sewing was viewed as a natural feminine attribute rather than an acquired skill.

The number of workers employed at the New Zealand Clothing Factory is difficult to ascertain due to a lack of surviving records. Information can, however, be gathered from various sources. The firm began operations in Customhouse Square in 1873

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8 J.L.C. Richardson, *Employment of Females and Children in Factories and Workshops*, Dunedin, 1881, p.14

9 *AJHR*, 1878, H-2, pp.11-14

10 Robertson, 'Women workers', p.31

with 'about a dozen hands', and by April the following year was employing 100 workers, primarily women.\textsuperscript{12} In 1875 it was reported that Hallenstein was employing 160 women in the factory; in 1876 the \textit{Otago Guardian} reported 170 women and 30 men and boys employed there; and in 1878 Anderson, the manager, reported employing 300 workers, the majority of whom were women.\textsuperscript{13} The growing number of workers corresponded with the opening of Hallenstein’s retail outlets (thirteen were opened between May 1876 and December 1879).\textsuperscript{14} Prior to the establishment of the retail departments, the factory had relied on travellers who dealt in the wholesale trade to sell its products. The gold fields provided a particularly good demand, yet Hallenstein complained that the travellers incurred heavy expenses and so decided to establish his own retail outlets. The stores proved so successful that the New Zealand Clothing Factory found it difficult to keep up with the demand.\textsuperscript{15} This would explain the increase in staff numbers at the clothing factory in this period. However, average cash sales per branch declined sharply between 1880 and 1885. In 1880 average cash sales per branch amounted to £7000, but by 1885 this number had dropped to just £3800, which explains why one account has just seventy workers moving with the factory to the Dowling Street premises in 1883.\textsuperscript{16} From 1896, as the Depression eased, sales steadily increased, so that by 1901 the New Zealand Clothing Factory was employing 300 women, making it one of the largest employers of women in Dunedin.\textsuperscript{17}

The ages of the workers at the New Zealand Clothing Factory are also difficult to

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Otago Witness}, 11 April 1874, p.20


\textsuperscript{14} L. Shaw, 'Hallenstein Brothers and Company, 1876 - 1906,' PGDA Long Essay, University of Otago, Dunedin, 1994, p.23

\textsuperscript{15} Shaw, 'Hallenstein Brothers', p.15


\textsuperscript{17} Olssen, \textit{Building}, p.90
accurately establish because of a lack of surviving records and the fact that Anderson claimed not to know the ages of his workers. 'As a rule we do not take a note of their ages. When very young persons are employed, I ask them their age but do not register it. I simply register their names.' A Dunedin Factory Inspector, Mallard, in 1878 said the difficulty in proving the ages of workers was one major problem in the administering of the legislation pertaining to factories. Statements given by Hallenstein workers in 1878 and 1890 indicate that many of the workers at the New Zealand Clothing Factory were between the ages of twelve and eighteen. In 1878 Anderson said he was employing 'perhaps ten' under the age of 14, and 'about 150' between 14 and 18 years of age. Even in 1901 most women employed in the industry were between the ages of 15 and 25 years. The clothing industry provided work for women in the interlude between school and marriage, explaining the high percentage of young girls in the factory.

The number of hours worked by women and children at the New Zealand Clothing Factory did not usually exceed eight hours per day according to the Otago Witness in 1874. The working hours were from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., with a one hour dinner break from 1-2 p.m. Anderson confirmed these were still the working hours in 1878, displayed in every room in the factory as required by the Employment of Females Act. Anderson considered eight hours 'quite long enough, particularly in a factory where there is a large number of hands.' These hours compared favourably with other workplaces in the city, such as the City Steam Laundry whose workers worked 12 hour days, inclusive of Saturdays, in spite of the law against long hours. Many

18 AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.11
19 AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.15
20 AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.11
21 Census New Zealand, 1901, p.301
22 Otago Witness, 11 April 1874, p.20
23 AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.11
24 AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.23
employers disliked the eight hour day requirement in the 1873 Act, and debates on the
topic continued in parliament. The manager of the Mosgiel Woollen Mill complained
in 1875 that having imported and erected machinery at very great expense they could
not afford to keep it idle for as long as the legislation required because of competition
from imports. They also claimed that for the employees to work a 'few hours longer
was a matter of very little consideration'. In 1878 Anderson told the Royal
Commission into the working of the Employment of Females Act that he believed it
would be an advantage if the factory were to be in operation from 6a.m.-6p.m.,
suggesting shift work and adequate breaks. Although he was quite satisfied with the
Act Anderson told the commissioner he desired double shifts to be allowed in
emergency situations. T.F.S. Tinne, in a study on local industries of New Zealand
in 1881, also complained of the 'hinderance' caused by the eight hour system,
concluding that it puts the worker 'one-fifth backward in the race for custom.' For
the workers and the greater community, however, the eight hour day was acceptable.
More girls were allowed by their parents to enter the factories after the hours of work
had been limited. For some the medical argument was the most convincing reason
to limit the hours women would work. J.B.B. Bradshaw, the member of the House
of Representatives for Wakaia, explained in 1881:

The medical testimony shows that a great physiological law is violated when
women and children are overworked... and that it is physically impossible for
a woman (or child) to work even in the best regulated factories the same
number of hours as a man without seriously injuring her constitution.

Bradshaw had a longstanding interest New Zealand working conditions. Indeed, it
was Bradshaw who instigated the Employment of Females Act in 1873. The act was

25 NZPD, vol.XIX (1875), p.105
26 AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.11
27 T.F.S. Tinne, Local Industries of New Zealand, Auckland, 1881, p.18
28 D.M. Unwin, 'Women in New Zealand industry,' MA Thesis, University of
Otago, Dunedin, 1944, p.12
29 J.B.B. Bradshaw, 'Introduction' in Richardson, Employment of Females and
Children, p.3
also known as 'Bradshaw's Act'. Bradshaw was always involved in parliamentary debates about the Employment of Females Act. He believed that the struggle between labour and capital was an 'unequal contest', and was adamant in his belief that the employment of women and children necessitated both trade unions and the regulation of the labour market. After the legislation was passed, young women employed in Dunedin presented Bradshaw with a testimonial expressing their gratitude for his efforts.\(^\text{30}\)

