

**The Public and Private Business Model of the  
Utility Clothing Scheme**

**A View of Consensus and Control from the  
West Riding of Yorkshire**

**1941-1945**

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*Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
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I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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*Irene in her Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) uniform.*  
ca.1942. [Photographs]. At: Author's own collection.



*Alexander in his Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) uniform.*  
ca.1940 and 1943 respectively. [Photographs]. At: Author's own collection.

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## Abstract

From its implementation in 1941, through the Second World War, and to its end in 1952, the Utility Clothing Scheme altered the course of the British fashion economy. Encapsulated by a period of global conflict, the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts surrounding cc41 exemplify the economies of wartime. In investigation of the true nature of consensus and control purported by the Utility Clothing Scheme, this thesis conducts investigation of the public-private business model between government and private business. Analysis engages a study from the view of the historic West Riding of Yorkshire. Within this geographic area, distinct business and enterprise cultures and their resultant textile outputs are well recognised. As a result of these ways of working, the region held a prominent position in the Utility Clothing Scheme, from policy, through production, in products themselves, promotion of the Scheme, and also through consumer purchase.

Through reviewing archival material, founded in documentary sources and object analysis, this thesis employs sociological interpretive perspectives through a phenomenological approach applied in a mixture of methodologies. Findings demonstrate, while acknowledging the limitations of Utility, it can be asserted that the Scheme was collaborative. The active role of industry and trade was emphasised in evidence recorded in documentary sources as well as imbued within extant garments. While the Utility Clothing Scheme aided the maintenance of the sector, it also set the scene for the post-war fashion economy. Due to the public-private business model of the Scheme, standardised practices were far reaching. Ways of working were directed by the knowledge and established techniques of the manufacturers and retailers of cc41 garments. As confirmed by businesses engaged in making and selling Utility cloth and clothing in the West Riding of Yorkshire, rather than passive control, Utility was founded on reaching consensus through collaboration.

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## Abbreviations

**BoT** – Board of Trade

**IncSoc** – Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers

**IWM** - Imperial War Museum

**M&S** – Marks and Spencer

**M&S Company Archive** – Marks & Spencer Company Archive

**PESTELE** – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, Ethical

**The First List of Cloths** - The First List of Cloths which May be Sold Under the Special Quota and the Types of Garments to be Made from Them

**V&A** – Victoria and Albert Museum

**WYAS** – West Yorkshire Archive Service

**YFA** – Yorkshire Fashion Archive

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

The Utility scheme has meant, not just a guarantee for the consumer but almost, I think, a revolution in the trade (Hansard HC Deb. 8 May 1952, Column 596).

The Second World War (3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 – 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 [Victory in Europe Day]) represented a period of significant disruption and upheaval in all areas of public and private life. My maternal Grandmother, Irene Richardson (nee Blackburn) [fig. 1], described her time in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) as the best time of her life. The presentation of a uniform represented a period of change for many. Navigating a move from working in tailoring in Leeds before joining the WAAF, Irene embodied one of many whose experience of living was altered by wartime, not least in the clothing worn. Uniforms represented utility which pre-dated simplification and standardisation in design and manufacture for the civilian population under the Utility Clothing Scheme. Production of uniforms for those in the forces was standardised, a range of sizes covered, and scarce resources accounted for through making the most of available fabric. The Service Dress uniform Irene wore originated in 1939 upon the foundation of the WAAF and was tailored following altered patterns used for the men in the Royal Air Force (Imperial War Museum, 2025, UNI 11797). It must be noted that the quality of cloth afforded to WAAF uniforms was of a higher grade than for those made for airmen (Imperial War Museum, 2025, UNI 11797). Conversely, pieces such as the 1940 pattern Khaki serge blouse Battledress jacket produced for the Royal Armoured Corps followed utilities in design and construction; wartime economies were made through the design of this uniform in several ways – removal of pockets and pleats, as well as hidden

plackets, which made buttons visible - therefore this jacket followed what was also known as the 'utility pattern' (Imperial War Museum, 2025, UNI 2313).



Figure 1 - *Irene in her WAAF uniform*. ca.1942. [Photograph].  
At: Author's Own Collection.

For a great number of people like Irene, this period sparked a lifelong dedication to fashion. In a sense of belonging, uniform established expectation in correct dressing connected to design. This was recognised in civilian dress too, and thus was reflected in the fashion industry, where wartime was the catalyst to a profound shift in all aspects of design, production, and consumption, that led to a total restructuring of the sector. One of the prime drivers of this shift was the Utility Clothing Scheme, which was in place for just over a decade, from September 1941 until 1952 (Sladen, 1995). Necessitated by the war and closely following the implementation of clothes Rationing on 1st June 1941, the

Scheme represented the realisation of the government's intervention in the business world in wartime.

One central object which inspired avenues of investigation presented within this thesis is a surviving 'Marlbeck' Utility jacket [fig. 2]. When determining the parameters of research, as part of my personal collection, several elements prompted interest in approaching garments as a primary source. Within the fabric of the garment, both literally and within the historical associations it holds, this jacket prompted interest in analysing the connections between government, industry, trade, and consumer. As the first piece from which object-based research commenced, this piece emphasises the importance of the inclusion of object analysis of pieces manufactured and retailed in the West Riding of Yorkshire through the period of study.



Figure 2 – Marlbeck. ca. 1942-1945. *Utility jacket [front]*. [Wool with synthetic lining].  
At: Author's own collection.

In essence, the Utility Clothing Scheme was established by the wartime British government to standardise production and retail of cloth and clothing. The Scheme, as a result, also set out to regulate access to goods, no matter of socioeconomic status. The Utility Scheme initially covered fabric and clothing articles, but grew to also encompass footwear, some homewares, and furniture (Cooper, 1945). It was devised to tackle the escalation of the cost of living, ensure that clothing was “available at reasonable prices under war conditions for people with limited incomes, maintain the closest possible control over manufacturing and selling prices” and to also “...secure a larger output with available machinery and labour” (Cooper, 1945, p.2). Utility brought with it, standardisation, control, and the need for consensus and widened collaboration to meet the clothing needs of the British civilian public. The West Riding of Yorkshire was one established centre of mass clothing manufacture, alongside Lancashire, London, and areas of Scotland. Tailoring was an area of prominence for the West Riding. Weaving cloth, making-up garments and retailing them, the region was noted for its workforce and practice. This manufacturing centre became integral to producing clothing bearing the ‘cc41’ label. The identifying mark or label ‘cc41’ was applied to cloth, clothing, shoes, homewares, and furniture created as part of the Utility Scheme. Sladen (1995) points to ‘cc’ being indicative of ‘civilian clothing’, and it can be presumed that the ‘41’ connects to 1941, the year the Scheme came into action (Sladen, 1995).

This thesis concerns the foundations in, links to, and relevance of manufacturers and retailers to the Utility Clothing Scheme between 1941 to the end of the Second World War in 1945. Collaborative working was central to the successful functioning of the Utility Clothing Scheme and was defined by communication between the British government, and the private sector, in what is being identified within this thesis as the ‘public-private business model’. Placing study of the West Riding’s business and enterprise cultures in exemplar analysis, the public-private business model of Utility, as well as the importance of regional contributions to the wider national cultural and political economies, is investigated for greater understanding.

Scrutiny of this underexplored area of the Utility Clothing Scheme, in communication, collaboration, and the position of manufacturers and retailers, brings previously underrepresented histories of the production and sale of cc41 clothing to the fore. The view of consensus and control from the West Riding of Yorkshire enables the thesis to bridge the gap in existing historiography, which is explored within a review of literature (see page 30). A range of interpretive methods (refer to chapter two) analyses previously disparate source material to address the actualities of consensus and control in manufacturing and retailing practices in the West Riding during the defined timeframe of 1941 to 1945. In order to build understanding around the establishment of the Utility Clothing Scheme through investigation of primary source material, founded in trade body discussion and business practices, this period of the Scheme's existence (1941-1945) was selected for focus within the thesis. The study considers the central idea that the need for efficiency led to a standardised approach to garment creation and sale which was influenced by Austerity<sup>1</sup> regulations but evolved through the involvement of industry and trade. It will also explore consumer interpretations as evidence towards public acceptability of Utility design and construction.

## A Review of Literature

Histories of clothing in the Second World War have been chronicled through a range of perspectives. Discussion largely centres on shortages and Austerity, with national identity as a further recurrent theme which runs through these analyses. In tandem, the political impact of wartime economies contributes to a range of discussions, a poignant reference for understanding social change (Rose, 2003), in working roles (Gamber, 1997; Gazeley, 2008), promotional tools, and consumption of goods (Gurney, 2020; Kirkham, 1999; McNeil, 1993; Trentmann, 2017). In this way, wartime cultures of dress – in politics,

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<sup>1</sup> Capitalisation of 'Austerity' was chosen as a writing style here to reflect the overall legislative economies of wartime. See later definition provided on page 84.

production, and sale – can be interpreted through the experience of living, phenomenologically (Loiskandl in Small, 2001), and in collective consciousness (Némedi, 1995), as is presented within this thesis. Austerity regulations shaped representations and understandings of roles on the Homefront; participation in society, which encompassed working practices, everyday living, and engagement with consumption, altered in many ways. As a result, navigation of wartime developments in making and selling clothing had widespread impact, resulting in a range of social changes for the populace (Summerfield, 1993).

## **Utility in Focus**

Previous studies focused on the Utility Clothing Scheme have charted its chronology, drawing on political discussion, official records, and periodicals (Sladen, 1995), or accounted for media discussions of Utility clothing as a central evidential source (Brown, 2014). Others detailed the restrictions enacted under Utility through a broader lens of wartime fashion (Howell, 2013, Summers, 2015). Summers (2015) considers wartime Austerity measures in reflection on dress in wartime, stating “some people believed that the fashion industry stagnated during the war; others claim that it carried on creatively. The truth is somewhere in between” (Summers, 2015, p.2). Summers’ suggestion is reflected in understanding clothing in wartime more broadly, through rationing and coupons, uniform, underwear, Make-do and Mend, the role of beauty and styling, as well as focusing on the Utility Clothing Scheme.

Further writing, like Summers’ approach, places description of the Utility Clothing Scheme within wider consideration of dress in wartime more broadly. Through both qualitative and quantitative analysis, Howell (2013) provides a succinct overview of wartime dress and fashion presented through consideration of the coupon system of clothes Rationing and the Utility Clothing Scheme, amongst other areas. Further writing by Howell (2021) provides insight into cultures of dissemination, through photography and representations in

popular press. By accounting for editorial policy and how this aligned with the contemporary view of society Howell approaches *Picture Post* as a source for analysis of wartime dress histories. Howell details how women could see themselves and their lives represented within the publication, which captured social and cultural changes which were shaped by wartime. In exploration of dress in wartime, Howell addresses societal shifts away from conspicuous consumption juxtaposed with the continued importance of individuality expressed through garment personalisation and the role of social expectations concerned with being appropriately attired. In this way, Howell demonstrated how the impacts of wartime economies could be navigated by audiences across the socioeconomic spectrum through engaging with inventive means of approaching dress. Political and social alignments of the publication were important considerations in Howell's research and prove pertinent to the present research. This approach to the source material is implemented within this thesis, through drawing on a breadth of different sources that highlight a range of perspectives which are proposed through interpretation of published articles, in-house material, and un-published records. Much of the literature which reflects broader considerations of dress in the Second World War chronologically, charting wartime economies through government Orders. This is evidenced for the most part through press coverage and consumer reaction (Howell, 2013, 2021; Summers, 2015).

Investigations into Utility in wartime and through its eleven-year existence have presented different approaches to understanding the Scheme. Where Brown (2014) depicts an array of Utility garments in illustration, interpretation is descriptive. This too is reflective of the charting of chronology of the lifetime of the Scheme, with evidence centrally drawn from popular press. Further literature which focuses solely on the Utility Clothing Scheme centres on making, selling, and consumption through broader Britain-wide analysis, as in Sladen's (1995) *Conscription of Fashion: Utility Cloth, Clothing and Footwear, 1941-1952*. Where Sladen discusses the roles of politics, regulation, and trade, questions about consumer reaction also posed, enabling this text to establish factors which compelled the government to implement the Utility Clothing Scheme, as well as make arguments for the role of both the Board of Trade and

retailers in setting regulations (Sladen, 1995). In this way, Sladen considers several aspects which centre on government policy, purposes for the need for the Utility Clothing Scheme, and its promotion. As a result, Sladen's work offers context to the Scheme from its implementation through the changing nature of regulations during its lifetime. In saying this, Sladen's inquiry leaves room for further angles of investigation which are posed within this thesis. Analysis of political debate is one area which is bridged through investigation of Parliamentary records. A suggested by Sladen, further study of clothing manufacture in Britain and relationship to Utility garments was covered within this publication "on rather less certain ground" (Sladen, 1995, p.9); deeper understanding through focussed investigation of manufacture and retail is undertaken through this study's concentration on the West Riding of Yorkshire, seeking to bridge this gap. The 'mass' nature of production of Utility garments had substantial impact on the clothing industry, which affected design and consumption (Reynolds, 1999). Furthermore, Rose argues that design and consumption was connected to notions of national identity and the role of citizenship (Rose, 2003). As a result, experiences and assessments of the design and consumption of Utility clothing, both during the Second World War and the period after (1946-1952), have been shaped by these defining characteristics. Consequently, public perceptions of mass manufacture and the wartime spirit connected to engaging with Austerity restrictions has been recognised and explored.

Reynolds' (1999) examination focuses on the practical, reflecting on the government-implemented regulations and what these meant for the design of Utility clothing and the mass manufacture of garments under the Scheme between 1942 and 1945. Utility simplification resulted in larger runs of a minimum of 1,000 of the same piece, compared to the pre-war standard of 100 of one style, which led manufacturers to place emphasis on design (Reynolds, 1999, p.134). Biddle-Perry (2017) highlights that the motivations of the Utility Clothing Scheme lay in simplification and standardisation of process, saving resources (both labour and fabric), and as a result, bringing down prices. In this way, within the parameters of Austerity measures, design remained relatively within the scope of businesses (Biddle-Perry, 2017, p.18).

Both the exploration of the Utility Clothing Scheme which is presented amongst broader discussions of wartime dress and representations which place the Utility Clothing Scheme at the centre of analysis are represented within the existing literature. While reference is given to the involvement of manufacturers and retailers through the lens of regulations (Sladen, 1995), arguments mostly centre on the consumer; for Utility to be successful, control was required to reduce clothing consumption and ensure the sale of garments made (Reynolds, 1999), and this was implicitly connected to consumer belief in Utility clothing (Biddle-Perry, 2017). As a result, there is space for more focussed investigation into specific geographic areas.

Notwithstanding existing analyses, what remains underrepresented in existing literature is in-depth investigation of the cooperative working between the government and the cloth and clothing manufacturing industries which was required of the Utility Clothing Scheme, through the development of a public-private partnership. As a result, the present study considers participation by both manufacturers and retailers in collaborative working during the Second World War period of the Utility Clothing Scheme (1941-1945), reflected in analysis of parliamentary debates, working documents of manufacturers and retailers (including letters), trade publications, and surviving garments.

## **Utility and the West Riding of Yorkshire**

In investigating the public-private working of government and private businesses, this study positions the West Riding of Yorkshire as its focus to build on existing literature. While this study contributes to the history of the Scheme and the histories of manufacture and retailing in the West Riding of Yorkshire, it also serves to develop knowledge of the role of such contributors to the Utility Clothing Scheme. A range of literature relating to the textile and clothing industries of the region has developed over the decades. Much of this

writing regards the position of the West Riding of Yorkshire within the textile trade (Cookson, 1997; Fowler, 2016; Gregory, 1982; Honeyman, 1993, 2000, 2011; Shell, 2014; Smail, 1999; Sprecher, 2020). Fabric production within the West Riding predominantly encompassed wool-based cloths, including worsteds, kerseys, and shalloons (Smail, 1999), with shoddy another area recognised as demonstrating textile innovation within the region (Shell, 2014). Hudson (1986) provides a comprehensive overview of the breadth of fabric types manufactured in the region from 1750 to 1850, citing the “lack of homogeneity” as central to understanding the “diversity of cloths [which were] being produced for a wide variety of different markets” (Hudson, 1986, p.25). The marked differences embodied in regional specialisation by the West Riding in manufacturing, marketing, and selling Hudson describes encapsulate the ability of the area’s different fabric producers to manufacture cloths for Utility clothing, as well as for use in other goods, such as uniforms (Shell, 2014), Utility homewares, and non-Utility civilian goods.

The different fabric types produced in the region were extensively used within tailoring, connecting with Honeyman’s (1993, 2000, 2011) research. Honeyman has written extensively on the mass production of tailored men’s and boys’ garments in Leeds in the decades prior to the Second World War. Honeyman’s work positions the labour force, industry organisation, manufacturing processes, promotion, market reach, and consumption centrally, in understanding the development of Leeds into a tailoring hub – all considerations which are integral to the present study. Methods of production and marketing described by Honeyman are reflected in the present study, namely in how wholesale bespoke and ready-made garment manufacturing and retailing practices both informed the Utility Clothing Scheme and were altered because of it.