In 1875 Bradshaw protested against the principle in the statute that enabled employers to work women and children as early as 6 a.m. in the morning. He claimed that 'men in this country did not go to work before eight o'clock no matter whether they were employed in factories or not'. Bradshaw said this clause meant that women were leaving their homes and children 'unkempt and unwashed', and that if they were breast-feeding they would no longer be able to and would have to raise their children on 'tea, coffee or in some cases, opiates.' Bradshaw was corrected by Donald Reid of Taieri, who informed parliament that men opened the factories at 8 a.m. to get the machinery running.\(^\text{31}\) On the whole, workers expressed gratitude for the protection the legislature offered them. In 1878 some women workers reported an improvement in their social condition and physical health because of the changes the legislation had brought to the hours they worked. One woman who worked at Brown, Ewing and Co., said that prior to the act she regularly worked ten to fifteen hour days for pay no better than she now received for an eight-hour day after the Act came into effect.\(^\text{32}\)

The wage system at the Hallenstein Brothers' New Zealand Clothing Factory was based on levels of skill. An apprentice system worked well in the early years. Apprentices, considered unskilled, were paid 5s. per week according to the *Otago Guardian* in 1876. Those 'handy with a needle' received 10s., and 'the smallest, who are sewing on buttons, make 7s.6d. a week.' The term of apprenticeship was undefined (in fact Anderson preferred to call them 'learners'), the workers being a

\(^{30}\) *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: Volume Two 1870-1900*, Wellington, 1993, p.54

\(^{31}\) *NZPD*, vol.XIX (1875), p.303

\(^{32}\) *AJHR*, 1878, H-2, p.20
paid a small wage before being put on to piecework.\textsuperscript{33} In 1876, on average, women would earn from 20s. to 30s. per week on piecework, but the \textit{Otago Guardian} reported that many of them were able to add considerably to this by taking work home. Those that did take work home were chiefly those having to support themselves entirely and who were not, the \textit{Guardian} reported, living with parents or friends.\textsuperscript{34} Two years later the wages had not changed. Anderson took pride in the fact that almost all Hallenstein workers were taught their skills on the premises. The promotion from learner to pieceworker was entirely dependent on the worker and not age- 'they are paid in proportion to their skill, whether young or old. They are not put on to piecework till they are competent, and then get the full rate of wages, no matter what age.'\textsuperscript{35} In 1878 Maryanne Jane Wilson, a fourteen year old girl working at the New Zealand Clothing Factory, reported to the Royal Commission of Enquiry into the Working of the Employment of Females Act: 'I am an apprentice here. I do not know when I shall get an increase - I have not asked. I am not bound, and there is no arrangement.'\textsuperscript{36} Anderson said that those who acted as 'overseers' at the tables received 35s. and 'exceptional women', who acted as teachers, earned as much as 40s. per week. He also said the men in the factory did 'the heavy part of the work' and their average earnings were £3 pounds per week, while men on piecework averaged 10s. per day.\textsuperscript{37}

So while Anderson was happy to pay according to skill, it seems he had different definitions of what constituted skill for males and females. From the earliest days of factory production in Britain women were paid half of what men earned for the same

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Otago Guardian}, 13 May 1876, p.2  
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Otago Guardian}, 13 May 1876, p.2  
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{AJHR}, 1878, H-2, p.11  
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{AJHR}, 1878, H-2, p.19  
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{AJHR}, 1878, H-2, p.11
work. This was an accepted norm, and Penelope Harper has found that there was in New Zealand in this period an unquestioned acceptance of the differences in men's and women's wages. A tailor earning £3,10s. in 1878 explained the discrepancy: 'Women get so much less than men... because they cannot do the same work so well as the men, not being sufficiently skilled.' Later, with the advent of the Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Act, Awards restricted women workers to light work and prohibited them from doing jobs such as the pressing of coats, vests, trousers, mantles and heavy garments and from lifting more than set weights. The majority of restrictions focused on skill, and restricted women to work ancillary to production.

Part of the problem lay in the temporary nature of women's factory work; many female workers used their time in factories as a bridge between school and marriage (explaining to some degree the young age of the workers). This also resulted in women having less chance of promotion and meant that female labour was the most poorly organised and poorly paid sector of the workforce. Despite the conventions which kept women's wages low, there was some awareness, at least from Anderson, that the wages the women were earning were not in some cases supplementary - rather some girls were providing primary incomes in their household. Anderson in 1878 knew of two sisters working in the New Zealand Clothing Factory who were working to entirely support their family, and speaking generally, he said "I know of instances where the father does nothing. Several of the girls keep their parents, instead of their parents keeping them." Of the married workers, Anderson reported that

A great many of the women support their husbands, and I generally find on enquiry that these husbands, if not drunkards, are unemployed, not being able to obtain work at their trade, and refusing any other kind of employment they

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38 S.O. Rose, "Gender at Work": sex, class and industrial capitalism,' History Workshop, number 21, Spring 1986, p.118


40 Millen, Colonial Tears, p.134

41 Robertson, 'Women workers,' p.35

42 C. Brown, 'Aspects of the Clothing Industry 1900 -1920,' HIST 452 Essay, University of Otago, 1985, p.3
might obtain. There is a great deal more of that here than in Victoria and other places where I have been.\footnote{AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.12}

Despite Anderson's awareness that many of his workers were in fact the primary wage earners in their households the gendered wage differential remained. Males were the accepted breadwinners in society and no challenges were made to this assumption in the late nineteenth century.

Another factor which may explain the continued low wages paid to women in this period was the belief that women were incapable of organising themselves in the same way that men did in trade unions, hence an emphasis on protective legislation aimed especially at women and children. One female employer in 1889 remarked in the \textit{Otago Daily Times} 'They will never combine... how do you expect girls who do the work simply for pocket money ... to agree?\footnote{\textit{Otago Daily Times}, 22 January, 1889, p.4} Indeed, the majority of women employed in the clothing industry were either very young or burdened by domestic responsibilities, making them unlikely to move towards organised resistance. The advent of the Tailoresses Union in 1889 marked the first sign of organised female labour in the history of New Zealand, although it was not until September of 1891 that membership became restricted to women only.\footnote{Harper, 'Tailoresses', p.26} The Tailoresses's Union was concerned with many aspects of female labour, including the abuses which came out of the system of paying for work 'by the piece' and 'out work' done at home.

About half of the workers at the New Zealand Clothing Factory were being paid by the piece for their work in 1878. Piece rates led to notorious abuses in the clothing industry. Work would often be taken home, so that the outworker paid all overheads, and since the Employment of Females Act expressly excluded pieceworkers, there was little done to control the excessive work which could be demanded of the workers.
Piecework came to be synonymous with exploitation and sweated labour. On the other hand, many workers came to regard payment by the task rather than the hour as a symbol of residual craft status. And for the employer, piecework had the advantage of simplifying accounting arrangements. In Melbourne as late as 1884 the Operative Bootmakers defended piece rates as a guarantee of their independence. In Dunedin, however, piece rates became the source of much discontent. Some factories, particularly woollen mills, utilised a system of supervised piece rates which set minimum levels of production, and meant employers could avoid paying holiday pay. Most factory managers complained about holiday pay in 1878; for the Hallenstein factory it meant a loss of 30 pounds per holiday. Despite this New Zealand Clothing Factory workers received two extra holidays per year. The member of parliament for Roslyn and Director of the Mosgiel Woollen Mill, Arthur John Burns, claimed that the workers did not like the compulsory holidays because if on piece rates they received no pay on the holiday. The New Zealand Clothing Factory gradually decreased the amount of work allowed to be taken home. Little work was given out, and then only at the same rate as was paid for that done in the factory. It was chiefly the smaller factories which were responsible for the notorieties that led to the Sweating Scandal which dominated labour politics in New Zealand from 1888 - 1890. In 1895 many clothing workshops were still paying by the piece, although the practice was becoming unacceptable. In 1895 the Bureau of Industries reported:

Of course, the competition induced through piecework executed by women for

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46 R.T. Robertson, 'Sweating in Dunedin,' PGDA Long Essay, University of Otago, Dunedin, 1974, p. 67

47 G. Davison, _The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne_, Melbourne, 1978, p. 58


49 _AJHR_, 1878, H-2, p. 12

50 _AJHR_, 1878, H-2, p. 7

51 Unwin, 'Women,' p. 32
pocket money or by girls partly supported by their parents, will always be a curse to the genuine work woman so long as piecework is allowed to be given out at all.

The Dunedin Tailoresses Union was formed in 1889, but it was not until 1905 that the Union managed to get piecework abolished and a weekly wage unconditionally established.52

The Dunedin Tailoresses Union was established in July 1889 and within one month claimed a membership of 700, the majority of whom were clothing factory workers.53 Because the names and workplaces of the members were not registered it is difficult to ascertain what percentage of these members came from the New Zealand Clothing Factory. An attempt was made at one stage to register the union under the Trades Union Act, but it was turned down on account of the fact that many of its members were under the age of 16. That the members were young is also confirmed by the general tone of newspaper articles and speeches to the Union, which indicate it was assumed members were single and living at home with their parents. Generally members were referred to as 'girls', 'future wives' and 'future mothers'.54 The union was established during the Sweating Scandal and quickly achieved a minimum rate of pay and provided for women employed on piecework to be paid for the quantity they produced according to complicated 'logs' which fixed rates for each operation.55 According to one account, the first log of 1889 made possible wage rises between 12 and 40 per cent.56 Overall, however, it seems the logs were unsuccessful, causing problems for the union because changes in methods of manufacturing and fashions frequently rendered them inappropriate.57 It was not until the 1905 Award that the

53 Harper. 'Tailoresses', p.26
54 Harper. 'Tailoresses', p.27
55 Robertson, 'Women workers', p.33
56 Unwin, 'Women in Industry,' p.102
57 Robertson. 'Women workers', p.33
problems of piecework were finally solved.

The Sweating Scandal of 1888 - 1890 was mostly concerned with the poor conditions and low pay given for work in the smaller workrooms with small numbers of workers, as opposed to large factories like the New Zealand Clothing Factory. It was concerned with the exploitation of female and child labour (although some male workers were also of concern), the term 'sweated' meaning very low pay, extremely long hours, piecework and substandard workshops. The Sweating Scandal was important in showing that industrial exploitation did exist in New Zealand and needed to be addressed. The scandal was sparked by a sermon given by the Reverend Rutherford Waddell in 1888 on the 'Sin of Cheapness', which led to number of articles in the *Otago Daily Times* by Silas Spragg which exposed the problem. The topic drew much attention and led to a parliamentary investigation which reported in 1890. Bendix Hallenstein, one of Dunedin's leading businessmen, became active in meetings which addressed the problem. At a general public meeting in Dunedin on 7 June 1889, Hallenstein gave a speech declaring that:

> This movement has from the outset had my heartfelt sympathy. Keen competition compels us to pay lower prices than formerly, but I have often said to the members of our firm - all of whom, I am happy to say, agree with me - that we would prefer to abandon our business rather than carry it on if it can only be made remunerative by starvation wages. I, for one, would not feel happy to live on the misery of others.  

Hallenstein's emotive words were sometimes looked upon suspiciously by the *Otago Daily Times*. In February 1890 Bendix Hallenstein suggested permanent boards of arbitration be established to settle labour problems (this would happen in 1894 with the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act). The *Times* felt this proposal was more for the benefit of employers like Hallenstein than for the good of the worker, suggesting it exposed Hallenstein's 'dread of allowing the labour movement to go on unchecked.' To an extent, Hallenstein would have been speaking in the interests of the business community. However, in a speech he made to the newly formed

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58 J.T. Paul, *Our Majority and the After Years*, Dunedin, 1910, p.18

59 *Otago Daily Times*, 22 February, 1890
Chamber of Commerce in 1890, Hallenstein expressed no disregard for the organisation of labour, reassuring his fellow employers that unions conducted in 'a spirit of fairness... could not only be a benefit to the employed, but also to the employer and the colony's industrial development.'\textsuperscript{60} Being the owner of a large, well reputed clothing factory not especially targeted in the Sweating Scandal, Hallenstein was able to speak on the topic without too much fear of negative repercussions. The New Zealand Clothing Factory fared well in the 1890 investigation, as it had since it was first opened in 1873. Hallenstein seems to have had a social conscience and provided a very good working environment for his staff, as is discussed in the following chapter. His paternalistic approach to management is also evident in the social activities his firm provided for their workers.