When coupled with Sprecher’s (2020) investigation of the involvement of the multiple tailors of Leeds in the Demobilisation process, connection is made between pre- and post-war mass tailoring in the region. The Leeds multiple

tailors<sup>2</sup> played an integral role in the distribution of clothing to demobilised service personnel after the Second World War. Sprecher argues these suits held a prominent position due to the wearer's "expectations about what constituted acceptable tailoring, fashion and standards of dress for their demob suits" (Sprecher, 2020, p.108). In this way, while wartime restrictions impacted on manufacture, the processes of production were essential to shaping wearer interpretation of what qualified 'good' tailoring. Therefore, the manufacturers of Leeds played an important role in this process. In addition, business histories which account for developments of companies such as Montague Burton Ltd. (Honeyman, 1993) and Marks and Spencer (Worth, 2007) provide comment on the Utility Clothing Scheme within wider analysis of practice. However, despite the presence of pre- and post-war writing on garment manufacturing specialisms, as well as business histories, the contribution of the West Riding to the Utility Clothing Scheme has thus far been somewhat neglected, presenting opportunity for wider investigation.

## **Dress and the Everyday**

Considering the everyday nature of Utility clothing, a range of sources present interpretive angles of investigation pertinent to this thesis. Worth (2020) addresses clothing and class, connecting how clothing represents unspoken communication of social stratification. Identity is reflected through dress, and access to goods by the population has shifted through time. Changing fashion systems are connected to politics, economics, technology, purchasing power, 'mass' selling, and the proposed democratisation of fashion through manufacturing and consumption (Worth, 2020). The changes which occurred within the systems of production and consumption shifted parameters of acquisition, widening consumption through methods of manufacture and socioeconomic change.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Multiple tailors' were attributed such associated description due to the presence of ownership of multiple outlets from which they retailed their garments (Sprecher, 2020).

Connected to the expansion of fashion systems, the term ‘democratisation’ features across discussions of social history, and is a term which could, in theory, be associated with the Utility Clothing Scheme. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2024) applies this definition to political democracy, through different forms of emancipation, which widened greatly in the twentieth century (Kauffman, 2024). This definition of democratisation has been expanded by Worth (2007) to reflect increased access to clothing determined ‘fashionable’ due to economic and social change; more people were able to acquire goods no matter of socioeconomic status (Worth, 2007). Crane (2012) connects the theory of democratisation within dress history to the “[implication of] an eventual standardization of clothing in which social class differences would be less visible or nonexistent” (Crane, 2012, p.62). And while it must be noted that democratisation should be connected to foundations in early forms of activism, market expansion, and industrial development, the idea of democratisation may also be applied to access to, and acquisition of, different goods. The buying of different products having widened through the nineteenth century following the beginnings of the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, draws attention to the idea that consumption became more open across the socioeconomic spectrum (Lemire, 2011). Market expansion did not, however, ultimately reach everyone in an equitable manner (Crane, 2012). Therefore, though access did increase overtime, democratisation must not be considered an equitable process. Though Howell (2013) accounts for the role of wartime shortages and regulations in making clothing acquisition more democratic, the notion of levelling through reduced prices and widening access is one theme which has been overlooked in extant histories of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

Acquisition of clothing may also be tied to emotion and the object. This relationship is explored by Almond and Evans (2022), who position their research by drawing on the local collections of Leeds Museums and Galleries and the Yorkshire Fashion Archive, supporting the position of everyday dress in understanding the past. This is in direct contrast to the curation of exhibitions staged by larger institutions, which place focus on high-end clothing not accessible to many. Focussing on the experience of buying and making clothing

in Yorkshire, the 'ordinary', or everyday clothing, pose interesting source sites for investigation (Almond and Evans, 2022). As such, Almond and Evans offer insight into regional social history through exploration of the experience of living. This connects to Bide, Halbert, and Tregenza's (2024) assertion that "exploring the connections between material culture and the everyday practices of life in a consumer society reveals the transformative power of the everyday" (Bide, Halbert, and Tregenza, 2024, p.2).

Considering the above, there is a growing body of literature which deliberates alternative approaches in understanding experiences of the Second World War as well as other periods of conflict. Whitmore and Harrison (2021) consider 'War Through Other Stuff', which accounts for a range of methodological interpretations of wartime, beyond the military. The Homefront, women's history, objects, geography, and memory, to name a few, are encapsulated within a special issue of *Critical Military Studies*. In this work, Whitmore and Harrison position the role of both the tangible and intangible in reflecting on wartime interpretation. Bide (2021) considers emotion in understanding clothing and experience, drawn from the material object. Analysis stems from Bide's grandmother's wedding shoes, with objects from the Museum of London's collection of everyday fashion objects (Bide, 2021). With surviving garments as evidential sources of use and emotional connection, Bide encapsulates how the economies of the Second World War altered society. Therefore, "the power of material fashion objects to challenge the existing narratives and tight periodization present in many public histories of the Second World War" is proven through reflection on changes enacted through Austerity Regulations (Bide, 2021, p.421).

## Reflections

The identification of key studies presented in this review of literature outlines gaps in approaches which will be bridged within this study. This thesis aims to account for lost narratives and underrepresented histories of the Utility Clothing Scheme as a component part of the wartime economy. In this way, the active

involvement of cloth and clothing manufacturers and retailers is positioned in analysis of how discussion and debate shaped consensus in application of Utility regulations. The Utility Clothing Scheme is therefore identified as a distinctive fashion enterprise. Evidence posed within the thesis offers a new way of looking at the Scheme. Through a methodological framework that analyses the contributions of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, and Ethical (PESTELE), this study evaluates the position that industry, within its operational role, was not passive in acceptance of all wartime controls. To understand this, the link between government and business is exemplified through what is recognised within the thesis as the public-private business model through which the Utility Clothing Scheme operated. Consequently, communication, consensus and control are assessed in this thesis through consultation of published and unpublished source material, including engagement with recognised systems of object-based research.

Further, existing historiography has focused on the consumption of Utility, in design and promotion; the businesses which made the Scheme possible have often been overlooked. To create the everyday clothing required by the population, a working relationship was established between the government, industry, and trade nationally, which resulted in discussions between public bodies and private business. Wartime economies not only impacted on the output and sale of Utility cloth and clothing, as well as non-Utility goods – measures also shaped design, construction, finish, and price. Through focus on the West Riding as an exemplar of mass manufacturing, evidence within this thesis reflects the active role of industry within the Utility Clothing Scheme. This contributes to existing literature on the subject through exploration of regional social history. By focusing on the West Riding, this thesis shines new light on distinctive cultures of production and retailing which remain unaccounted for in previous studies. Mass manufacture of clothing by the likes of Montague Burton Ltd. and Marlbeck Ltd., and retailing by chain stores, such as Marks and Spencer, enabled the Scheme to meet requirements necessitated by wartime. Through the above illustrations, the businesses of the West Riding held a central role in this process. By exploring what has been identified through this

study as the public-private business model of Utility, in which public bodies of the state collaborated with private companies, the significant part played by businesses in the Scheme is brought to the fore. By focusing on one influential centre's contributions of Utility clothing – the West Riding of Yorkshire - questions related to manufacture, retailing, and business relations concerning the Scheme and its public-private workings are examined.

## **Research Question**

The following research question has been developed:

*The public-private business model was integral to the Utility Clothing Scheme. How did this way of working contribute to consensus and control in the manufacture and retail of cc41 clothing?*

## **Aims and Objectives**

This thesis accounts for garment manufacture and retail under the Utility Clothing Scheme, through analysis of practice and debate between 1941 and 1945. The West Riding of Yorkshire is approached in geographic focus for investigation due to its position as a mass manufacturer of cloth and clothing. Enquiry is formed around the gap in existing literature, and as a result, through implementation of a phenomenological theoretical framework in approach (refer to pages 47-53), the collaborative ways of working are examined through addressing underexplored areas of making and selling Utility clothing.

## **Aims**

The aims of this thesis are:

To expand previously recognised histories of the Utility Clothing Scheme through acknowledging the impacts of the public-private business model of the Utility Clothing Scheme on manufacturers and retailers between 1941 and 1945. Through analysis of collaboration between the government and private businesses, this thesis seeks to critically understand the communicative processes of consensus and control through approaching new evidential sources.

## **Objectives**

To address the outlined aims, the following objectives were undertaken: -

1. Employ a phenomenological perspective which follows the PESTELE framework in investigation of the manufacture and retail of Utility clothing.
2. A review of existing literature to understand both the Utility Clothing Scheme and clothing manufacture and retailing practice of the West Riding of Yorkshire from the eighteenth century to 1939, to contextualise the role of the region prior to the Utility Clothing Scheme.
3. Analyse trade papers to understand the implementation of, and industry discourse around, the Utility Clothing Scheme.
4. To address the documented experiences of consensus and control of the Utility Clothing Scheme on manufacturers and retailers between 1941 and 1945.
5. Conduct archival research in the business records of the West Riding and analyse industry and trade discourse around, the Utility Clothing Scheme.

6. To assess the realities of consensus and control, analysis of surviving garments and undertake material culture investigation following the combined framework informed by Prown<sup>3</sup> and Pearce's<sup>4</sup> methodologies.

## Scope and Limitations

This thesis is concerned with the period between 1941 and 1945, which is to say, from the implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme until the end of the Second World War. This timeframe was chosen to address the implementation of the Scheme and chart the working relationship of the government and businesses through the war; although the Scheme endured a further seven years, and did not cease entirely until 1952, its post-war remit was affected by a series of legislative amendments which take it beyond the scope of this study. Parameters of 1941 to 1945 were therefore selected for focus in order to address the immediate impacts of the Utility Clothing Scheme, and how integral communicative collaboration was to reaching consensus between government and private businesses.

The balance of archival documents and objects is reflective of access to reference materials. Local archive and museum collections form the basis of research, the breadth of different source types evidenced in tables 1 and 2

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<sup>3</sup> Prown's (1982) approach which positions the object as a source, follows a three-step programme of research through *description*, *deduction*, and *speculation* which bridges visual analysis with other forms of investigation in order to understand historical connections the object has. Prown's methodology will be further explored in the next chapter, *Sources, Methods, and Methodologies*, which considers application of methods outlined here within the thesis.

<sup>4</sup> Pearce (1999a) discussed approaches to understanding objects through material culture investigation. Pearce described how the object itself serves as a primary source of evidence (Pearce, 1999a). Imbued with meaning initially formed by the contexts in which, say, a garment was first made and used. Combined study of contemporaneous documentary material related to this making and use of Utility clothing, as well as comparative analysis with non-Utility clothing informs wider understanding of context in wartime economies of fashion, and notions of consensus and control in practice. Pearce's approach will be further explored in the next chapter, *Sources, Methods, and Methodologies*, which considers application of methods outlined here within the thesis.

above, an introduction to the methods used in the study. As noted, connoisseurship forms a research methodology in itself, represented through inclusion of objects drawn from my own personal collection. As a connoisseur and collector, Utility garments have been acquired over a number of years from a range of different sources, including online marketplaces, antique textile fairs, and generous gifts. The collection has proven to build a personal archive, as well as a wardrobe. This relationship is closely connected to learning, preservation, knowledge-sharing, and identity.

Identifying maker, retailer, or area provenance may prove challenging for many cc41 garments due to the nature of the Scheme and the period of manufacture. These elements relate to the application of labelling, geographies of association (linked with area specialisation and production of different fabrics and finished garments), and wartime economies. However, where attributive labelling has been applied to garments, two pieces analysed in object-based research (presented in chapter four) drawn from my collection can be confirmed to have been manufactured in Leeds – a jacket by Marlbeck, and a jacket by Alexandre, amongst others from museum collections; selection of these garments for inclusion as a source for object-based research in this study owes to knowledge of place of manufacture. Where manufacturer labels are not present, others do have indicators, such as the blue wool infant's coat analysed in chapter four, indicative of the types of fabric manufactured in the West Riding region. Other cc41 labelled garments sourced from Bankfield Museum (Halifax), Leeds Museums and Galleries, the Marks and Spencer Company Archive (Leeds), and the Yorkshire Fashion Archive (Leeds), indicate provenance linked to original purchase within the West Riding. Pieces examined which do not fit into these defined categories, of known manufacture and / or retail in the West Riding do, however, provide insight into different areas. These objects serve to evidence, for example, the proliferation of patterned fabrics and recycling of resources, as well as illustrate recorded testimony founded in Mass Observation recordings. Objects, alongside documentary evidence, are therefore integral to the material culture approach utilised within the thesis [see chapter two].

A central concern in research gathering for this thesis has been the resultant implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. The ramifications of lockdowns on communication and facilitation of archival visits meant that primary source material was viewed both online and in-person (following the easing of restrictions). The sources approached reflect underrepresented and underexplored histories and materials, centred on objects and trade documents (including written recordings of representative body meetings, trade periodicals, and working documents from businesses making and / or selling Utility clothing), with additional evidence from Mass Observation, magazines, newspapers, and photographs. These sources bridge the gap in available material in the archive, connecting to survival of material, donation to collections (Cameron, 2025), or accessioning. Furthermore, accessibility in relation to practical considerations of location, funding, and transferal of study between Higher Education Institutions also had influence on direction and content sought for investigation.

## **Thesis Chapter Structure**

To understand fashion is to understand society and cultures (Rocamora and Smelik, 2020, p.1). Manufacture, consumption, and identity are central elements within this comprehension (Rocamora and Smelik, 2020). In this way it can be asserted that the Utility Clothing Scheme was about more than clothing the population; Utility was connected to policy, production, products, promotion, and purchase. These associations therefore shape the structure of analysis within this thesis. The thesis presents research findings across six chapters, including this introductory discussion which frames consideration of and justification of approached sources and applied methods, and finally concluding remarks. Though the information presented within these sections is interrelated, breaking down the discussion in this way aids methodical clarity. The sectional structure is shaped as follows [table 1]:

Chapter One - <i>Introduction</i>	
Chapter Two - <i>Sources, Methodologies, and Methods</i>	
Chapter Three - <i>Policy</i>	
Chapter Four, Section One - <i>Production</i>	Chapter Four, Section Two - <i>Products</i>
Chapter Five - <i>Promotion and Purchase</i>	
Chapter Six - <i>Conclusions</i>	

Table 1 - Table showing thesis chapter structure.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Unravelling the Seams Sources, Methodologies, and Methods**

This thesis engages with a range of methods, many of which have been developed by and supported by historians from different specialism backgrounds. Object-based approaches to research outlined by Prown (1980, 1982) and Pearce (1999) have been studied, with more recent contributions by Riello (2011), Lemire (2016, 2019), and Bide (2021) considered in interpretation of material culture analysis. As a result, an independent approach incorporating elements of these methods has been cultivated, and is defined within this chapter [see pages 66-73]. The range of source material, including written, visual, and physical pieces, have been studied through the theoretical frameworks of PESTELE and phenomenology. Employment of this approach demonstrates theoretical understanding of different dress historical perspectives and research methods in application through interrogative enquiry, building on existing literature concerning the Utility Clothing Scheme.

Where much existing historiography concerning the Utility Clothing Scheme has been informed by a popular press as a central source, this study draws from a variety of different primary evidential material, including trade press, working documents, and garments themselves. Approaching these sources reflects the application of different methodological approaches to examining the Utility Clothing Scheme which accounts for the active role of the businesses involved in the making and selling of cc41 clothing. The following has been undertaken in order to achieve the identified objectives:

- a. Investigation of committee and trade body representative records, including meeting minutes, published articles, and letters to

assess the extent to which businesses making and selling Utility clothing in the region were following regulations and government Orders.

- b. Connection of analysis with contemporaneous periodicals, advertising materials, in-house industry and trade publications, and government regulation Orders.
- c. Examination of trade directories to identify West Riding cloth and clothing manufacturers, and link these to business records and surviving objects in archives, museums, and private collections in order to build historiography on the Scheme and assess the public-private business model of Utility in practice.
- d. Analysis of working documents, statistical accounts, industry and trade reports, letters, in-house publications to assess the extent to which businesses making and selling Utility clothing in the region were following regulations and government Orders.
- e. Analysis of fabrics used, garment construction, and labelling, comparative analysis (Utility and non-Utility, influence of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers templates, and connect object analysis with study of contemporaneous periodicals, advertising materials, in-house industry and trade publications, and government regulation Orders.

## **Theories, Perspectives, and Practice – Approaches to Investigation**

Clothing serves a range of different purposes, as modes of dress, and in fashion, across cultures and societies (Taylor, 2002, p.1). 'Dress' may be defined as "visible clothing, costume or wearing apparel that can indicate a particular style or fashion and reflect prevailing customs about physical appearance" (Cumming, Cunnington, and Cunnington, 2017, p.92), in other words, a mode of sartorial presentation. Dress encompasses fashion, however, fashion can be demarcated from dress as "associated with clothing and the

constant shifts and changes in personal adornment" (Cumming, Cunnington, and Cunnington, 2017, p.106).