Social occasions and sports days formed part of Hallenstein’s activities for their workers, while competitions and giveaways involved the greater community in the Hallenstein spirit. There was an annual cricket match and rowing race with workers from Ross and Glendinning, an annual picnic and for many years an annual ball. Over the years various sporting endeavours marked staff entertainment, including a girls’ cricket club, basketball team and an athletics team.\textsuperscript{61} Hallenstein was apparently forward thinking in his use of incentives and social outings to create staff loyalty and a successful business empire. Paternalism in management of this kind guaranteed a certain amount of loyalty from staff, and operated as a subtle form of worker control. This consideration may well have contributed to the lack of resistance workers at the Hallenstein Brothers’ New Zealand Clothing Factory showed toward changes in the labour process. Deskilling, mechanisation, piece rates and the gendered wage disparity seemed of little concern to workers at the clothing factory, for whom there is no evidence of resistance to these issues. While many of Hallenstein’s workers are likely to have been members of the Tailoresses’ Union, the union presented little challenge to the labour process in a large establishment like the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Otago Daily Times}, 1 February, 1890

\textsuperscript{61} Letter to Halsted, p.8, AG295, 35/10
The Dunedin Tailoresses' Union presented no challenge to established conventions on the differences in wages paid to men and to women and accepted the prevalent view of women's domestic role in society. Calls for higher wages were made on the basis that a daughter should be able to contribute to her parents' household rather than be a drain on it. The Union did speak out on a woman's right to vote, however, strongly supporting the suffrage movement.\(^{62}\) No records exist of attempts the union may have made towards immediate improvements to the wages and conditions of its members.\(^{63}\) Perhaps a consideration here is that the Union was initially presided over and run by men. In Victoria, Raylene Frances has found that the question of worker resistance was closely linked to the question of gender.\(^{64}\) The sexual division of labour was reflected in the union structure, whereby the male union officials saw no need to question the gendered wage differential and kept union demands within the boundaries of the accepted colonial gender order. On the whole, the Dunedin Tailoresses' Union had an image 'in keeping with the moderate spirit of organised labour in Dunedin.'\(^{65}\) The Tailoresses' Union presented no challenge to the beliefs of labour supporters around New Zealand, nor to the wider community, who were supportive of its activities.

Work opportunities for women in the 1870s and 1880s were changing. The clothing industry provided women with a welcome alternative to employment in domestic service. The New Zealand Clothing Factory employed a large number of young, female workers. This provided the managers with an inexpensive workforce and worked well with the process of deskilling in the factory. Cheap apprenticeships and piece rates characterised the wage system in the factory. The colonial gender order ensured that the female labour was cheap, and this appears to have been unquestionably accepted by worker and employer alike. Evidence suggests workers

\(^{62}\) Harper, 'Tailoresses,' pp. 103-104, and p.49

\(^{63}\) Harper, 'Tailoresses,' p. 29

\(^{64}\) R. Frances, 'No more Amazons: gender and work process in the Victorian clothing trades, 1890 - 1939,' Labour History, vol.50, 1986, p.112

\(^{65}\) Harper, 'Tailoresses,' pp. 32, 38, 49
at the Hallensteins' factory worked only eight hour days, as the legislation required. Other companies in Dunedin were less concerned with the laws governing the employment of women and children. This problem was to be addressed between 1888 and 1890, when the Sweating Scandal resulted in the advent of the Tailoresses Union and an official enquiry into factory standards and wages, as well as a great deal of community interest. Bendix Hallenstein was actively involved in the proceedings, standing up for the business community and in the interest of the worker. A paternalistic management approach may have helped in creating Hallenstein's non-confrontational body of staff, but it does seem that his workers were among the most fortunate in Dunedin's clothing industry. The female workers at the New Zealand Clothing Factory did not have to put up with sweated conditions, but they did put up with low wages compared to male workers. The gendered wage disparity was an accepted norm; there are no records to suggest the Tailoresses' Union ever raised the issue. However M. Galt has found that the wages paid to women as a proportion of the wages paid to men in similar jobs tended to rise after 1900.66 The rise was greatest in domestic service as women moved out into other jobs, like those offered to women at the New Zealand Clothing Factory. After 1900 Galt found that women moved toward teaching, nursing and clerical work - jobs which showed the most marked rise in wages compared to semi-skilled tailoresses'.

If the Hallenstein Brothers did not challenge the gendering of work and pay, the firm paid great attention to the occupational health and safety of the workers and the quality of their working environment. In the same year that Bendix Hallenstein supervised the establishment of the clothing factory, state regulation of the working environment began. This legislation applied quite specifically to businesses such as Hallenstein’s, where a larger proportion of the workers were female. The legislation was quietly avoided by many employers in these early years, and it was not until the 1890s that occupational health and safety in New Zealand factories was adequately reviewed and assessed. Until this time, however, it was largely up to the employer to set the standards in their respective industries. The Employment of Females Act, passed in 1873, was the first attempt to standardise and improve working conditions for women and children in New Zealand. The Act was to evolve greatly, and was one focus of the debate against women working outside of their ‘natural’ role. While the 1873 Act did address hours of employment, holidays and ventilation of the workplace, the Act was incomplete and failed to address many important areas of occupational health. Many issues were not to be addressed for a long time. Temperature in the workplace, provision of adequate light, noise control, proper sanitation and toilet facilities and accident monitoring and control were among factors not included in the legislation. Those who established and managed the New Zealand Clothing Factory, however, did consider many of these factors. As a large, commercial company the managers took pride in providing a suitable environment for their workers. Eventually the company set up a Relief Fund to provide for workers’ health care and regularly held social functions for the benefit of the employees.

In 1873 An Act to Provide for the Employment of Females in Workrooms and Factories was passed, the first legislation in New Zealand to concern itself directly
with matters relating to occupational health and safety. Hours of work and numbers of holidays to be taken were stipulated, and the act required that 'every workroom shall be properly ventilated'.¹ The act was very simple and became the source of much debate and interest in the years that followed. It was expanded in 1875 to define a minimum age of employment in any factory or workroom (ten years old) and set specific regulations about meal times, rest intervals and the requirement that notices specifying hours of employment were to be posted in each factory.² By 1881 the minimum age had risen to twelve years old, and by 1885 the minimum age was fourteen, although evidence from John Hanson, a Dunedin Factory Inspector, indicates children younger than this were indeed still labouring in the factories.³ 'I found young persons at work who, from their size and appearance, did not look to be more than ten or twelve years of age, but, when asked, stated their age to be over 14 years.'⁴

The Act was difficult to enforce. For example, in 1878 most employers, including Anderson, manager of the New Zealand Clothing Factory, admitted that they did not ask employees their age.⁵ Inspections were not carried out systematically. Inspection was carried out at irregular intervals and some workrooms were not inspected at all. It was not until the 1880s that the Acts were adequately enforced.