Faiers (2015) proposes dress history as the study of clothing as individual pieces, as well as wider collective interpretation (Faiers, 2015, p.16). From details such as construction techniques, for example, Faiers argues that "the changes in the manufacture of garments" can be outlined, and, in addition, clothing serves "as a means of comprehending wider political and socio-economic developments", inclusive of explorations of changes in fashion, everyday dress, and representational of non-Western dress, culture, and diaspora (Faiers, 2015, p.16). Dress historical research is interdisciplinary (Rocamora and Smelik, 2020). The dress historian's approach, then, may be connected to a range of interpretive methods. Beverly Lemire (2016) addresses the connection of "fashion" with objects themselves as well as associated "creative processes vested in this phenomenon, for its generative stimulus to industry and commerce, and for ways groups are defined by their material culture" (Lemire, 2016, p.10). From the object and recordings of practice stem a range of different investigative angles, intertwined with time, place, and society (Lemire, 2016). Further, within sociology, Crane (2012) connects the "social identity" of clothing with empowerment (Crane, 2012, p.2). Social identities connected to clothing, then, may be liberating or restrictive, dependent on societal structures, the purpose of their creation and wear, and individual use and alteration (Crane, 2012).

Understanding the use of clothing through time, through a variety of methodologies, as a specialism, dress history is populated by researchers from a range of disciplinary backgrounds; history, economics, geography, politics, literature, archaeology, sociology, and anthropology, to name but a few. As a result, a diverse array of different types of source materials are approached by the dress historian, through which clothing and dress form central understanding of the past. It can therefore be understood that "at an analytical level, the study of fashion – and the history of fashion in particular – includes both abstract concepts and material objects." (Riello, 2011, p.8865).

From early researchers of the nineteenth and twentieth century, dress historians have cemented the field as legitimate and much needed, particularly in terms of the perspectives which are offered by dress historical approaches to research. The work of pioneers within the field including Doris Langley Moore, Anne Buck, and Janet Arnold, as well as object-based researchers more widely, must be acknowledged. Doris Langley Moore's work, as an early practitioner of dress historical research through self-direction and use of personal collections, employed object-based research to allay common misconceptions around dressing (Mida and Kim, 2015, p.18). The role of connoisseurship in Langley Moore's work reflects even earlier collections and writing on dress history which, as posed by Dyer (2021) employed methodologies of collecting and recording which positioned understanding of sartorial expression prominently. As a method of research, connoisseurship has been applied within this thesis, through analysis of objects, including those personally collected, in a range of ways. These relate to object, experience, and perceptions (Uhrmacher, McConnell Moroye, and Flinders, 2017). Connoisseurship therefore can be understood as linked to phenomenology, in that understanding is gained through experiential engagement with garments. Within the thesis, this is connected to the building of knowledge of the Utility Clothing Scheme through object-based research, and the meaning imbued within the cc41 label attached to each piece.

Application of object-based research is an interdisciplinary approach which has developed within dress history (Cobb, Orzada & López-Gydosh, 2020, p.6). Surviving garments store information pertaining to the time of creation and original use, commensurate with social and cultural surrounds (Cobb, Orzada & López-Gydosh, 2020, p.6), as well as how the piece may have been used overtime, through wear and alteration, for example. Reflecting on the development of the position of objects as a focal point of personal research, Lemire (2019) sought to connect "social, gendered and commercial histories" to "explain non-elite consumer practices" (Lemire, 2019, p.87). Lemire's discussion of innovative early approaches to material culture informs this thesis,

through PESTELE and phenomenologically interpreted source material. In addition, Niklas and Pollen (2015) point that traditional associations of historical research, which positions archival research at its centre, also suggest that, in practice, “unusual or unresearched historical sources and make special efforts to interrogate what is missing or unsaid” (Niklas and Pollen, 2015, p.2) form huge part of the dress historian’s approach, as already shown. By drawing on a range of different source material in combination, the underrepresented voice is brought to the fore. In relation to interpretation, as Taylor notes that, due to the various functions of clothing, garments, photographs, and other related material must be recognised for its position as a device for cross-disciplinary investigation (Taylor, 2002, p.1).

The various angles of interpretive approach to the study of historical dress will prove integral within the present study. Existing research into the Utility Clothing Scheme addresses certain elements, namely those informed by readings of popular press publications, and some governmental literature. However, deeper inquiry into the garments themselves alongside documentary sources which display actualities of practice follow the characteristics of dress historical research, in building understanding of state and industry interaction through the Utility Clothing Scheme. Consumer cultures which developed from wartime economies stemmed from the public-private business model – a business culture which materialised as a result of the necessity of wartime economies. This collaboration was founded in Austerity measures and came to focus on the Utility Clothing Scheme in application.

## **PESTELE Analysis: A Critical Framework**

What is being termed here ‘PESTELE’ – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, Ethical – is a method of research used in a variety of ways within dress historical study. This mode of investigation correlates with object-based approaches, particularly material culture analysis.

PESTELE enables the researcher to establish context, thus situating discussion, which stems from the garment, within the political, economic, social, technological, cultural, legal, environmental. Where this framework initially appears to distinctly differentiate the different approaches to analysis, what must be acknowledged is the overlapping and interconnected nature of contextual factors. Though serving as a means of categorisation for analysis (Robson, 2002), as in, that PESTELE breaks down the approach to sources, the different elements are interpreted collectively in order to recognise the role of the various factors being considered. As such, the present study, a geographic and social case study of the makers and sellers of Utility clothing of the West Riding of Yorkshire, considers in reflection the political, economic, social, technological, cultural, legal, and environmental milieu of the region, and the nature of the Utility Clothing Scheme within.

PESTELE serves as a framework for the thesis as well as an analytical tool. In this way, due attention is paid not only to the governmental intervention of the Utility Clothing Scheme, serving to highlight the involvement of private business in producing and selling finished Utility garments. Conversely, through the geographic centring of this case study in the historic West Riding of Yorkshire, focus is also placed on the often-overlooked role of the manufacturers and retailers of the county in the Utility Clothing Scheme. As a result, through connected social case study, the distinct unique cultures of business practice of the West Riding textile trades are explored, evidencing the important role businesses had in the Scheme in active involvement rather than passive engagement with directives.

## **Phenomenology: A Critical Framework**

As outlined in the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* (2009), phenomenology has its origins within philosophy. Initially conceptualised by Edmund Husserl, the theory of what would become known as phenomenology was adopted into sociological thinking through early twentieth century existentialism (Scott and Marshall,

2009, p. 562). Influencing several areas of qualitative research methodology, phenomenological approaches came to be applied within sociological investigation, instigated by Émile Durkheim, as well as in other areas of the social sciences, and in the healthcare environment (Robson, 2002, p.195). The philosophical roots of phenomenology, and subsequent sociological developments, evidence incorporation as a critical investigative framework within this thesis.

Phenomenological research within sociological conceptualisation considers experience of and engagement with the world, as shaped by individual consciousness (Fulcher and Scott, 2011). Such individualism of perspective is formed, in itself, by the life-world, simultaneously objective and subjective in nature (Fulcher and Scott, 2011). This interaction, through engagement with others and the world in all its contextual surrounds, results in the constant reconstruction of interpretation. Hence, as each individual's active and passive communication with the environments around them is continual, the individual's lifeworld shapes each experience as uniquely lived (Fulcher and Scott, 2011). This can be interpreted as the experience of living – informed by various factors and unique to each person - rather than a shared, collective lived experience.

The life-world theory, developed by Husserl, can be understood as a concept which altered understandings of phenomenology from its original conception, with Husserl's shift to different subjects in the 1930s, which were prominently explored within the unfinished *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Small, 2001, xvii). However, as suggested by Loiskandl (2001), "Durkheim's social phenomena are constituted by the power of external coercion, by diffusion within the group, and by existence independent of individual forms they assume" (Loiskandl in Small, 2001, p. 149). By framing understandings of experience by the individual as subjective due to environmental factors, including social and cultural norms and interpersonal interaction, as understood by Alfred Schütz (Small, 2001), the phenomenological lens of research within this thesis accounts for working relationships, communication, and the influence of the wartime economy on the trade through the Utility Clothing Scheme. In this way, questions of consensus

and control of the public-private business model of the Utility Clothing Scheme are addressed, in that social constructions linked to wartime re-shaped reality (Loiskandl in Small, 2001). Therefore, the objective researcher must consider the possibility of many, if not countless, factors in interpretation under a phenomenological framework.

As suggested within Husserl's writings of the early twentieth century, with particular reference to reflective works compiled through the inter-war period which presented warning of imminent catastrophic potential, the importance of a phenomenological standpoint within this thesis is elevated (Buckley, 2019). Essays constructed both during the 1920s, in the period immediately following the end of the First World War which focussed on "Erneuerung" – "Renewal" (Buckley, 2019, p.6), and those composed through the 1930s, particularly Husserl's "crisis-texts" of 1934-1937, Buckley (2019) argues, demonstrate Husserl's certainty in the need for belief and reason, as well as morality (Buckley, 2019, p.8). These concepts correspond to the necessity of collaboration through the Utility Clothing Scheme; working together, the state and private businesses altered output in justified standardisation.

The framework employed within this thesis accounts for developments in phenomenology, as well as implementation of theory as method. In practice within research, a phenomenological framework engages exploration of individual encountering, understanding, and feeling in relation to phenomena (Robson, 2002). In the case of this thesis, this interpretation is collective, therefore enabling the analysis of a range of phenomena related to the period of investigation. Such an approach calls into question hegemonic accounts. Carr (2021) points to the collective, in what is described as the "human world", which encompasses both the individual and their experiences, as well as in interactions with environments objects (2021, p.144-145). Therefore, where notions of lived experience tend to insinuate commonality, through phenomenological conceptualisation it can be understood that reframing this notion towards experience as lived offers an alternate interpretation of a period of time. Within this, events are incorporated to understand "place" (Carr, 2007, p.503), which enables minority voices to be incorporated within historical

inquiry; phenomenology sets assumptions aside (King, 2022). Through investigation of the public-private business model of the Utility Clothing Scheme, the present study applies phenomenology as a framework to understand this currently under-researched area.

### **Phenomenology in Application: The Meaning and Value of the Lived Experience of the Utility Clothing Scheme**

The subjective and unique experience of the individual is central to phenomenology. Investigating experience means application of this approach is justifiably transferable to historical inquiry. As demonstrated by Carr (2021), who positions phenomenology as a method to historical inquiry, such application is of particular interest in bridging gaps in existing literature on the Utility Clothing Scheme through incorporation of interpretive perspectives founded in sociology. Though controls were in place, the experience of living associated with making, selling, and consuming cc41 garments must not be viewed in isolation. It can be understood that, through a phenomenological lens, individual and collective consciousness influence interpretation of situations, of subjects, of events; an individual experiences the shared life-world (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2009). Consequently, re-framing understanding through phenomenological interpretation of this social history, centrally of interpersonal relationships in navigation of social and cultural norms, as expressed by Schütz (Small, 2001), accounts for the different intersectional factors which shape experience.

Criticality in understanding, through the phenomenological framework, bridges what Husserl understood as “the world”, which is understood through a “natural attitude”, informed by experience (Carr, 2021, p.140). What must be integrated into investigation, however, are the circumstances which inform these attitudes. This approach, phenomenology, questions hegemonic accounts through “critique of knowledge, or a critique of experience” (Carr, 2021, p.141). In the present study, this disruption of mainstream narratives is in relation to

communication; in consensus and control under the public-private business model of Utility. Though the possibility of addressing all of the complex experiences of a large amount of stakeholders, select studies of participants within the Utility Clothing Scheme within the West Riding of Yorkshire enables this study to bridge gaps in existing literature.

Sociological theories surrounding the social construction of meaning around dress are important considerations to make when analysing Utility and the consumer. The same must also be acknowledged in identifying the relationship between the government and manufacturers and retailers. Understanding around the parameters of cc41, and early resultant associations with conceptualisations of standardisation, had definite impact on both industry and the public. It is therefore suggested that the public-private business model of Utility demonstrates connection with ideas presented by Husserl, in belief, reason, and morality – a collective consciousness and collective participation for the greater good (Buckly, 2019). The reality, as experience of living, calls into question the actuality of manufacturers and retailers passively conforming to government directive in practice. In this way, the present research considers the socially constructed world of cultural meaning. Within the parameters of Utility Clothing Scheme, as well as the work and practice of manufacturers and retailers, the objectively real world of such practice is investigated through sources such as balance sheets and governmental policy (through documents sourced on HANSARD, at WYAS (West Yorkshire Archive Service), and the Marks and Spencer Company Archive, for example).

Connected to the life-world theory, investigation of representative trade body meeting minutes and statements from these representative organisations imply emotion experienced with respect to regulation; it is clear that confusion, frustration, and uncertainty were voiced. Association with phenomenology as method, and drawing on object-based research of cc41 garments within this thesis, sensory and embodied aspects are incorporated into analysis (Kind, 2022). Clothing serves many purposes, one of which being communication. Barnes (2002) highlights the role of clothing as “nonverbal communication” (Barnes, 2002, p.29). This connects to a range of messages, including identity.

Such communications are suggestive of an imbued *langue*, of which a garment or means of dressing is a medium of communication (Eco, 2007, p.143). For clothing, “meanings are embedded in a broader cultural context”, connected to time and place (Castaldo Lundén, 2020, p.250). As a result, clothing is important to research, because it is a form of “cultural phenomena” related to experience (Barnes, 2002, p.28). As a communicative tool connected to the time in which it was first created and through its lifetime of use, garments prove central tools for understanding the past. As subjects of phenomenological investigation, these methods correspond with descriptive, contextual, and embodied information gathered to understand the phenomenon (King, 2022), that is, the Utility Clothing Scheme, through descriptive interpretation of the object’s transcendental surrounds (King, 2022), in other words, the Utility Clothing Scheme, Austerity, wartime economies, and the Second World War. As a result, this thesis shifts discussion towards a more contemporaneous positioning through a temporality-based approach to understanding, framed by individually lived, and uniquely shaped, experience.

Previous studies have left space for such inclusion of focussed industry and trade experience of the Utility Clothing Scheme (for example, Brown, 2014, Sladen, 1995), as they have hitherto, for the most part, charted the Scheme’s chronology. Where extant studies have overlooked the experience of living of the makers and sellers of cc41 garments, through connecting source material the applied phenomenological approach accounts for such previously underexplored and thus underrepresented historiography of Utility. Further, geographic and social study of the West Riding enables account of this influential production centre to be highlighted. Through engaging this approach to research, the meaning and value of the lived experience of Utility clothing will be brought to the fore, placing the active voice of industry and trade at its centre.

Phenomenology as a critical framework shapes understanding within the thesis. Viewing history through this lens also offers an epistemological foundation of how the period and content of investigation can be viewed - as being subjected to a time and place in the world. By applying other qualitative modes of

exploration alongside a phenomenological framework, including PESTELE, and, as a result, ethnography through case study, these methods, as both frameworks and analytical tools, aim to better understand the intrinsic temporality of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

## Gathering Evidence

Holdings of archives and museum collections present rich opportunity for the researcher. With written documents and surviving objects, these settings enable evidence gathering, with interpretation through PESTELE and phenomenological frameworks befitting of the material cultures of such primary sources. Archival-based research of written documentary sources form the foundation of the thesis. The written record, building from popular media sources, political discussion and legal implementation of Orders through the wartime period of the Scheme's enactment, though to surviving documentary sources of individual businesses, and trade body representative committees and groups. In initial identification of collections within the archive, the *Board of Trade Apparel and Textile Order, 1942, Designated Clothing Factories* document served as a central starting point for investigation. This "list of firms whose clothing factories at the addresses given were entered on the Designation List of 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942" (Designated Clothing Factories, 1942, p. 1) highlights not only the policy and requirements of Designation, but also the number of different clothing manufacturing sites in Britain which were connected with the Utility Clothing Scheme. Company names and addresses sourced from the List invaluable to this study; access to this document alone facilitated understanding of the reach and nature of the manufacture of Utility garments in the West Riding of Yorkshire itself, as well as other production centres, such as Manchester, Glasgow, and London, to name but a few. Stemming from this government-produced document, research into the practices and products of the Utility Clothing Scheme stemmed.

Identified clothing manufacturers from the Designation List, of which records were able to be accessed, served as branching points to cloth makers, from which makers-up were acquiring fabric, and retailers, to which select garment manufacturers were providing stock. Initial exploration of objects and documents within the collection, through catalogue searches or conversation with Curator or Archivist occurred. From these interactions, relevant documents and surviving Utility garments were identified for viewing, and study room visits were arranged. In examining these pieces, elements of established methodologies described later in this chapter<sup>5</sup> were applied in combination, under novel approach, namely, the PESTELE and phenomenological frameworks applied to the thesis.

## **Object-Based Research and Material Culture Analysis**

Objects are imbued with a wide-range of histories. As a record of a zeitgeist, garments therefore serve an important primary evidential source of a period's social, cultural, political, economic, and technological climate. Within research, the valuable role which apparel holds has developed to reinforce the place of such forms of study as a valid avenue of investigative approach. Again, this is long fought for by dress historians. When addressing the importance of applying dress historical perspectives such as object-based research, Taylor (2002) discussed how valuable areas of historical enquiry were often overlooked in the past in areas including economic and social history, due to the dismissal of object-based approaches to research concerning textiles and dress (p.64). However, since Taylor's writing, there has been much development of methodological approaches which centre the object (for example, those employed by Dudley, Barnes, Binnie, Petrov, and Walklate eds., 2012; Mida and Kim, 2015; Nicklas & Pollen, 2015; Riello, 2011; Watson, 2020; Woodall, 2020; Woodham, Smith, and Hess eds., 2020). This enables interpretation through the various lenses which the researcher applies (Riello, 2011). Testing theory

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<sup>5</sup> See *Mixing Methodologies: Approaching the Object for Analysis* for description for more in-depth explanation.

against new sources of evidence, the object within the present study is explored, in association with written records, under a phenomenological view of PESTELE.

Bide (2021) highlights the abundant possibility of using garments within historical enquiry, as “the intimate nature of the interactions between bodies and the making and wearing of garments and textiles” means “investigating the ways that bodies have shaped and marked objects can provide a means of exploring historic emotions in a way that gives the historical subject agency” (Bide, 2021, p.420). This strongly correlates with phenomenological theories, which have been incorporated into understanding of symbolic associations with dress (Entwistle, 2016, p.35), in that individual interaction with the object serves to shape interpretation. As such, this is characterised by personal perception of and engagement with a garment (Bide, 2021). The experience of living encapsulated within the garment itself, representing making, selling, and consuming through time.

Extant garments are used as a source site for investigation through bringing together elements of approach to object-based research and material culture<sup>6</sup> analysis. A range of garments, produced as part of the Utility Clothing Scheme in the West Riding of Yorkshire, serve as a starting point for discussion, as well as more specific comparative analysis between Utility garments produced under the period of investigation. Material culture analysis, therefore, an important means of exploring the Utility Clothing Scheme. Building on the detail kept in associated accessions records (Watson, 2020), analysis of the surviving Utility garment, therefore, is tacit in tracing actualities within history which challenge accepted conceptualisations of wartime.

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<sup>6</sup> Riello (2011) defines material culture as “the attribution of meaning to objects by the people who produce, use, consume, sell, and collect them.” (p.8867). Pearce (1999a) suggests the term serves as a collective noun (p.9).

## Collections and Collecting

Of the seemingly ‘hidden’ museum objects, safely stored in collections centres and archival rooms away from public display, Woodham, Smith, and Hess (2020) consider policy, engagement, and the fundamental emotional connection with surviving pieces of the past. The intrinsic importance of the object must not be diminished because of its status in store rather than on exhibition (Woodham, Smith, and Hess, 2020). Tangible connections are drawn through study by a range of individuals, including academics and in community engagement (Woodham, Smith, and Hess, 2020). Unspoken, emotional bonds to the past are affirmed through object handling, connecting the present hands with material culture of the piece (Woodall, 2020).

Woodall (2020) stated how “a small but growing body of work is focused on museum storage areas as sites for museological research” (p.82). Seemingly overlooked due to their hidden nature, being conserved in the collections store, the object itself can offer much as a primary evidential source, as well as the obvious attraction of the illustrative purposes it serves. After all, as Watson (2020) reflected “museum objects were meant to be seen in order to facilitate knowledge and understanding...” (p.155). This has been evident within present research, with objects usually held in storage being symbolic, as physical survivors of a time and space, of the realities of the wartime fashion economy.

Due consideration is paid to collections policies, and the reasons why certain garments may be represented whereas others may remain underrepresented. The Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A), for example, hold a collection of Utility clothing which provides a comprehensive overview of the different types of garments created for the Scheme, alongside fabric samples and items of Utility furniture. The collection itself has its beginnings in the pieces created by the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers in 1942, with the V&A holding the original prototypes created in 1942. Smaller archival and museum holdings related to the Scheme comprise more localised collections of such pieces. These items were commonly purchased within the county of residence, therefore being retailed by local traders, with many also being manufactured

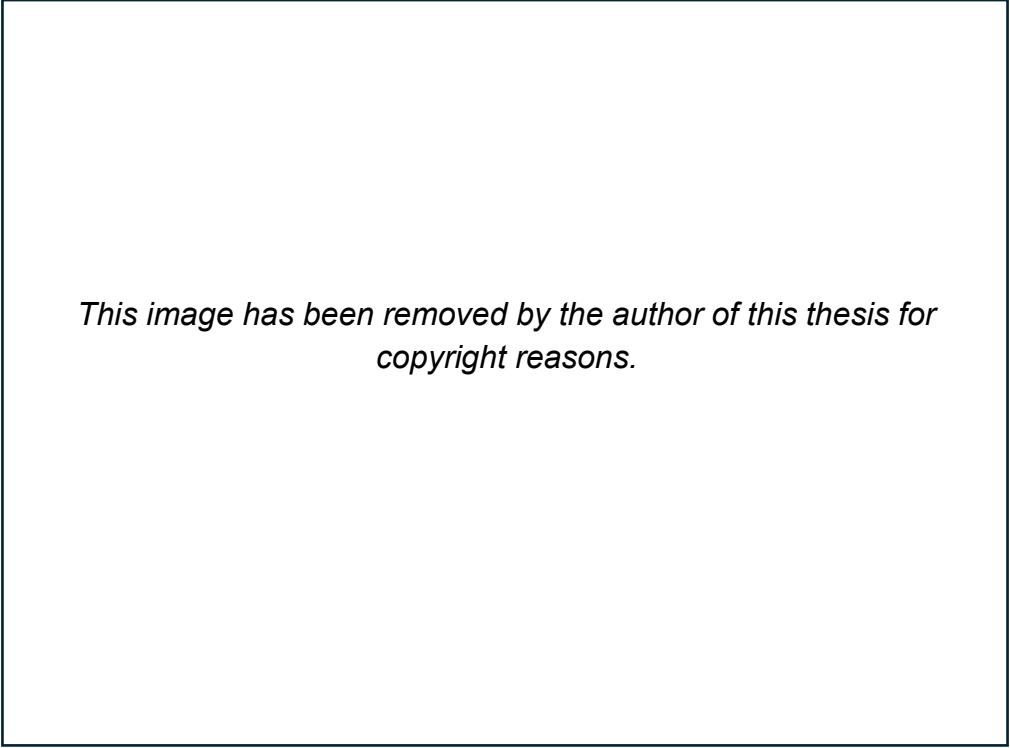
nearby. This, therefore, can be said to reflect the production, selling, and consumption of the region. For instance, the Yorkshire Fashion Archive (YFA), based at the University of Leeds, is formed by donations. The collection is made up of objects including clothing, accessories, magazines, and related items, which have been collected since the late 1990s (Evans, 2023). The collection reflects donors who lived and/or purchased pieces in Yorkshire through these periods; these may have been manufactured in the county, or elsewhere being retailed here (Evans, 2023). As a reference collection for use by students of the University, as well as researchers outside of the institution, the YFA's collecting policies surround "aiming to archive clothing and accessories produced or purchased in the Yorkshire area over the course of the last century. Born from a lack of information concerning the history of dress in the Yorkshire region, the archive aims to use fashion and clothing to chart the socio-cultural history of the area throughout the 20th century" (Hall, 2017, p.157). Cobb, Orzada, and López-Gydosh (2020) point to the importance of academic collections held by universities, in that they allow students to engage with materials in a different way to those held in museum collections, prompting research and practice-based engagement with objects, as well as holding a position from which discourse may stem (Cobb, Orzada, and López-Gydosh, 2020, p.3).

Protheroe (2005) points to the collections of the Marks & Spencer Company Archive, being largely made-up of written, documentary sources at the time of publication. However, the importance of other elements of the collection are far from overlooked as a resource utilised for this study. Forming an important and growing aspect of the collection, garments are a significant feature of the Archive's holdings which will have undoubtedly expanded in the almost 20 years since Protheroe's investigation of the objects held by the M&S Company Archive. In addition, the primary documentary sources held within the M&S Company Archive reveal much about the business' practices. Further, holding personal papers, correspondence, and other similar written material, the Archive can be cited as a key site of research. However, the 'closed' status of many documents means that research may be presently limited in breadth, the archive as keeper of long held secrets.

## A Binding Thread of the Thesis

The myriad factors which the cc41 garment represents as an article of clothing are characteristic of a period and a variety of associated conditions in which multiple areas of investigation intersect [fig. 3]. Though control and cooperation were hoped for outcomes, the extent to which this was the case must be questioned in the unique collaboration between government, industry, trade, and consumer under the Utility Clothing Scheme. These factors are imbued within the garments themselves. To address these factors, elements of Susan M. Pearce's approach to object analysis, alongside components of Jules D. Prown's material culture methods, are applied in object-based research of extant garments. The creation of a unique approach of mixing methodologies together combines with the developed theoretical frameworks of PESTELE and phenomenology.

As survivors of a time and place in history, objects themselves have the role of being recorders of primary evidence. As shown in the above discussion of use of extant clothing in their work, the application of object-based research in material culture analysis within this thesis is well founded, particularly through the frameworks employed here, namely, PESTELE. Closely linked to the individual wearer, extant clothing is a source site for plethora of histories, including retail, manufacture, technologies, society, politics, economics, culture, and environment. Garments, then, as active, rather than passive, records offer understanding of times, events, and individual and collective experiences of living through material culture. In application within the thesis, as a source-site for research, analysis of extant garments provides a unique opportunity to look 'inside', and 'outside, Utility clothing.



*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

Figure 3 - *Objects from object-based research session at Bankfield Museum, Halifax. 2021. [Photograph]. At: Halifax: Bankfield Museum. Image author's own.*

### **Mixing Methodologies: Approaching the Object for Analysis**

In approaching the object for the purposes of this study, the methodologies of Jules D. Prown and Susan M. Pearce are considered as starting points. Both established practitioners within object-based research, much of their enquiry into methods of working with surviving objects has laid the ground for developments in object-based approaches to evidence gathering. In promotion of object-based approaches to research, Prown stated that, despite the exhibition of objects in museum display, at the time of writing in 1982, there was a distinct lack of a thorough philosophy within the field pertaining to material culture enquiry (Prown, 1982). Though not the earliest historian to suggest scholarly use of the artefact as a source site for research, Prown's work highlights the importance of objects as primary sources (Mida and Kim, 2015). Prown noted burgeoning interest in object-based research and material culture within different areas of historical study out with art history (Prown, 1982). While

the origins of object-based approaches lie within art history, anthropology, and archaeology (Mida and Kim, 2015), material culture and object-based research have grown as widely used methods in a range of historical disciplines, having remained an important element within dress history. De la Haye and Wilson argue that such avenues of research can be regarded as established methodologies within dress history in that a dress historian would approach the investigation of material culture in its own right, at times with attention solely placed on analysis founded in object-based analysis (de la Haye and Wilson, 1999, p. 3).

As earlier defined, where Riello (2011) proposes material culture is connected to objects through ascribed meaning and their relationships to people. (p.8867). Prown (1982) defines material culture as intrinsically linked to research of people and place; in this way, “the study through artifacts of the beliefs – values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions – of a particular community or society at a given time” (Prown, 1982, p.1). In this way, both Riello and Prown’s characterisations of material culture strongly correlate with earlier discussions of phenomenology, commensurate with sociological approaches, as will be applied to the present study through the outlined developed frameworks.

Prown’s methods highlight the importance of the object as a central source. In *Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method* (1982), Prown suggests a three-stage method of approaching the object in order to ascertain detail on its history, in retrospective research following visual analysis [fig. 4]. In approaching the object, Prown lays out the following method, which begins with an initial *Description* of visible features of the object (Prown, 1982). This Description includes substantial analysis, comprised of taking measurements and assessing the movement of the artefact, and describing the content depicted (Prown, 1982, p.7-8). Description also includes formal analysis of elements such as colour and structure (Prown, 1982, p.8). The Description stage is then followed by *Deduction*, through which the researcher considers their own experience in relation to how they may relate to the object. In the case of a garment held within a museum, this stage identifies imagined wear, as well as handling, broken down respectively as sensory engagement, intellectual

engagement, and emotional response (Prown, 1982, p.8-9). The final stage, *Speculation*, is made-up of theories and hypotheses comprised of evidence compiled and considered from the earlier defined stages, followed by researcher engagement with a program of investigation by which written records and secondary sources are approached in order to gain further understanding of the object itself (Prown, 1982, p.9-10).

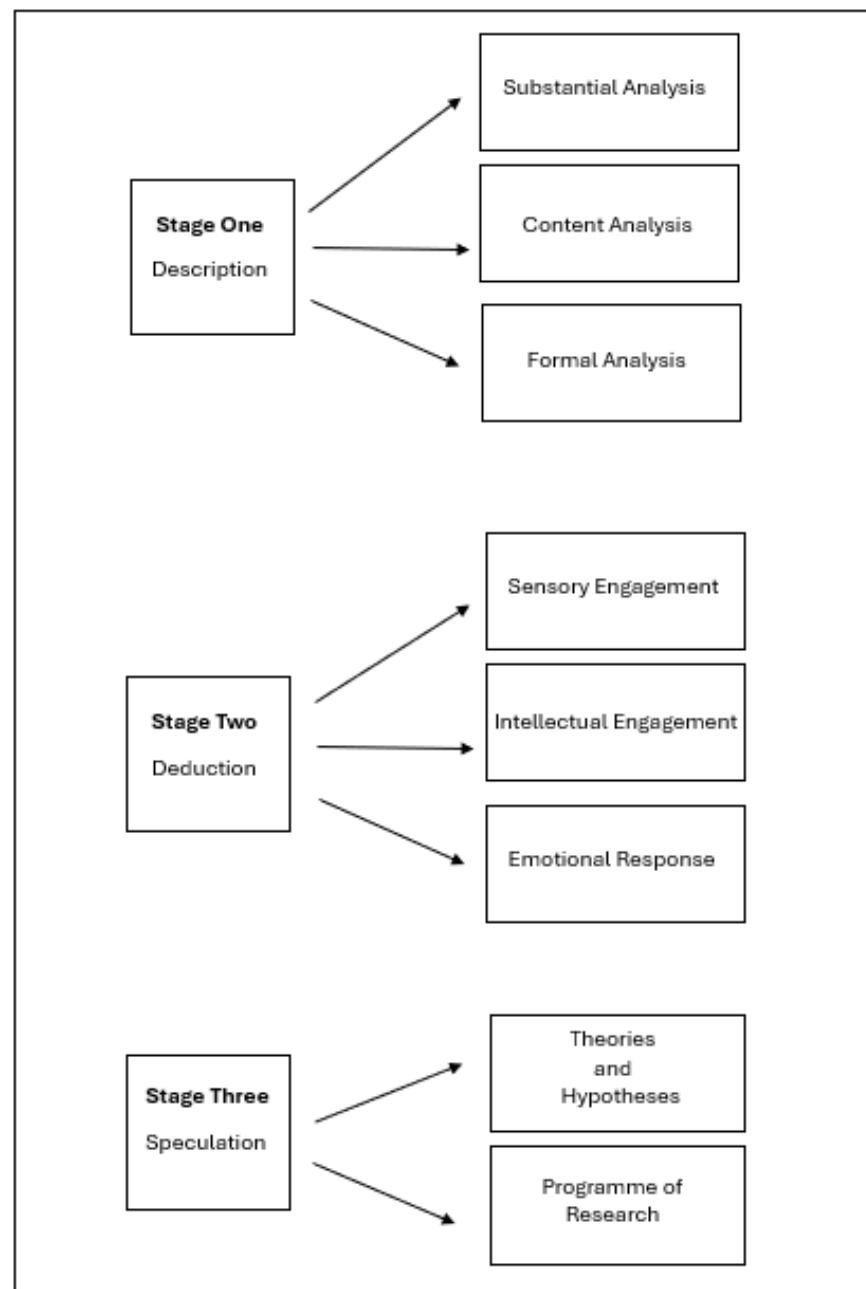


Figure 4 - Diagram showing Prown's (1982) three-stage methodology of object analysis. Information taken from Prown, J.D. 1982. *Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method*. *Winterthur Portfolio*, [online]. 17(1), pp. 1-19. [Accessed 30 August 2021]. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1086/496065>

Prown's example of chairs, referred to in *Style as Evidence* (1980), can be adopted when looking to the garment as a source within the thesis. In this article, Prown considers the 'anatomy' of the chair, connecting the 'human' elements of a piece of furniture with the "cultural values" (Prown, 1980, p.199) of human existence. This same structure may be transferred towards a piece of clothing, which may have arms, legs, a back, and so forth. Justifying the use of material culture and object-based approaches, Prown's writings cement the value of approaching artefacts as representatives for a wider range of people than that of the written record (Prown, 1982, p.3), a key aim of the present study.