In parliament bills seeking amendments to the Act were debated with increasing frequency. In 1874 one member of the House of Representatives, William Rolleston, said that 'the fact was, the bill was no good at all except as a public health measure', and as a protection to those 'who had not the means of protecting themselves against the greed of their employers.' Rolleston, the M.P. for Avon, did not believe the time

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¹ NZ Statutes, 1873, No.LXXI, p.313
² NZ Statutes, 1875, No.LXXXIX, p.184
³ NZ Statutes, 1881, No.23, p.184
⁴ AJHR, 1885, H-20, p.5
⁵ AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.11
had arrived in 'this colony' for such measures. In the following year the Honourable G.M. Waterhouse, of Wellington, posited that given the sexual disparity in New Zealand it would be irresponsible to pass legislation which he believed encouraged the employment of women in factories. 'He did not believe the employment of women in large numbers was favourable to their moral growth, or to the improvement of their physical stamina.' This view was supported by members of the medical profession.

As the number of women entering the workforce increased many male doctors sought to restrict women's participation in paid employment through the use of arguments based on medical ideas. If women worked in factories it was assumed by many that their reproductive capacity would be drastically affected and New Zealand's future could therefore not be assured. A woman's reproductive function defined her character, position and value. The 1880s have been identified as a period of international obsession with the size, composition and health of each nation's population, explaining some of this perception. Fear of a decline in racial fitness, combined with concerns about the Asian influx and widening opportunities for women in the workplace, added to the argument against women working in factories. For young, unmarried women, factory work was not considered particularly desirable mainly because of possible injury to their health and childbearing capabilities. Parliamentarians like Waterhouse believed that 'those who were to be the wives of the present generation, and the mothers of those who were to follow after us, had no place

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6 NZPD, vol.XVI (1874), p.467
7 NZPD, vol.XVI (1874), p.419
9 E. Olssen in New Zealand's Heritage: The Making of a Nation, Part 54, p.1496
10 O'Donnell, 'Female Complaints', p.3
11 O'Donnell, 'Female Complaints', pp.3-5
in the common factory.\textsuperscript{12} Edward Stafford, M.P. for Timaru, was adamant that 'it was the duty of the state to see that no employment shall be open to [women] that would interfere with the duty which nature imposed upon them as mothers and protectors of the young.'\textsuperscript{13} Dr. Ferdinand Batchelor was appointed as the specialist in female diseases at Dunedin hospital in 1886 and continued to make similar arguments as late as 1909:

...when the work in our factories is largely conducted by female labour, one cannot but realise that our social evolution is progressing on incorrect lines and is diverging further and further from home life which tends to the rearing of a healthy population.\textsuperscript{14}

Batchelor spoke of the large numbers of women who attended his practice on account of nervous weaknesses, headaches, eye-failure, recurrent or disabling illnesses involving two or three days invalidism every month and a number of nervous phenomena 'which we usually classify under the vague term of "neurasthenia" and where almost invariably we hear the same story - "over work and overstrain ... long hours in ... offices or shops or stuffy factories"'.\textsuperscript{15} Batchelor reasoned that neurasthenic females could not bear labour pains, so needed drugs, which led to high maternal and infant mortality rates. J.L.C. Richardson also wrote of the effect of factory on the infant mortality rate in 1881, claiming that lower hours of work led directly to lower rates of infant mortality.\textsuperscript{16}

In 1890 Dr. William Stenhouse, reporting to the Sweating Commission, expressed his concern specifically regarding the clothing industry, maintaining that the 'constant movement of the legs at a sewing machine causes congestion of the pelvis and gives

\textsuperscript{12} NZPD, vol.XIX (1875), p.419

\textsuperscript{13} NZPD, vol.XIX (1875), p.305

\textsuperscript{14} F.C. Batchelor and T.King, \textit{Addresses given for the Society of the Promotion of Health of Women and Children}, Dunedin, 1909, p.5

\textsuperscript{15} Batchelor, p.5

\textsuperscript{16} J.L.C. Richardson, \textit{Employment of Females and Children in Factories and Workshops}, Dunedin, 1881, p.12
rise to pelvic troubles and uterine and ovarian diseases.' Constant standing was said to lead to tiredness, varicose veins and bad backs. Dr. Stenhouse also commented on the high incidence of anaemia among factory workers. Evidence for this high rate of illness among female factory workers in Dunedin is difficult to find, and, indeed, very small numbers of 'factory girls' were admitted to the Dunedin hospital during this period. However, the range of issues surrounding aspects of women's health by the turn of the century indicate that it was the focus of much scrutiny and attention. Ventilation in factories was considered important to the health of the workers within, and the legislation attempted to ensure that factories and workrooms were indeed well ventilated.

Ventilation of factories was a factor considered at the passing of the first Employment of Females Act. In 1875 Donald Reid, Member of Parliament for Taieri, said that it was ventilation 'in these establishments that women had to complain of, and not the numbers of hours during which they had to work. What they required was that they should have a healthy atmosphere in which to work.' Many factories were overcrowded and badly ventilated, with the effluvia from the materials used, especially in the boot and woollen industries, detrimental to the workers' health. The New Zealand Clothing Factory was apparently very well ventilated by the standards of the day, despite the fact that the large numbers of employees at times would indicate some overcrowding. As early as 1874, during the factory's first year of production, the Otago Witness reported: 'one thing which was noticeable was the freshness of the air in the workrooms, the ceilings of them being high, and the premises appearing to be well ventilated.'

17 AJHR, 1890, H-5, p.35
18 O'Donnell, 'Female Complaints', p.92
19 NZPD, 1875, XIX, p.304
20 Unwin, 'Women in Industry', p.44
21 Otago Witness, 11 April 1874, p.20
In 1878 James Bradshaw, M.P. for Wakaia, set up and chaired a Royal Commission of inquiry into the working of the Employment of Females Act. The New Zealand Clothing Factory was one of several Dunedin factories to be inspected and the managers were interviewed. When questioned about the ventilation in the factory, Anderson said it was 'as good as we can make'. He went on to explain the difficulty in ventilating a place where people are 'sedentarily occupied,' on the grounds that 'having no exercise they feel the slightest cold and object to the least draught.' Anderson claimed to have often broken the windows to let in the air, but that the workers had 'closed them up again with rags'. There were no 'vents' as such; all ventilation was provided by windows. This seems to have created a cold environment at times - of the few complaints workers had about the New Zealand Clothing Factory, cold was one of them. It seems that in the first few years of opening the factory was not heated, except by the two coal furnaces in the pressing room. In 1874 the *Otago Witness* wrote of the pressing room that it 'certainly was a little warm, but that was as might be expected, and it did not possess any of that unhealthy, unwholesome fume often to be found where a number of people are confined for hours.' However, it would appear that the furnace did not in fact project a lot of heat. Elizabeth Amy, an eighteen year old trouser maker at the factory in 1878, said that although working above the furnace she did not find it 'too close or warm; it is sometimes too cold.' Margaret Gow, who was making coats in the factory in 1878, also complained of the cold, saying that she and the other workers in her room found it very cold in the winter. Elizabeth Amy reported that in the summertime the windows were kept open. She said she did not think the room was unhealthy and proudly admitted she had not had a bad cold since she had been there.

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22 *AJHR*, 1878, H-2, p.11
23 *Otago Witness*, 11 April 1874, p.20
24 *AJHR*, 1878, H-2, p.20
25 *AJHR*, 1878, H-2, p.20
26 *AJHR*, 1878, H-2, p.20
When the new factory was built and established in Dowling Street in 1883, Hallenstein and Ross considered the working environment carefully. Skylights then and now adorn the roof, allowing for a light and spacious work space. The gallery above the second floor allowed the skylights to provide light to both floors of the factory. The outside walls were also well supplied with windows. Other workrooms in Dunedin were much gloomier. Smaller workrooms, especially in the clothing industry, were often poorly lit and poorly ventilated as well as overcrowded. Workers who took work home to finish at night often developed problems with their eyesight.27

Noise in factories was not considered in the 1873 legislation or the later amendments. The heavy machinery, sewing machines, furnaces and equipment would no doubt have created a very noisy environment. The Otago Guardian did comment on the noise in the New Zealand Clothing Factory in 1876: 'The noise of several of the larger machines is quite bewildering to anyone who is not accustomed to it, and it is some moments before one can hear conversation comfortably.'28 Tinnitus and hearing loss, which are common ailments experienced by people who work around machinery, are often not detected until later in life. Workers and employers are unlikely to have been aware of the damaging long term impact of noise in factories, explaining the neglect of this topic by employers, workers and legislation.

The provision of proper sanitation, water closets and adequate wash facilities was of some concern to the 1878 commission of enquiry into the state of New Zealand factories. Most factories did not have adequate facilities in this regard, and although the Hallenstein's factory was not entirely up to standard, it compared favourably to other factories in Dunedin. The Chief Inspector of Nuisances reported in 1878 that the Rattray Street factory, employing 200 females daily, had 8 waterclosets, four each for the men and women. All the toilets were in the same area, the men's divided from the women's by a 'nine inch brick wall, about six or seven feet tall'. The


28 Otago Guardian, 13 May 1876, p.2
inspector was concerned that the main doors opening into the halls were both on the same side, 'consequently male and female must see each other entering together if they chance to meet at the outside doors.' While this would have been somewhat improper in those modest times, it was better than in another Dunedin factory, where the women had to walk through a room of male workers in order to get to the one watercloset provided. Some workrooms made no provisions for separate sanitary arrangements at all. It was not until the Factory Act of 1894 that toilet facilities were legally required to be 'separated in such a way as to ensure privacy.'

The early Acts made no provision for keeping premises clean, and this factor was not addressed until the 1890s. In 1892 a factory inspector explained that employers were even failing to check and keep clean staff toilets, and proposed it was their responsibility to do so since the staff were incapable:

In many ways employees need protection against themselves, against their own slovenliness and neglect of healthful precautions, sometimes against a species of "larikinism" subversive of decency.

In the same report, the inspector claimed it was well known that in one Southern town the death of a girl was caused by want of proper sanitary accommodation, and that others were no doubt injured more or less for life by inhuman neglect of this nature.

Some did consider the provision of basins and dressing rooms to be important in 1878. The Chief Inspector of Nuisances, William Connell, reported in 1878 that the New Zealand Clothing Factory provided 'nothing in the shape of a wash house or place for the females to clean themselves in, the only substitute being basins in their workrooms, the water supplied from several taps in the rooms.' None of the other workrooms inspected had specific washbasins either, however, so at least the

29 *AJHR*, 1878, H-2, p.24
30 *AJHR*, 1892, H-14, p.4
31 Brookes, ’Aspects, p.153
32 *AJHR*, 1892, H-14, p.4
Hallensteins' workers had access to those basins mentioned in the workrooms. The inspector also expressed concern over the lack of a dressing room in which the females could adjust themselves upon coming to work and leaving.\textsuperscript{33} However no other factory or workroom in Dunedin did either, as the issue was not considered to be of prime importance.