Prown's consideration of epistemological concerns, personification, and meaning which may be taken from the object itself relate to the object and its interaction with the observer, whether that be past, present, or future. Susan M. Pearce incorporates further considerations in object-based research which appear less restrictive in interpretation. Pearce (1999b) acknowledges, and encourages, intersecting ideas and approach to source material in combination. This reflected how, as will be discussed, prior understanding of the subject and exploration of contextual factors are central to Pearce's method, a method which as a result also accounts for barriers and constraints which may potentially arise within research (Pearce in Pearce, 1999b).

Objects acquire connected meanings related to the contextual surroundings in which they were initially created and used, as well as over time (Pearce in Pearce, 1999b). Pearce (1999b) describes such unique "historical associations" of objects as being connected to the different ways understanding of objects and their histories is developed (p.19). Construction, consumption, and cultures of clothing are all valuable angles of investigative approach in history, therefore justifying how the inclusion of object-based analysis will prove advantageous to the present study.

In the *Objects as meaning; or narrating the past* (1999b), Pearce undertakes analysis of an infantry officers coatee jacket, dating from 1815, and worn at the Battle of Waterloo, which is held by the National Army Museum in London. In

analysing the jacket, Pearce outlines the essential initial establishment of context, situating the object “in time and space, and to describe the historical moment of which it was a part” (Pearce in Pearce, 1999b, p.19). Description of the contextual surroundings of the garment leads to greater comprehension of details such as the use of a piece of clothing, possible reasons for condition, cut and construction, and contemporaneous social inferences associated with this, for example (Pearce in Pearce, 1999b, 20-21).

Pearce continues by discussing the important implications of the *langue*, or the language and social conception of objects, things, and ideas of a time, as understood by Saussure and Barthes (Pearce in Pearce, 1999b, p.21). In applying this to material culture and establishing grounding for understanding the object, how meanings may be communicated, in the case of Pearce’s analysis of the coatee, and the present discussion of Utility clothing, through garments in combination with textual sources (Pearce in Pearce, 1999b, p.23). One must, therefore, consider contemporaneous interpretations and the importance of context.

Additionally, Pearce’s approach to object-based writings on the subject account for the museum and/or collection, in relation to collecting policies, their histories, and the impact this may have on the individual researcher’s ability to access certain materials or artefacts. This demonstrates how museum use and interpretation of objects can shape the reasons for collecting (Pearce in Pearce, 1999b, p.20). This particular element of Pearce’s approach to analysis is therefore beneficial to interpretation of the museum collection and is transferrable in application to the thesis.

Situating the object within research, Pearce accounts for historical understandings and modern interpretations, particularly the role of material culture, which, by placing the object at the centre of analysis, enables contextual analysis to inform interpretation [fig. 5]. The material cultures imbued within a piece of clothing, therefore, can be surveyed when analysis is coupled with exploration of documentary sources. Pearce also considers the implications of the *langue*, or the language and social conception of objects,

things, and ideas of a time, as Pearce acknowledges, is understood by Saussure and Barthes (Pearce in Pearce, 1999b). One must, therefore, consider contemporaneous interpretations and the importance of context. In applying this to material culture and establishing contextual grounding for understanding the object and how meanings may be communicated to the present discussion of Utility clothing, surviving garments prove central to analysis.

Accounting for contextual factors surrounding the implementation and application of the Utility Clothing Scheme, contemporaneous understandings and use of the Utility garment from manufacture through to sale and consumer acquisition, and, in both object-based and documentary research, museum and archive collecting policies and the ability to access different materials dependent on institutional procedures. In addition, Pearce's discussion of *Museums of Anthropology or Museums as Anthropology?* (1999) highlights the position of the museum-space as a site in which the visitor, collector, collection, and exhibition coincide. Pearce's article considers the influential role of collecting policies, driving the focus of collection content and thus, also serving to direct the researcher. By reflecting on these elements, Pearce accounts for the impact that such factors have upon access to historical artefacts and the resulting influence this may have on research avenues, elements which have been given due consideration within the present research.

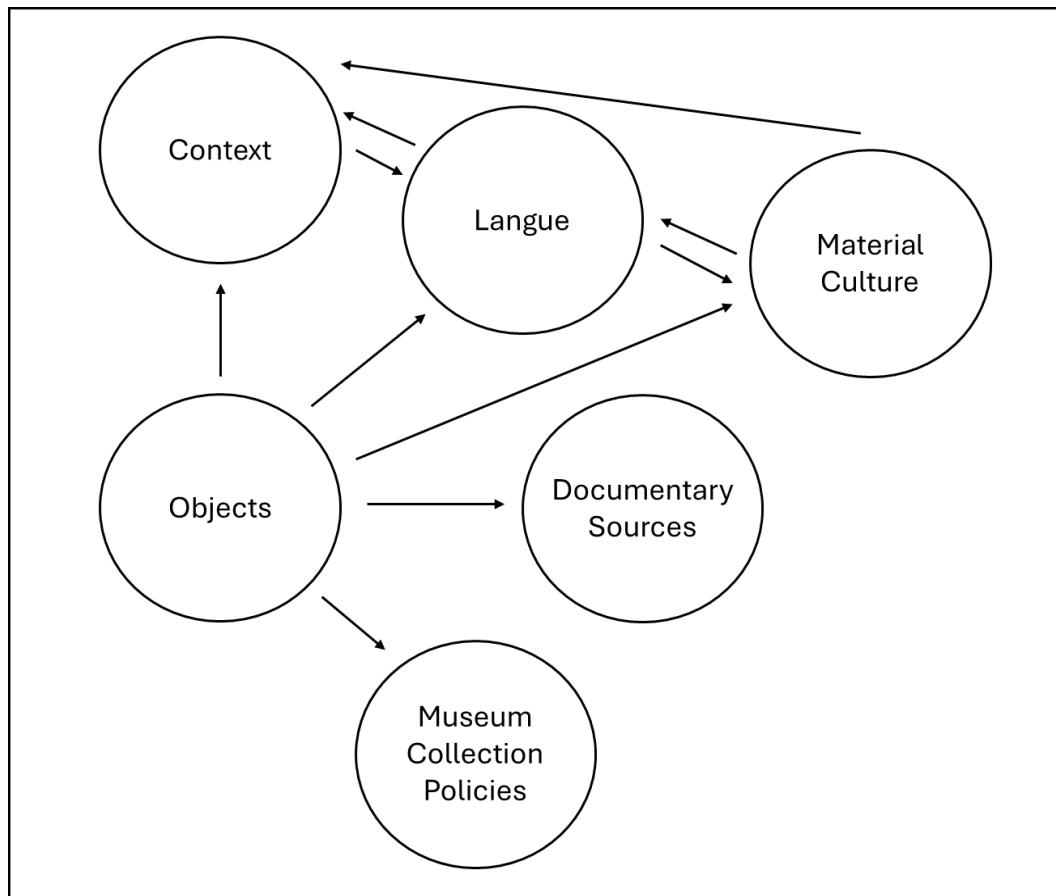


Figure 5 - Diagram showing interpretation of Pearce's (1999) methodology of object analysis. Information taken from Pearce, S.M. 1999b Objects as meaning; or narrating the past. in Pearce, S.M. (ed.) *Interpreting Objects and Collections*. London: Routledge, pp.19-23, and Pearce, S. M. 1999c. Museums of Anthropology or Museums as Anthropology?

*Anthropologica*. [Online]. 41(1), pp. 25-33. [Accessed 31 August 2021].

Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/25605915>

Approaching surviving garments as a central source site of analysis within the study will serve to provide unique insight into the Utility garment. While demonstrating the range of different garment types made and sold across the region, surviving Utility clothing also suggests a start point for material cultural investigation. Applying Pearce's method, when applied alongside material cultural approaches, phenomenology, and the developed PESTELE framework, was deemed most appropriate to this investigation. Established investigations of dress history draw on PESTELE, such as those noted by Prown (1980, 1982), Pearce (1999a, b, c), Taylor (2002). Through interpretation of wide-ranging evidence coupled with a phenomenological subjective viewpoint, this thesis offers a nuanced examination of the Utility Clothing Scheme, framed within the

contexts of the wartime fashion economy more broadly. Through case study, the investigative lens employed accounts for the unique and historic enterprise cultures of the West Riding of Yorkshire in understanding the realities of cc41 garment making and selling, in questioning consensus and control of the public-private business model.

## **Approach in Application**

Different interpretive methods have informed the approach to research, demonstrative of the interdisciplinary interrogation which underlies dress historical study. These are drawn from sociological enquiry, object-based research, and material culture investigations. Application in combination has enabled research aims and objectives to be addressed, accounting for social and cultural considerations, including politics, business cultures, wartime economies, and social shifts. As this thesis is concentrates on the early phase of the Utility Clothing Scheme in consensus and control, analysis centres on the public-private business model. Object-based research firmly focusses on cc41 garments in relation to policy, production, products, promotion, and purchase, through application of regulations between 1941 and 1945. Consequently, object-based research is closely limited to this timeframe.

The phenomenological lens through which the entirety of the study is viewed leads this enquiry to consider the contextual factors influential in the making and selling Utility clothing. This approach, which encompasses political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, ethical, is considered under what is abbreviated as PESTELE (Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, 2012). As a theoretical framework, PESTELE enables extant studies of the Scheme to be expanded upon, accounting for the various factors that shaped the public-private collaboration of the Utility Clothing Scheme in combination, through investigation of the range of primary sources approached through a phenomenological lens. This lens is applied through experience of living reflective of policy, communication, and manufacturer and retailer experience of collective consciousness.

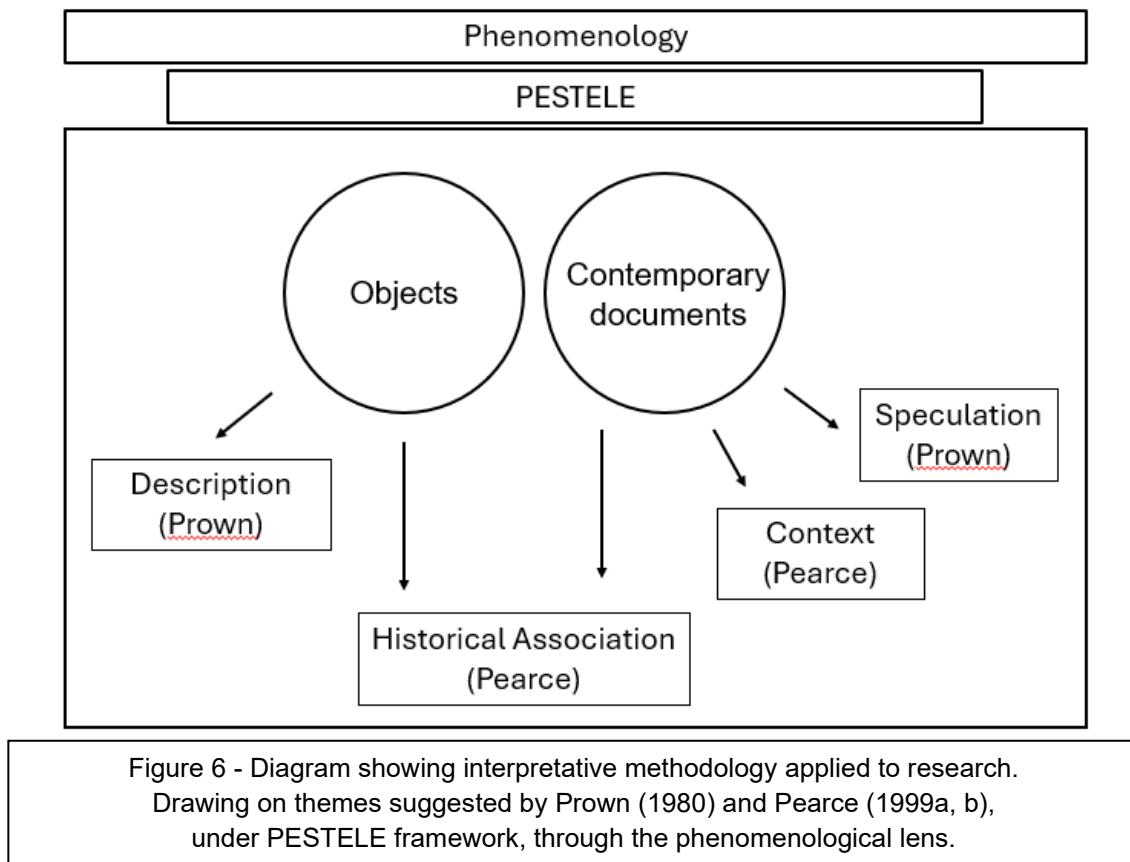
Where archival-based research of written documentary sources underpin the thesis, the incorporation of object analysis also form an important element of the study. From engagement with Utility clothing from collections and those personally acquired stems object-based research into archival documentary sources. Here, methodologies of garment analysis and material culture investigation identified by Prown (1980, 1982), and Pearce (1999a) emphasise the role of object-based research, which, within this thesis, is drawn from political debate to trade documents and garments [table 2]. By employing elements of techniques of object-based research practiced by Pearce (1999a) and Prown (1890, 1982), in interpretation through a back-and-forth process of understanding historical associations and the language imbued within objects (Pearce, 1999b) through a programme of Description and Speculation (Prown, 1982), cc41 garments have been used to develop insight around consensus and control. In addressing these objects as evidential sources, connoisseurship is another consideration; the collections approached each have their own collecting policies shaping the objects which are acquired (Pearce, 1999b). Each of these elements - frameworks shaping the thesis, methods of object analysis and object-based research, and understanding collections - further connect to PESTELE and phenomenology.

While informed by established research methodologies, these have not been applied in isolation, nor in entirety. In practice, where elements of methodologies outlined by Prown and Pearce are applied within the thesis in combination alongside sociologically informed frameworks, a philosophically unique approach to researching both written documents and extant garments was developed, demonstrating deviation from established methodological application [fig. 6]. Within research for the study, from visual analysis, Description of the object stemmed. Speculation founded in primary and secondary research was carried out concurrently, with contemporaneous documentary sources and surviving cc41 garments being addressed in multiplicity. This meant that evidence was gathered to address the research question, to understand the realities of consensus and control within the industry and trade of the West Riding, both through physical object and written

word. Such an approach became necessary for a period of the study, due to restrictions of access and travel relating to the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant impacts upon subsequent access to archival-based study. Concurrent research of object and document, did, however, prove positive to the study. Due to research findings, gathered information led to different angles of enquiry. With documentary sources and the object at the centre of research, interpretation under PESTELE and phenomenological frameworks accounted for the material culture of the object. Stemming from the garment, imbued with meaning, the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, and Ethical were investigated, with documentary evidence gathered in conjunction. Viewing each of these sources was undertaken through the phenomenological lens, incorporating consideration of place. In this way, different elements of PESTELE were founded within the different source types [table 2].

Type of Evidence	Method Application
Trade and workplace - trade body representative paper / pamphlet / meeting minutes; trade magazine / worker magazine; working record (ledger, accounts book, meeting minutes); workplace correspondence (letter [internal / external])	-Phenomenological -PESTELE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, Ethical)
Popular press – magazine; newspaper	-Phenomenological -PESTELE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, Ethical)
Mass Observation - diary entry; questionnaire	-Phenomenological -PESTELE (Political, Social, Technological, Environmental)
Government - informational pamphlet; government Act or Order; transcription of government debate / discussion (House of Commons and House of Lords)	-PESTELE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, Ethical)
Garment	-Pearce and Prown (object-based research, material culture) -Phenomenological -PESTELE (Political, Social, Technological, Legal, Ethical)

Table 2 - Table showing source types and applied methodological approach.



A range of different archives have been used to inform research. The archive and museum repositories approached from which primary, documentary source material informing the thesis was collated, are: the British Library (North), Heritage Quay (University of Huddersfield), Marks and Spencer Company Archive (Leeds), SunnyBank Mills (Leeds), University of Leeds Special Collections, and the West Yorkshire Archive Service (Bradford, Leeds, and Kirklees branches). Further, online archives have also been accessed: Digimap, Hansard, Mass Observation Archive (University of Sussex Special Collections [online]), the National Archives (Kew [online]), and ProQuest [online]. The archives outlined have provided written, documentary source material, both published and unpublished, maps, and working documents [table 2]. Maps are used to show the make-up of manufacturing centres, highlighting the production sites in Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, and Leeds, among others. Records of meetings held by representative bodies exemplify the debate and discussion held within industry and trade, whereas parliamentary records juxtapose private business concerns with governmental record. Working documents, such as

sample books and order books, show the types of cloth being made in the region. These documents also showed which of these textiles were being bought to be made-up into Utility garments, and who was buying these fabrics and therefore making clothing as part of the Scheme. Further, such documentary sources also concern the actuality of production in public-private partnership with the state, that there was much contestation amongst industry and trade, with considerable discussion taking place within the private sector itself, as well as from representatives with government actors, namely, the Board of Trade (British government department and committee of the Privy Council).