The Employment of Females and Others Act did include provisions for periods of rest and eating. The Hallenstein's factory followed these provisions well. In 1878 the dinner hour was from one to two in the afternoon, and Anderson claimed the works were entirely suspended during this hour.\textsuperscript{34} This claim was supported by the evidence of Margaret Gow, who said 'we do not work during the dinner hour, excepting for ourselves.'\textsuperscript{35} While some workers went home for lunch, others remained in the factory. There were facilities for making tea, and the workers took their dinner 'in messes of half a dozen each'. Anderson believed it would have been a hardship to insist they leave the premises: 'we rather encourage those young persons who live at a distance to remain during the dinner hour, as it keeps them from the street.'\textsuperscript{36} This paternal attitude was characteristic of some employers of the time, and Anderson's testimony did show concern for his workers. The Dowling Street factory was built with a large dining room, described by D.H. Hastings as 'capacious and comfortable'.\textsuperscript{37} Hastings reported that the Dowling Street workrooms were cleared during the dinner hour and the windows were opened, so that when the workers returned the factory was filled with fresh air. Hastings was impressed with the conditions in the Hallenstein's factory, writing in 1888 that 'altogether the comfort and health of the workpeople seems to have been greatly studied.'\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{33} AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.25
\textsuperscript{34} AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.11
\textsuperscript{35} AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.20
\textsuperscript{36} AJHR, 1878, H-2, p.11
\textsuperscript{37} D.H. Hastings, (ed), A Plea for Protection, Dunedin, 1888, p.76
\textsuperscript{38} Hastings, 'Plea', p.76
According to the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, all needful precautions for the prevention of accidents had been anticipated at the Hallenstein’s Brothers New Zealand Clothing Factory.\(^{39}\) The same article described the manner in which power was converted to the various machines, by shafts and belts, which were fully cased in 'so as to render accidents by contact in passing quite impossible.\(^{40}\) In the Rattray Street factory some years earlier the *Otago Guardian* reported a 'near fatal accident' which may well have spurred the decision to have the belts encased. In the accident a girl stooped to pick up a dropped reel, in the course of which the 'waterfall' she was wearing (the *Guardian* did not know what exactly a 'waterfall' was) came into contact with the shafting, and her hair was whirled rapidly around it. Fortunately a young girl saw the accident and 'with great presence of mind threw the whole machinery out of gear.'\(^{41}\)

One former worker from the factory described the lift as being 'one of our worries'. The lift was described as being operated by an endless rope, and the goods were brought up on a rope wound round a pulley at the top. The goods and rolls of tweed were held in a basket. 'One boy would hold the endless rope and the other took hold of the load. At the word "go!" one boy let go his rope and the other pulled the load in.'\(^{42}\) Stories were told of rolls of tweed falling out to the danger of someone working below. The worker had heard a rumour that a boy had once fallen down the well, but did not know if the story was true.\(^{43}\) Few accidents appear to have occurred in the Hallenstein’s factory in this period, or at least were not recorded.

The question arises as to why contemporaries focused on some occupational health issues and not on others. The legislation is reflective of a colony under British


\(^{40}\) *Cyclopedia*, p.307

\(^{41}\) *Otago Guardian*, 13 May 1876, p.2

\(^{42}\) Letter to Halsted, c.1920, p.3, AG295, 35/10

\(^{43}\) Letter to Halsted, p.4, AG295, 35/10
influence. Fear of recreating the 'dark Satanic mills' that characterised the slums of England is likely to have influenced legislators and employers alike. The movement for factory reform in England began early in the nineteenth century with figures like Robert Owen, a Welsh utopian socialist, agitating for improved conditions as early as 1815. Concerns about industrial diseases and the physical state of workshops surfaced in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, and collided with a lack of understanding and agreement on the transmission of diseases. Nineteenth century epidemics such as cholera and tuberculosis increased public awareness of health matters, and clean, fresh air became positively linked with good health and freedom from disease. One theory about the spread of disease was miasmatic, that outbreaks of infectious diseases were caused by the state of the atmosphere. Increasingly, confined and filthy conditions were associated with ill health. An awareness emerged of the need for well ventilated and well designed workshops. Factory legislation in England evolved accordingly and provided the basis on which the New Zealand legislation was founded. Although this does not explain why many issues were ignored (such as sanitation and noise control), it does go some way toward explaining why clauses for adequate ventilation were included in the first factory legislation passed in New Zealand. In designing the New Zealand Clothing Factory Bendix Hallenstein may well have been aware of the new thinking on health and industrial health, having travelled extensively, and this may explain why Hallenstein’s clothing factory was well lit, well ventilated and superior in providing rest time for their workers. Also, apart from the social and medical desirability of maintaining a healthy work space, Hallenstein may have linked a healthy working environment with high levels of productivity - happy workers will be efficient, loyal and non-confrontational. This type of attitude was common among many nineteenth century employers, who took on a paternalistic approach towards caring for their staff. Hallenstein did take an interest in the welfare of his staff, and went as far as establishing what may have been the first organised health service in New Zealand.

44 W. Hobson, World Health and History, Bristol, 1963, p.150
In 1880 Bendix Hallenstein established the New Zealand Clothing Factory Relief Fund. Interest from the initial account plus small payments from the staff kept the fund running, and Hallenstein donated money to mark special occasions in his life, such as the marriages of his two daughters. In his will he bequeathed the fund 250 pounds.\textsuperscript{46} Staff could apply for a grant from the fund if they fell sick or were in need, and their application would be considered by a committee. Later a doctor was appointed, but the staff still paid for their medicines. When this doctor, Dr. Martin, resigned arrangements were made with a chemist to supply the medicine when needed.\textsuperscript{47} The Relief Fund continued until the Social Security Act of 1938, when it became the Factory Benefit Fund, and was still being used in 1973 to provide various amenities to the workers.\textsuperscript{48} In being seen to be taking an active role in the welfare of his workers, Hallenstein gained for the firm a reputation for taking care of their staff. This would have had production advantages, encouraging staff cooperation and loyalty and at the same time reducing potential for conflict between staff and management.

Occupational health and safety was well considered at the Hallenstein’s Brothers New Zealand Clothing Factory, especially given the time at which it was established. Compared to less commercial enterprises in the clothing industry, the New Zealand Clothing Factory’s occupational health record was quite impressive. By 1890, when the major defects of the Employment of Females and Others Act were exposed, such as the absence of a penalising clause for inadequate sanitation and ventilation and poor inspection, larger companies like Hallensteins could be confident in the state of their workplaces. In 1892 the Report of the Bureau of Industries acknowledged the superiority of the larger factories in terms of occupational health, allowing that ample funds and the number of employees "secures a publicity which renders any

\textsuperscript{46} Evening Star, Dunedin, 13 August 1973, p.6

\textsuperscript{47} Letter to Halsted, AG 295, 35/10

breach of regulations almost an impossibility. The commission went on to acknowledge the positive effects such treatment had not only on the workers but also on the businesses:

The effect of this generous treatment is shown, not only in the healthy appearance of the workpeople but in the manner they regard the business as their own: the concessions for their benefit bearing fruit commercially in the zeal and energy which they apply to their daily tasks.