In addition to contemporaneous written documents, working documents, and industry and trade papers and publications, surviving Utility garments serve as central sources [table 3]. Details about clothing manufacture, in established practices as well as in the specific standards applied in the production of cc41 garments, are founded in object analysis and object-based research of Utility and non-Utility clothing. The clothing examined is made up of pieces held within local collections, namely Bankfield Museum (Halifax), Leeds Museums and Galleries, Marks and Spencer Company Archive (Leeds), and the Yorkshire Fashion Archive (University of Leeds), alongside garments personally acquired which were manufactured in the West Riding. Imperial War Museums and Victoria and Albert Museum (London) online collections have enabled provision of illustrative imagery of cc41 garments (including those of the collection created by the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, namely Morton, D., 1942, T.45 to B-1942) and have also contributed to comparative garment analysis [table 3].

Material objects were approached, first by immersive study defined by Description, which was followed by study of contextual material through Speculation (Prown, 1982) in order to address the elements summarised by the acronym PESTELE [table 3]. Consideration was then given to the life-world and broader implications of phenomenological place in which the object was originally used, through consultation of contemporary documentary sources. Accounting for the historical association and langue of the object, attention was

paid to the additional meaning which the object may have accrued as a keepsake, connotation suggested through understanding as a vintage item, and the position of the object within the museum collection (Pearce, 1999b).

Archive / Museum / Collection	Object / Document Type
Bankfield Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cc41 child's dress, 2007.252</li> <li>- cc41 <i>St Michael</i> 'corset' [girdle], 1961.325</li> <li>- cc41 <i>St Michael</i> 'corset' [girdle], 2007.255</li> <li>- cc41 <i>Delta</i> boots, 1961.768</li> <li>- cc41 <i>Manfield</i> slippers, 1961.781.80</li> <li>- cc41 shoes, 2021.209</li> <li>- cc41 <i>Watson &amp; Widd Ltd</i> men's shirt, 1982.823</li> </ul>
British Library (North)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industry periodicals (<i>The Drapers' Record and Tailor &amp; Cutter</i>)</li> </ul>
Digimap (The University of Edinburgh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historic Ordnance Survey maps</li> </ul>
Hansard (online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parliamentary Papers – House of Commons</li> <li>- Parliamentary Papers – House of Lords</li> </ul>
Heritage Quay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pamphlets (Labour and Socialist)</li> <li>- Secondary sources (books, catalogue recordings)</li> <li>- Industry periodical (<i>Textile Mercury and Argus</i>)</li> </ul>
Imperial War Museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal papers</li> <li>- Images of surviving cc41 garments in the collection</li> <li>- Official photography</li> </ul>
Leeds Museums and Galleries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conversational notes from Assistant Curator</li> <li>- cc41 <i>Burton</i>'s men's suit, LEEAG.2018.0038.0054</li> <li>- cc41 <i>Burton</i>'s men's suit, LEEDM.S.1987.0011.7</li> <li>- cc41 <i>Burton</i>'s men's suit, LEEDM.S.1987.0011.15</li> <li>- cc41 green wool dress, E.1977.0024.A</li> <li>- cc41 ladies 'wedding' suit, E/24/1977/12</li> <li>- cc41 <i>Shibden Valley Garment</i> child's dress, LEEAG.2018.0038.0044</li> <li>- Ladies two-piece <i>Philip Leslie</i> costume, E.85/1977/8</li> <li>- Ladies two-piece Anna of Leeds suit, LEEAG.1988.0033.0004</li> <li>- Men's <i>Matthais Robinson</i> jacket, LEEAG.2019.0227.0009.0002</li> <li>- Men's <i>Matthais Robinson</i> waistcoat, LEEAG.2019.027.0002</li> <li>- Men's wool greatcoat, E/187/1981/2</li> <li>- <i>Shibden Valley Garment</i> child's dress, LEEAG.2018.0038.0040</li> <li>- Summer dress, LEEAS.2018.0038.0036</li> <li>- Wool <i>Mitchell Walker</i>'s coat, LEEDM.E.1981.0187.0002</li> </ul>
Marks and Spencer Company Archive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accounts</li> <li>- cc41 <i>St Michael</i> coat, T1941/86</li> <li>- cc41 <i>St Michael</i> dress, T/1941/48</li> <li>- cc41 <i>St Michael</i> dress, T1941/52</li> <li>- cc41 <i>St Michael</i> shirt, detachable collars (x2) and original packaging, T1941/10</li> <li>- cc41 <i>St Michael</i> shirt with original tag, detachable collars (x2) and cufflinks, T1941/21</li> <li>- Paper bag, T100/1/9</li> <li>- Reports</li> <li>- Staff Bulletins and Training papers</li> </ul>
The National Archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Board of Trade Apparel and Textiles Order, 1942. Designated Clothing Factories</i></li> <li>- <i>Make-do and Mend. 1943. [Pamphlet]. At: Kew [online]. The National Archives.GII.2005.2.3</i></li> </ul>
Personal Collection [Author]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ration books and Utility-related documents and pamphlets</li> <li>- Cc41 <i>Alexandre</i> jacket</li> <li>- Cc41 <i>John Hawkins &amp; Sons Ltd.</i> apron</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cc41 child's coat</li> <li>- Cc41 <i>Clarks</i> shoes</li> <li>- Cc41 <i>Clarks</i> shoebox</li> <li>- Cc41 furniture catalogue</li> <li>- Cc41 labels</li> <li>- Cc41 <i>Marbeck</i> jacket</li> <li>- Uncut cc41 cotton fabric</li> <li>- Uncut cc41 cotton fabric</li> </ul>
ProQuest [online]	-Historical Newspapers
SunnyBank Mills	-Working documents (sample swatch books)
University of Huddersfield Library	-Periodicals ( <i>British Vogue</i> )
University of Leeds Library	-Contemporaneous publications (Clothing District Directory (West Riding), Directory of Bradford and Suburbs, <i>Leeds Co-operative Record</i> )
University of Leeds Special Collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Business archives</li> <li>-Industry and trade body representative committees and associations minute books</li> </ul>
Victoria & Albert Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Images of surviving cc41 garments in the collection, namely Morton, D., 1942 (designed). <i>Original no.16 Skirt Suit</i>. T.45 to B-1942.</li> </ul>
WYAS Bradford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Conversational notes from Archivist</li> <li>-Industry and trade body representative committees and associations minute books</li> </ul>
WYAS Kirklees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Catalogues, magazines, and press cuttings</li> <li>-Company Director's meeting minute books and personal papers</li> <li>-Industry and trade body representative committees and associations minute books</li> <li>-Working documents (account books, balance sheets and accounts, cash paid books, index books, letter books, order books, Paper patterns / cutting diagrams pay roll books, private ledgers, purchase accounts / purchase books, trading accounts, sales day books, pattern books / sample swatch books, wage books)</li> </ul>
WYAS Leeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industry and trade body representative committees and associations minute books</li> <li>-<i>Montague Burton Collection</i></li> <li>-<i>Marbeck Collection</i></li> <li>-Working documents (account books, balance sheets and accounts, cash paid books, index books, letter books, order books, pay roll books, private ledgers, purchase accounts / purchase books, trading accounts, sales day books, pattern books / sample swatch books, wage books)</li> </ul>
Yorkshire Fashion Archive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Conversational notes from Archivist</li> <li>- Cc41 apron, 1940-005</li> <li>- Cc41 leather gloves, 1940-180</li> <li>- Cc41 leather gloves, 1940-181.1-2</li> <li>- Cc41 men's underwear, 1940-029</li> </ul>

Table 3 - Table showing thesis primary source material and associated collections.

## **Positioning Policy, Production, Products, Promotion and Purchase – Why the West Riding?**

Selection of the West Riding for analysis within this thesis stemmed from object-based research of the Marlbeck jacket. by locating the manufacture of this garment to Leeds, the connectivity of the wider West Riding region proved integral to understanding its manufacture and sale. Located within the northern English county of Yorkshire, the West Riding<sup>7</sup> was recognised for its historical associations with the woollen textile industry. The area also held considerable connection to wider cloth and clothing production, such as in the fabric recycling of shoddy (Shell, 2014, p.375), and prominence in tailoring (Honeyman, 2011). One of three regions formerly divided into the Ridings of Yorkshire – alongside the North and East Ridings – the geographic location and environs of the West Riding situated its inhabitants in the position to produce fabrics on a domestic scale of manufacture, for some time prior to the beginnings of industrialisation in Britain in the eighteenth century (Fowler, 2016). Made up of more urbanised cities and trading towns that would develop into industrial districts (Smail, 1999), and rural areas of countryside and agricultural land, the topography and environs of the West Riding were essential to the region's position of power within the textile industries (Gregory, 1982) and as an area with multiple, often specialised, trading centres (Gregory, 1982) through into the twentieth century. Access to resources such as coal, farmland, and resultant sheep's wool, connectivity in rivers, a growing interconnected canal system, road, and rail, positioned the West Riding in an environmentally significant position for the production and sale of textile products of the region. Links to other centres, particularly connections to markets, including fashion markets, which developed alongside growth in the scale of manufacturing and trading in the region aided this positioning (Smail, 1999).

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<sup>7</sup> The term 'West Riding' itself is historic. The region was in existence until 1974. Under the period of investigation, 1941-1945, the West Riding of Yorkshire encompassed the cities and towns of Bradford, Halifax, Hebden Bridge, Huddersfield, Leeds, and Wakefield

Further, the historical ties of Britain to unionisation and workers' rights is well documented. The long connection which the West Riding held with such causes and action, similarly, has been charted. Industry and trade in the region were strongly intertwined with politicisation; unionisation associated with textile and garment manufacturers and retailers was necessitated by practical industrial subdivision. The present research draws attention to the fact that, with the establishment of centres for the trade of textiles in the county, the formation of representative bodies for both manufacturers and sellers of textiles and clothing was imperative. Bodies such as these, numerous in their organisational representation, accounted for the varied manufacturers apparent in the West Riding. Examples of such groups are listed in the below table [table 4], which were present alongside more concentrated organisations such as the Bradford Manufacturers Federation Central Board and the Leeds Retailers Association, to name a few. Many of these bodies were in practice for some decades, if not centuries, and remained in action throughout the period of the 1941-1945 conflict and beyond. Undoubtedly, the connectivity of the West Riding trades, through the afore mentioned networks of practice, were fundamental to such organisations, shaping them to represent these features of the region's textile trades and industries.

<b>West Riding Industry Representative Bodies</b>
Central Committee on Trade Terms
Bradford and District Fine Cloth Manufacturers Association
Heavy Woollen District Manufacturers Association
West Yorkshire and Lancashire Wool (and Allied) Textile Federation
Wool Textiles Association Committee
Wool Textile Manufacturers Federation Ltd.
Woollen and Worsted Trades Federation

Table 4 - Table illustrating a range of different representative bodies present in the West Riding fabric manufacturing industry into the twentieth century.

Bodies representing the textile trades and related manufacturing and retailing were influential in securing rights of workers in these areas of industry, debate and fight which continued throughout the Second World War, particularly under the standards of Utility. The involvement of representative associations was important to the textile trades located in the city prior to the war, however, their role only increased under Utility. The foundational class consciousness of the textile industry and trades hold strong historical links with ties created through the established networks of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Connections to the political histories of the region, within trade unionism and politicisation in northern towns, cities, and counties more widely, relate to, and must be acknowledged as, influential in manufacturing and retailing practices in the West Riding (Fowler, 2016). As will be further explored in this thesis, the relevance of such labour histories to the understanding of wartime restrictions and the involvement of the trades within the Scheme highlight the collaborative working which was required to ensure the 'success' of the Scheme. Such investigation forms an essential element of analysis of public and private collaboration. Between government and business, much debate arose which as a result concerned fulfilment of the Utility Clothing Scheme's aims. Therefore, arguments will be framed around the realities of consensus and control, posing strong links to the region's political character. To further demonstrate the foundations for the involvement of, and active debate amongst, producers and sellers of Utility clothing in challenging regulations set out by government; some of these influential elements are considered in Appendix One.

The textile industries of the West Riding and its powerful networks of manufacture and exchange are exemplified by the wide variety of fabrics and finished garments made and sold in the county in the period under examination in this thesis and centuries prior. Concentrated in established cities and towns, manufacturing became associated with certain textiles in product specialisation. The connections to textile manufacture, in particular, the region's work with woollen fibres, and the related importance of wool cloth to the Utility Clothing Scheme further justified investigation of Utility within the region [further

contextualisation is provided in Appendix One, and understanding of regional specialisation presented within the main analysis of the thesis].

## **Concluding Rationale**

The nature of clothing, appropriate ways to study clothing (specifically the approach to research taken within this study) and what we already know about the Utility Clothing Scheme have been brought together. Understanding of a range of different approaches used within dress historical research, or more widely within humanities research, informed the choice of approach to and application of methods within research for the thesis. While some of the methods employed are indicative of practice within the field of historical research, others have been developed through novel, experiential approach to the study, with a basis in established anthropological, sociological, and dress historical enquiry. Through providing definitions and discussion of different methodological approaches used, those selected for application within the present study are justified, alongside consideration to connect phenomenological and PESTELE frameworks as applied in approach to evidential sources.

Outlining the choice and use of methods in this study within this chapter has enabled the clarification of a pathway through research. A qualitative approach to the social and geographic case study, which also employs some quantitative analysis, leads research. Guided by PESTELE as a framework, the study builds material culture and object-based approaches to understanding consensus and control in creating cc41. As an analytical tool, PESTELE therefore facilitates account of often overlooked areas of analysis in relation to the Utility Clothing Scheme. This is particularly with reference to the public-private business model of the Scheme, and the role of different centres of manufacture of Utility clothing and clothing. Within this study, application of elements of established methods of object-based research demonstrates nuance. Using the Utility garment as a central source of analysis alongside approaching underrepresented archival

material offers additional evidence to existing debates concerning the Utility Clothing Scheme, contributing further justification to the study.

Viewing contemporaneous objects and documentary sources through a phenomenological lens, the hitherto often under explored, and therefore underrepresented aspects of dress and textile research, are brought to the fore. Such research is with particular reference to the wartime clothing industries and trades more broadly. Phenomenology in application to this investigation therefore can be rationalised not only through broadening understanding of the Scheme itself, but through the use of this theory as an investigative approach and critical framework. The application of phenomenology in interpretation of PESTELE seeks to account for the experience of living as adverse to existing debates around the Scheme. Such literature broadly addresses a defined and collective lived experience, something which, this thesis argues, may be quite different to these existing interpretations of the Scheme.

Further, through employing methodological approaches which bring together a range of primary source material in order to address the role of manufacturers and retailers in the Utility Clothing Scheme, from written records to surviving examples of Utility clothing, this investigation will highlight the role of one distinctive northern centre in the wartime fashion economy. Through geographic and social case study, the aim of building understanding of the unique business cultures of the West Riding and the significance of this within the context of the Utility Clothing Scheme, also enable to exploration of the public-private business model enacted through the Scheme. Further, by analysing surviving garments from the period, due consideration will be paid to the actualities of Utility clothing production, particularly evidenced through comparative inquiry of Utility and non-Utility garments produced and/or sold in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Further, the role of the West Riding of Yorkshire in the manufacture and sale of cc41 garments has, to date, remained overlooked. Through case study, the underrepresented realities of consensus and control within the Scheme are brought to the fore. Research for this thesis, founded in written documents and extant objects, therefore bridges different primary sources

together to address previously under explored realities of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Policy**

The nation's fixed-price food basket has now a companion suitcase  
(The Manchester Guardian, 29 December 1941, p.4).

On the announcement of the outbreak of war with Germany by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939, it was unknown how conflict would shape society. Altering life as it was known in countless ways, this Second World War established not only a new form of modern warfare, but also instituted changes on the home front, across a plethora of sectors. The economy, manufacturing and retail, and more broadly society as a whole, was shaped for decades to come by changes implemented in the period of conflict between 1939 and 1945. Not least of these changes were those introduced within the textile and garment industries, serving to shape the sector even to the present day.

This chapter presents a reflection on the establishment of the Utility Clothing Scheme. In understanding the meaning imbued within the 'cc41' label, applied to the Marlbeck jacket [fig. 7] as with all Utility clothing, this chapter draws on a range of evidence, including that from Parliamentary debates, the Directorate of Civilian Clothing, popular press, and trade publications, as well as trade body meetings, personal papers, internal correspondence, and working documents, it provides an overview of government debate and intervention in the Scheme, including analysis of the various Acts and Orders which eventually underpinned the Scheme and ensured its success. Chapter three also considers the Scheme in action as practical system and acknowledges reactions to its implementation. In this way, analysis adds new perspectives to our understanding of Austerity

regulations, the Making of Civilian Clothing [Restriction] Orders, the Limitation of Supplies, and therefore, the Utility Clothing Scheme. Importantly, by concentrating on how the new regulations enacted by the Scheme affected clothing manufacture and retail, this chapter argues that the public-private business model was necessary to the Utility Clothing Scheme. The impacts Utility had on the textile and clothing industries, as well as consumers, are explored within this chapter by understanding government and business perspectives, as well as those published within the press. Through identifying the implementation of the Scheme, initial reactions to cc41 are introduced, in understanding interpretations of Utility clothing. Thus long-held assumptions about the Concentration of Production, Designation of clothing factories, Clothes Rationing, and the Utility Clothing Scheme with respect to notions of national identity, and what this meant during wartime are investigated.

Both businesses and consumers were hesitant to passively accept controls without their own interpretation providing insight into the realities of wartime regulations. This, too, was the case within Parliament, as will be investigated within this chapter, demonstrated through evidence sourced from examination of Parliamentary debates, trade publications, trade body meetings, internal correspondence, and working documents. Within extant studies, examination of parliamentary debate itself is often overlooked, leading to questions around the establishment of the Utility clothing Scheme and its impacts on industry and consumer. While it is necessary to address parliamentary debate and the Acts and Orders put in place, the one-sided, top-down history this presents could implicitly portray consensus, cooperation and conformity. This, however, was not necessarily the case for Utility in practice. Therefore, understanding government debate, as well as accounting for the somewhat more hidden histories imbued within the Scheme from the perspective of those working to make and sell Utility clothing is essential to understanding the industries of manufacture and fashion at this time.



Figure 7 – Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. ‘cc41’ Utility label, Utility jacket.  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author’s own collection.

## Fashioning the Lessons of War – Reasons for the Utility Clothing Scheme

Markets which had been expanding prior to the First World War were met with problems during the conflict. As efforts were focused on the war, clothing civilians came second place (Brown, 2014, p.7). A reduced workforce formerly involved in clothing manufacture now at the war front coupled with diminishing access to, and deteriorating supplies of raw materials and rapidly rising costs, which were pricing the majority of consumers out of the market, meant inevitable shortages of both textiles and finished garments were on the increase. However, by 1917, the Government had outlined plans to produce what would be known as ‘Standard Cloth’ in response to scarcities in clothing for civilians (Brown, 2014, p.11). These elements undoubtedly proved influential in the Government’s implementation of policies to circumvent such shortcomings early in the Second World War.

In addition, contractual obligation of manufacture set by previously indicated British government requirements of the efforts of the First World War, along with the changes to import and export due to this conflict, were in many ways reflected in the adjustments to industry and trade through the Second World War. Within the textile industries of the First World War this was namely in turning production over to the manufacture of materials for uniforms, as well as heavy-weave linens (Ollerenshaw, 1999). In this way, the global linen industry shifted immeasurably. Despite the government intervening in the industry through putting work to tender, the overarching influence of the conflict resulted in reduced access to raw materials, changes to transportation routes and trading connections, along with increased prices (Ollerenshaw, 1999). The creation of different committees and boards, and appointment of individuals to oversee these different aspects was necessary to facilitate continuation of industry, ensuring access so that production was maintained. Ollerenshaw (1999) states:

Between March 1915 and the end of the war the British government purchased 163,000 tons of flax with a value of £20 million. As an experiment in state control, it has to be seen as successful, though contemporaries recognised that an unusually high degree of faith in the four key flax-buying firms and in the officer-in-charge of transport was necessary for its success. In other words, the normally stringent rules of control by the Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee could not apply and the authorities had to accept the word of the chartered accountants appointed to oversee the operation. (Ollerenshaw, 1999, p.73).

This sentiment alone demonstrates how attempts by government to control an industry may have been usurped by the necessary practices of such industries, and the contexts within which they were attempting to manufacture. Although Ollerenshaw's analysis accounts for the First World War, these concepts which must be applied in understanding the Utility Clothing Scheme, in relation to collaboration between the government and private businesses.

By the outbreak of the Second World War, 'a war to end wars' had penetrated the collective public consciousness, and it was the Board of Trade that needed

to ensure the civilian experience, which had altered the ability to access even the basics (food, clothing, and other manufacturing requirements) was not a recurrent feature presented in the Second World War. Comprehensive reorganisation of the economy during the Second World War was required on a national scale, which, as noted by Cohen (2012), could only be achieved with backing of civilians (Cohen, 2012, p.18). It is here that the involvement of the textile trades influence in making the Utility Clothing Scheme a success must be recognised; the public-private business model was essential. Collaboration between the government (public) and businesses (private entities) was central to the Scheme's functioning. Therefore, approaches to ways of working, necessitated by wartime access to material resources, required cooperation between the state and manufacturers and retailers in different areas, including employment, garment construction, and retail pricing. As a model of public policy, the Scheme sought to restrict supply and implement control of manufacture, which could only be obtained by collaborative working through consensus. It is essential to acknowledge that choice was still very much apparent in the consumer market. Choice was very much considered, as compliance with regulations connects to, as Parkins (2002) notes, "the capacity for consent" integral to notions of social responsibility, collective consciousness, and "modern citizenship" (Parkins, 2002, p.1). As a model of public policy, the Utility Clothing Scheme encapsulated control of manufacture and restrictions on supply but also provided an element of choice in the consumer market.

The Utility Clothing Scheme must therefore be positioned as part of a shift towards democratic equality of access. Policies on welfare through the inter-war period and into the Second World War must be understood as a mixed economy, in a combination of public, state provision, and private, voluntary resource. Interventionist measures which followed the end of the Second World War were dramatically distant from those which came before the conflict, bringing about changes in housing and the National Health Service, for example. In discussion of societal inequality between the 1930s and 1950s, Hennessy (2015) reflects on Tawney's (1931) insistence of "a powerful, British impulse towards inequality" (p.19). Hennessy conversely described how, in the twenty first century, this has lessened greatly due to collective, directional

resentment (Hennessey, 2015, p.20). The role of such meritocracy must be studied in contextualising the wartime economy, in access to goods and societal positioning, something which persisted even under Utility.<sup>8</sup> Writing in 1958, Young proposed collective action to dismiss social stratification, in idealised equality of opportunity in *The Rise of the Meritocracy 1870-2033*. However, with the associated judgement and moral considerations that remained prevalent, individuals were positioned in alignment with social perspectives on gender, age, and socioeconomic status, rather than in achieving equity (Scott and Marshall, 2009). Such views remained pertinent through supposed wartime 'democratisation' of access, as access remained founded in monetary wealth. Despite moves towards widened access, standardised production and retailing, and the collective notions of identity in wartime, even Utility clothing purchased first-hand, remained out of reach for many.

Government involvement in industry and trade, through implementation of Austerity measures,<sup>9</sup> connected to wartime economic policies to making the most of resources (both in labour and materials), posed societal meritocratic determination, founded in socioeconomic factors which impacted access to goods (i.e. in consumption). Supposed equalising measures, as a result, were not felt universally for the trade and for customers. For example, despite the reach of Austerity in the Second World War, the *Social Insurance and Allied Services Report*, commonly referred to as the *Beveridge Report* compiled by Sir William Beveridge (1942) serves as a poignant reminder of the inequality which remained in Britain. Within the Report, Sir Beveridge identified what were dubbed 'Five Great Evils' – Disease, Idleness, Ignorance, Squalor, and Want – strong descriptors, which identified the disparity in society. With post-war reconstruction in mind, the role which Austerity measures, such as Rationing and Utility, had in bringing about certain levels equality brought with them hopes

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<sup>8</sup> In accordance with Young's (1958) original coining of the term, a meritocracy may be defined as attribution of societal position due to supposed effort and capability, connected to societal perspectives of the time; as such, this expression is greatly disputed (Scott and Marshall, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> 'Austerity' during the Second World War was an overarching term which encompassed wartime economies in manufacture, retail, and consumption of goods. Austerity covered such measures as clothes Rationing and the Utility Clothing Scheme.

for equity, in implementation of services such as in healthcare, through the National Health Service (Beveridge, 1942).

It was deemed necessary to intervene in creation, sale, and consumption of goods in wartime, and therefore, measures with ideals of democratisation were put in place. Though these measures did not reach everyone – with some people unable to purchase first-hand goods – controls placed on manufacturing and retailing did serve to regulate garment production and sale. Further, as an instantly recognisable marker, the cc41 label would also reach the second-hand market.

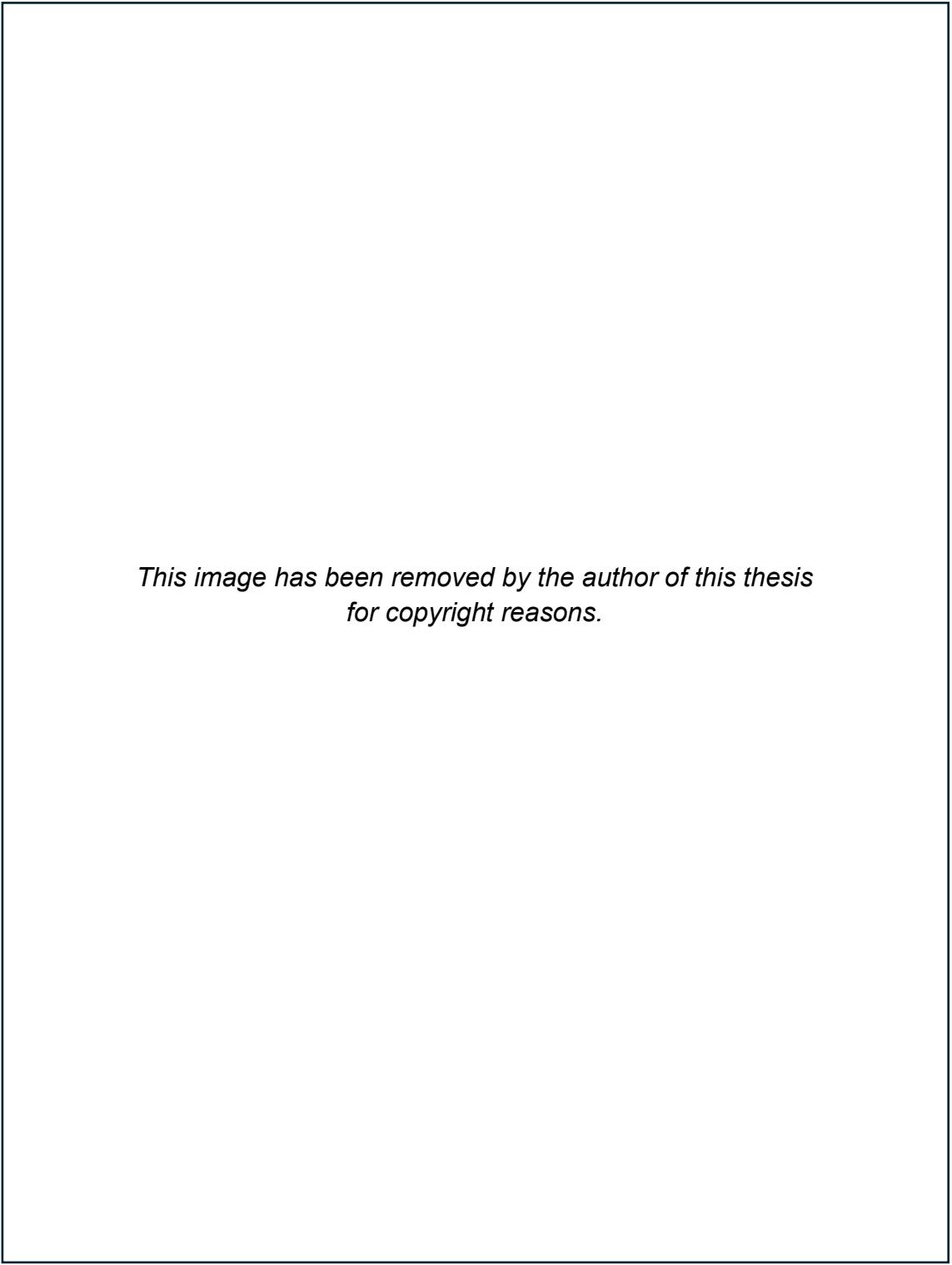
### **Textile tools of Conflict**

The high importance of morale on the Homefront was acknowledged by the government from the outset (Kirkham, 2005). A variety of tools were developed to communicate ideas, regulations, and important messages to the public. As political tools of communication, overt or covert, supportive or subversive (textiles themselves had by the Second World War long been used as implements of propaganda internationally). Through fabric, messages can be articulated in a range of different ways (Barnard, 2002). Items worn, such as the tricolour cockade, most commonly remembered for its wear during the French Revolution, informed of connection through the wearing of the colours of the French national flag (Olson, 2015) [fig. 8]. This method, through colour, pattern, and overall design, printed or woven into cloth, continued to be used during the 1939-1945 conflict. The meanings of such fabrics of the nation in Britain invoked notions of national pride, of morale, and also to share warning. As a surviving example, this scarf, designed by Fougasse, features a print littered with propaganda poster designs, highlighting the necessary awareness of enemy information gathering tactics which was required by civilians [fig. 9]. National pride also included promotion of necessary wartime restriction, such as frugal use and recycling of materials. The scarf shown in figure 10, demonstrates the prominence of recycling throughout the conflict; the design by Jacqmar features several popular propaganda sayings of the period, pertaining

to material waste and re-use [fig. 10]. Scarcity of essential resources resulted in a range of government campaigns.

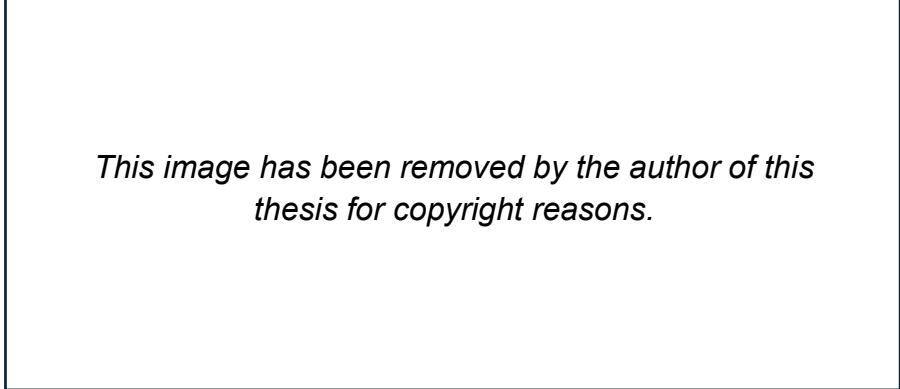
Patriotism was also founded in garments and textiles manufactured overseas. Produced as art of an international allied fundraising campaign, this dress, made from fabric which features a repeat pattern with the slogan “There’ll Always Be An England” printed in reverse [fig. 11], was one of a collection created to raise vital funds for the British-American Ambulance Corps; other mottos applied included “Friends Across the Sea” and “Bravo Britain” (ASU FIDM, 2012). Textiles manufactured for the war effort in use other than clothing demonstrated connection to propaganda in less overt manner. Silk fabric, manufactured by Shiri Rama Silk Mills Ltd., Bangladesh for use in parachute manufacture, included small indicators of support. The pattern applied to the silk itself meant that the fabric could be re-used [fig. 12]. Incorporated into the selvedge of the fabric, the “V for Victory” mark further imbued this textile with messaging in support of the allied forces [fig. 13].

Clothing and textiles therefore played an integral role as a tool of conflict in several different ways, including the promotion of patriotism, camaraderie, and national identity through overtly displaying support for the forces or messages communicated in support of the war effort. Further to the overt depictions of propaganda in textiles, the Utility Clothing Scheme itself held a place in such means of information sharing. Within the garments themselves, more hidden meanings through association of quality and durability with Utility garments, design choices served to also boost morale.



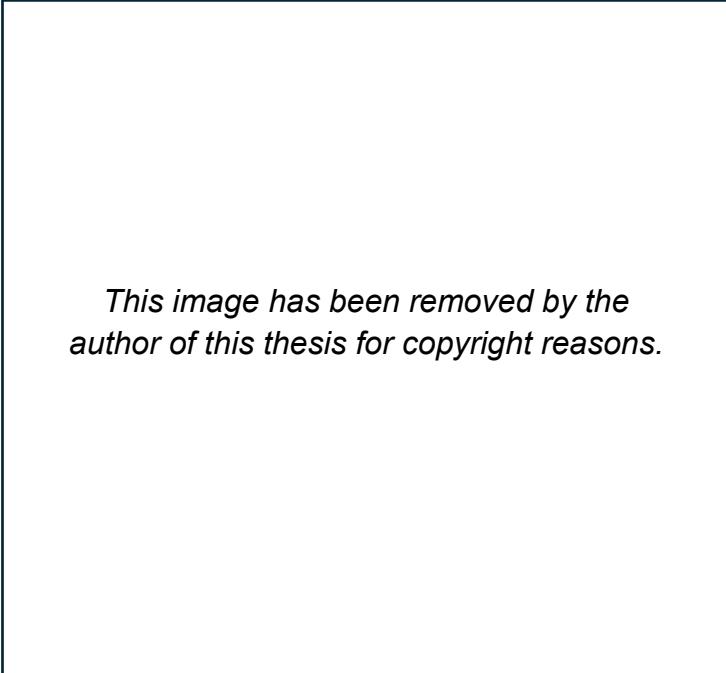
*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis  
for copyright reasons.*

Figure 8 – Cockade. ca.1790-1799. [Silk ribbons].  
At: London: Victoria and Albert Museum, Textiles and Fashion Collection. T.55-1938.