49 AJHR, 1892, H-14, p.4

50 AJHR, 1892, H-2, 1892
CONCLUSION

The New Zealand Clothing Factory was established at a time when secondary industry was just beginning to develop in New Zealand. As a new and young colony ambitious in its goal to create an 'ideal society' and anxious to avoid the evils of the Old World, New Zealand society was provincially based and made up of a series of communities. Employer and worker alike shared the responsibility for the future of this new land. Still, there was money to be made. The new emerging market provided Bendix Hallenstein with the opportunity to establish New Zealand's first clothing factory. His record of both community and business involvements indicates he was very much aware of the close relationship between the two in the colonial setting.

Labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory evolved as the managers sought new ways to increase productivity and maximise efficiency. The work was divided into departments where single, repetitive tasks could be performed. As far as was practicable, work was fragmented rather than specialised. If de-skilling is to be equated with the breakdown of tasks into simple operations then de-skilling was certainly a major feature of the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory. However, the relationship between de-skilling and fragmentation is complex. The rise of technology played an important role in the New Zealand Clothing Factory and was closely connected to the subdivision of labour. The company took advantage of new technology in the search for greater productivity, but increased mechanisation also meant an increased volume of ancillary handwork. The workers also had to learn how to operate the new technology. To an extent operating a machine may have been simpler than operating a needle and thread, but the increased speed at which tasks could be performed meant that workers were expected to produce more work at a faster rate. To some degree de-skilling was offset by the speed at which tasks had to be performed. Therefore, as Lazonick suggests, the technology was skill-augmenting as well as skill-displacing.
Subdivision of labour increased over time with increased mechanisation. Other factors, such as the importance of factory layout and the use of an appropriate power source, also became apparent. Feminisation of the labour process ensured the female labour force remained cheap, adding to the firm’s potential profits. The social construction of skill allowed men to earn more than women. Constructions of femininity kept women from performing certain tasks in the factory, like cutting and pressing, but there is no evidence the women wanted to perform these tasks, as they were heavy and laborious. The conflicting notions of gender and skill kept female labour cheap, and this was accepted by society and management alike.

The wage system in the factory was largely based on piece rates. This system had definite production advantages, spurring the workers to work faster to earn more. Piece rates also meant the firm could avoid extra costs like holiday pay. From the late 1870s economic crisis sent New Zealand into a long depression. This created a highly competitive environment and many businesses in the clothing industry resorted to 'sweated' labour to remain profitable. Protective legislation limiting the number of hours women and children could work also affected the wages women could earn. By the standards of the day the Hallensteins’ factory paid well. The retail side of the firm allowed a steady flow of business which in turn kept the factory busy. This ensured work and pay was kept at a reasonable level in the factory.

The Hallenstein Brothers’ New Zealand Clothing Factory was an exceptional firm even by international standards. The factory was well planned for the requirements of efficient production, although it is unclear where Hallenstein obtained his superior knowledge of the necessities of a good factory. The management structure was family based, providing an inexpensive, trustworthy and dedicated management team. External factors shaped the options which confronted management in its decisions about the organisation of work. In turn these external factors affected the way in which workers chose to respond.

Hallenstein and his managing staff gained control over their workers through a paternalistic approach to labour. Hallenstein’s management style predated Taylor’s
'scientific management' yet was organised and considered essential to the smooth running of the factory. There is no evidence of a self-conscious application of scientific management over the period covered, yet changes made to the organisation of the factory over time indicate an increased awareness of the means of greater productivity. Religion and life as an entrepreneurial colonist influenced Hallenstein's outlook as General Manager, and industrial harmony in the factory was created through paternalism. The family firm philosophy was carried over into the factory, and this is likely to have increased management's authority while at the same time creating a disciplined workforce. Given the disproportionate number of young women in the factory, paternalism was virtually in loco parentis. The community took a great interest in the factory's development, and parents were able to rest assured that their children were working in an acceptable environment.

Bendix Hallenstein's paternalistic management style ensured not only a pleasant working environment, compared to many in Dunedin at the time, but also a loyal and docile workforce. There is no evidence of the workers resisting changes to the labour process in the New Zealand Clothing Factory. This is due to a number of factors. The staff was made up mostly of women and girls, who were probably too preoccupied with their domestic responsibilities and futures to take up issues with their employers. Their work was largely transient, filling in the void that emerged between finishing school and getting married. The wage disparity between male and female workers was an accepted norm. The image of the male breadwinner was an important part of the construction of masculinity and femininity in the colony. Even with the advent of the Tailoresses' Union in 1889 the wage disparity did not become a contentious issue. The Tailoresses' Union was presided over and run by men who, although obviously concerned with the welfare of the women workers, were not interested in upsetting the colonial gender order.

Hallenstein provided an exceptional working environment. The physical conditions in the factory were superior to most factories at the time. Priority was given to good lighting and ventilation, and a dining room was provided for rest and eating time. Having travelled extensively Hallenstein may well have been influenced by the ideas
of Robert Owen and the international trend toward a greater interest in the working environment. Despite alterations in the labour process to increase labour productivity Hallenstein earned himself a reputation as one who took care of his workers.

Despite parliaments attempts to regulate the employment of women and children, full investigations into working conditions were instigated in 1878 and again in 1888. Protective legislation and community concern was both encouraged and reinforced by the colonial gender order. The watchdogs of morality, journalists and clergy, often inspected the factory. The profit alone, in short, was not the primary source of motivation for the managers in the factory. It is not clear whether Hallenstein’s status as a German Jew in a predominantly Protestant British community made him particularly sensitive to public concerns, or whether his sensitivity helped shape the public mood, but it is certain he took pride the factory and was ahead of his time in terms of working conditions and management style. An enlightened employer, Bendix Hallenstein was both popular and prosperous.

Work in the New Zealand Clothing Factory was shaped by a dynamic interaction of forces. The capitalist imperative to extract surplus value, the measure of worker resistance, the intervention of the state, advancements in technology, de-skilling and feminisation all operated within the parameters of the colonial setting. Yet that setting proved decisive. What has emerged is that while Braverman’s work provides a good theoretical base for analysing the labour process it needs to be qualified by acknowledging its limitations. By taking into account the broader social, cultural, political and economic factors at play, as William Lazonick suggests, we can develop a far more comprehensive understanding of the labour process in any particular setting. In clothing factories, however, it has proved impossible to study the labour process without recognising the centrality of gender.
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