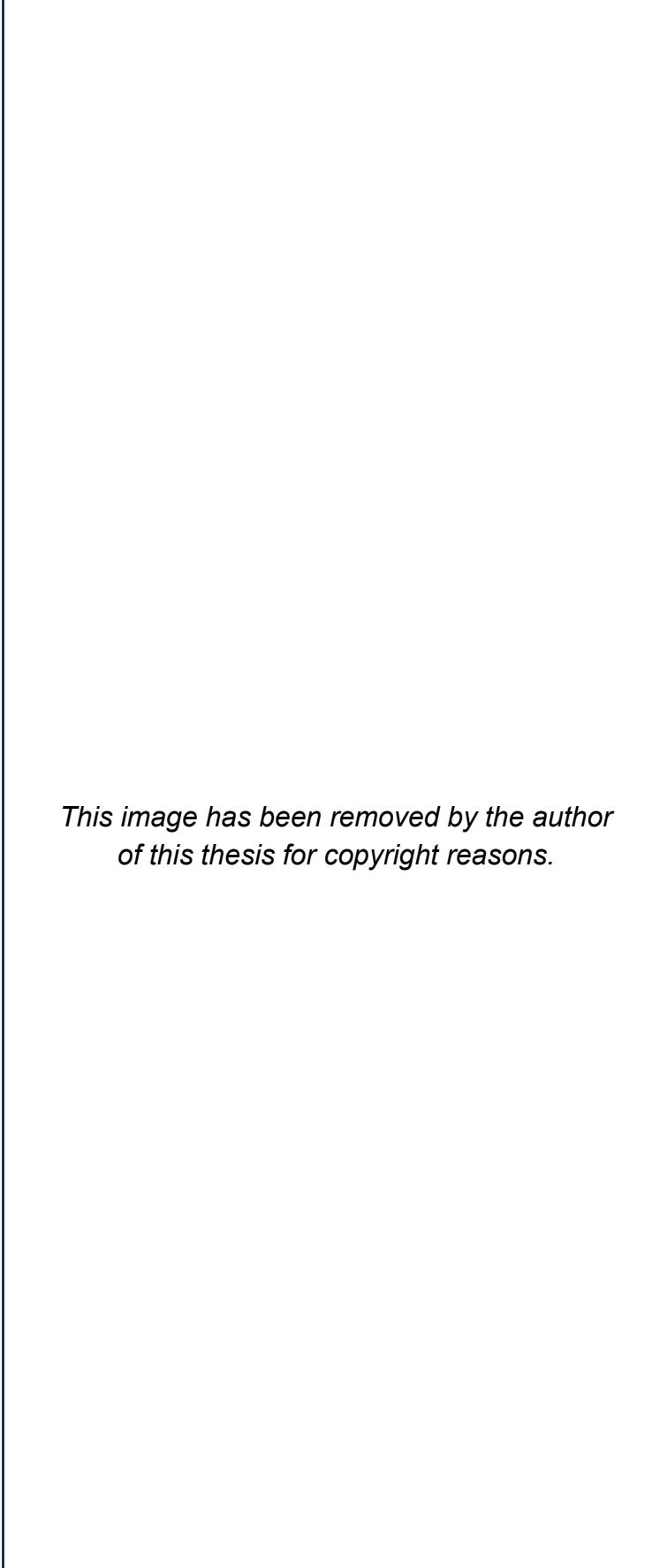
*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

Figure 9 – Fougasse. ca.1939-1945. *Scarf, Careless Talk Costs Lives.* [Crepe].  
At: Imperial War Museums. © IWM (EPH 3664).



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Figure 10 – Jacqmar. ca.1939-1945. *Scarf, Salvage Your Rubber.* [Crepe].  
At: Imperial War Museums. © The rights holder (EPH 3195).



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of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

Figure 11 - Day dress. 1941. [Possibly crepe].  
At: Arizona: Arizona State University FIDM. 2005.842.2.



Figure 12 – Shiri Rama Silk Mills Ltd. June 1943.  
*Detail of print pattern applied to parachute fabric. [Silk].*  
At: Author's own collection.



Figure 13 – Shiri Rama Silk Mills Ltd. June 1943. *Detail of 'V for Victory' and 'Q for Quality' stamps applied to selvedge of parachute fabric. [Silk].*  
At: Author's own collection.

Procedural intervention in the garment industry intensified throughout the Second World War (Sladen, 1995). A range of measures were developed to encourage textile *Austerity* in Britain. Austerity measures in fabric and clothing relate to government measures which sought to reduce garment consumption. The Board of Trade aimed to cut the acquisition of new clothing to 75 per cent of pre-war measures (Summers, 2015). Measures included clothes *Rationing* (1941), the *Utility Clothing Scheme* (1941), and *Make-do and Mend* (1943), as well as programmes of textile re-use and recycling. The Austerity measure of clothes Rationing was enacted 1<sup>st</sup> June 1941 in Britain. Estimations by the BoT that the cost of living measured between 25 to 30 per cent necessitated the implementation of restrictions to allay further price rises (Summers, 2015).

Introduction on Whit Sunday without prior public knowledge in order to avoid panic buying enabled retailers to prepare for the new system which initially ascribed each person 66 coupons a year which would be traded in, along with monetary payment, on the purchase of clothing (Summers, 2015). Different garment types were ascribed different coupon values, with childrenswear requiring fewer coupons due to the amount of fabric used in their construction. A further means of textile Austerity, the Utility Clothing Scheme was introduced 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1941. Initial aims centred on material and labour shortages, setting standards in industry and retailing practice. Aims developed over the first year of the Scheme to incorporate “specifications for cloth; fixed prices and profits; specified types of clothing; designated manufacturers [see pages 118-126]; guaranteed quality; preference for Utility over non-Utility in terms of raw materials and tax” (Sladen, 1995, p. 37).

In addition, other tools were employed by the government to promote both material and monetary saving. Introduced in 1943, *Make-do and Mend* encouraged recycling through repurposing. An informational newsreel created by the Ministry of Information showcased methods of clothing alteration and home textile repurposing (Ministry of Information, 1943, NPB 13037). Through the clothes speaking for themselves, it was clear how old clothing could be recycled through approaching classes on offer, as well as following insights proposed by pamphlets created (The National Archives, 1943, GII.2005.2.3).

Characters proved an impactful means of communication - for Make-do and Mend, Mrs Sew-and-Sew was introduced (Board of Trade, 1943, INF 13/144). In aims of reducing what was deemed 'wasteful' spending and instead financially support the war effort through monetary investment in War Savings Certificates, the National Savings Committee introduced the Squander Bug, which featured in cartoons, propaganda posters (The National Savings Committee, 1943, NSC 5/624), and even souvenirs (Imperial War Museums, ca.1940s, IWM (EPH 4611)).

National drives were mirrored around the world. The Squander Bug also featured prominently in America, Australia, and New Zealand. Mirroring the British Make-do and Mend campaign, America had its own *Make and Mend for Victory* booklet. Produced by The Spool Cotton Company in partnership with the state under the Consumer Division of the Office of Price Administration, the *Make and Mend for Victory* booklet promoted notions of national identity grounded in individual commitment to saving material resources (The Spool Cotton Company, 1942, p. 2). Within the booklet, it was urged that the following "Make and Mend Consumer's Victory Pledge" was taken:

*As a consumer in the total defence of democracy, I will do my part to make my home, my community, my country ready, efficient, strong.*

**I will buy carefully** – and I will not buy anything above the ceiling price, no matter how much I may want it.

**I will take good care of the things I have** – and I will not buy anything made from vital war materials which I can get along without.

**I will waste nothing** – and I will take care to salvage everything needed to win the war. (The Spool Cotton Company, 1942, p.2).

The sentiment shared in the American Consumer's Victory Pledge corresponds with much of the prescribed wording of British wartime restriction. Ceiling price and selection of garments of quality similar to that of Utility, reduced consumption comparable to clothes Rationing, and making the most of garments through restoration and repurposing akin to Make-do and Mend is clear.

Necessity breeds invention, and, whether following strict legislation, burgeoning innovation, or novel and inspired plans to attract public interest, the needed

measures of control over cloth consumption were communicated through various means; these were also adapted and adopted by industry and trade. It is here that notions of national identity and the collective good were drawn on to promote a sense of unity in adherence to necessary austerities. Like Clothes Rationing, the Utility Clothing Scheme was borne from reflection on previous conflicts, and of cumulative restrictions on garment construction and consumption. Connecting patriotism with contribution of material savings to the war effort through reducing consumption quickly became established as a global measure to encouraging consensus (Mower and Pedersen, 2013). By emphasising need for the war effort, national pride promoted acceptance. Encouraged by such notions of national contribution, the British government worked to devise the Utility Clothing Scheme. The notion of democratisation was a force for promotion, though control of industry, trade and consumers, was contested. However, Sladen's affirmation that "the general realization of common peril and common commitment to the war effort also implied a common willingness to accept the mass of controls and restrictions on corporate and private life" (1995, p.2) must be warily considered.

### **Parliamentary Debate**

As noted by Sladen (1995) initial optimism over the length and disruption of the conflict did not deter the speed with which action was taken to ensure the avoidance of the seemingly inevitable material shortages. Through the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act (August 1939, further extended 1940), the government was permitted to implement Homefront controls. Laying the groundwork for the Utility Clothing Scheme, Parliamentary debate frequently drew attention to the demands of war on civilian clothing and resulted in the implementation of a number of Acts and Orders which shaped civilian clothing production, retailing and consumption. Discussions of reductions in availability of raw materials (Hansard HC. Deb. 17 January 1940), as a result impacting on the ability to manufacture finished garments as well as the ability of civilians to acquire clothing, can be seen within the Parliamentary records early in the war.

Civilian support through reducing purchase of clothing was cited as a means of supporting the need for materials for the war effort (Hansard HC Deb., 28 February 1940). However, the export market remained a focus; discussion of the depletion of supplies of clothing available to British civilians by the export market (Hansard HC Deb., 28 February 1940) were impactful on British production and consumption. Household socioeconomic means were also a point of debate.

Developing strategies which would bring into line the cost of goods with earnings (Reynolds, in Attfield, 1999, p.127), countless debates around such wide and all-encompassing measures ensued, resulting in the implementation of several Acts and Orders. Rising costs of living and the ability to acquire basic necessities encountered frequent debate even in the early years of conflict. In a debate held 31<sup>st</sup> January 1940 in the Chamber of Commons controlled pricing of food was deemed necessary action (Hansard HC Deb., 31 January 1940). Comparably, the response for food controls were not replicated when Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, raised the concern of the control of clothing prices. The Chancellor explained that a committee of specialists had been established to explore how clothing, considered possibly the most challenging to organise due to the vastness and variety in which garments came, may be organised. The complexity of the system in which the textile industry processed raw materials, made-up garments, and sold clothing operated raised questions about how this system could possibly be regulated to control prices (Hansard HC Deb., 31 January 1940).

However, proposals for the addition of Purchase Tax on clothing were voiced throughout 1940, in order to raise additional revenue for the war effort. Arguments presented by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Kingsley Wood, proposed that approximately 40,000 traders had registered for inclusion, which the Central Price Regulation Committee stated would work as follows:

Tax is chargeable on the wholesale value of the goods, and is collected at the stage when the goods pass from the manufacturer or wholesaler to the retailer. The retailer, therefore, has to pay a higher price for goods which have borne the tax, and for such goods he will have to recover this by charging a higher price to the public, but he must not make any profit on the tax (Hansard HC Deb. vol.365 cols.624, 15 October 1940).

Conversely, many Members objected entirely to this Tax being imposed, or asked for the period to be extended (Hansard HC Deb., 15 October 1940). In the Parliamentary debate of 15<sup>th</sup> October 1940, Mr. David Adams stated “I disapprove of this Order primarily on the very broad ground that it is a menace to our national unity” (Hansard HC Deb. vol.365 cols.637, 15 October 1940). Despite some opposition, the House approved the Order. Creating this type of division in society, through limiting access by monetary cost, was one of the elements which the Utility Scheme was designed to avoid; that Purchase Tax would later be removed from Utility clothing in 1943 is an interesting, contrasting position for the Government to take.

The Civilian Clothing Directorate, as it was first known, was established in 1939 to address the concerns its name suggests, being initially tasked with preventing the extensive profiteering that had been experienced during the First World War (Reynolds, 1999, p.127). Ultimately this small department would grow exponentially, becoming encompassed by the Board of Trade, which then enabled the BoT to handle a range of concerns, namely shortages of raw materials in the textile trades and the lack of availability of finished garments at different price points. To this effect, the BoT would also manage costs, taxation and what would become the Utility Clothing Scheme.

The first Making of Civilian Clothing [Restriction] Orders were implemented on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1941, initiating Austerity regulations which would serve a hugely memorable feature of wartime change on the Homefront (Reynolds, 1999, p.126). This order limited the quantities of fabric and decorative trimmings which could be used by larger manufacturers as well as tailors and commercial dressmakers (Reynolds, 1999, p.126). Following the instigation of greater organisation of the textile industry, the attention of the Board was drawn to the progressing depletion of raw materials and supplies of finished garments, and

the resulting dwindling access to these by clothing manufacturers and the public respectively.

Parliamentary discussion of the impacts of shortage, the necessity of going without, and “sacrifices in the national interest” were central (Hansard HC Deb., 22 January 1941). It is, therefore, difficult to pinpoint where the Scheme was first raised within parliament. However, Hugh Dalton suggested, in retrospective explanation connected to the widening availability of Utility garments, that following the introduction of clothes Rationing “it was felt that it should be supplemented by the production of utility clothing” (Hansard HC Deb., 23 July 1942, col.213). It can therefore be asserted that the need for a counterpart to Rationing resulted in initial introduction of the Scheme in late 1941, and Utility clothing being more noticeably found in shops from 1942 (Mass Observation FR 1143, 9 March 1942, p.1).

## **Concentration of Production**

Prior to the introduction of the Utility Clothing Scheme, along with restrictions being placed upon the production of garments, the make-up of industry practice was altered by the introduction of Concentration of Production. An ‘explanatory memorandum’ detailing what Concentration would entail detailed how:

...the Government’s economic policy in war-time is to facilitate the fullest possible transfer of resources to war production while maintaining exports as far as practicable. This policy demands the severe cutting down of civil consumption and the release of labour, materials and factory pace for more essential purposes (Board of Trade, March 1941, R/3/5/188, p. 2).

The need for appropriate manufacturing spaces and adept producers was high on the agenda for government consideration in the making of Utility clothing. The reputation which the West Riding held for such production prior to the Second World War situated the region’s garment manufacturers in a strong position as a key contributor to the Scheme. Such practice required the public-private business model of the Utility Clothing Scheme, through collaborative working between the government and businesses – those manufacturing and

selling clothing - to come to the fore. As a result, Leeds became the first area to hold a regional committee in trialling application of Concentration.

While reductions in the production of civilian goods was critical to the war effort – including turning sites of production to the manufacture and storage of ‘war machinery’ – the effects that Concentration had on home and export trades, and resultant impact on the economy, as well as pricing were less overt.

Concentration of Production set out “to bring about a release of Factory Space and Labour, and a conservation of raw materials. To concentrate production in the smallest number of units making the least interference with Government and Export Trade. To avoid wastage of labour” (Woollen and Worsted Trades Federation, 23 April 1941, p.1/2). Industry insight therefore shows that

Concentration of industry would predominantly relate to manufacturing concerns such as textile production, due to work in relation to raw material processing.

Further, a typed document, presumably created in-house at Marks and Spencer as a circular to further explain the effects of the system of Concentration on manufacturing, details the necessity of production to continue in order to maintain supplies and as a result public morale, which in turn was proposed would ensure confidence in the government would continue (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca.1942, R/3/5/203). The importance of mass manufacturers were emphasised, as they were considered to “[have] the existing best equipped factories, and the best organised labour, for mass production” (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca.1942, R/3/5/203, p.1).

Representatives of the textile industry were actively involved in voicing concerns of manufacturers during consultation, with several points affirmed which, in time, would bear resemblance to regulations of the Utility Clothing Scheme. Concentration outlined what would become known as the parameters for Designation, where the manufacture of Utility clothing fell to what were deemed Designated firms from 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942, [see pages 118-126], vis:

Certain advantages would accrue to “nucleus” firms, these being:

- (a) the Board of Trade would try to prevent their factories from being requisitioned,
- (b) and as far as possible would help to maintain supplies of raw materials,
- (c) being eligible for inclusion on the list of protected firms, the lower age of reservation would apply, although this did not make a lot of difference in this industry,
- (d) the Ministry of Labour would as far as possible safeguard the labour requirements of these firms,
- (e) Government Orders would be given to these firms as far as possible (Woollen and Worsted Trades Federation, 23 April 1941, p.2).

In aims of making Concentration more appealing to smaller firms which would feel the brunt of this regulation, Sir Thomas Barlow coined “Compensation for Concentration” (The Drapers’ Record, 18 July 1942, p.11). As the profits of production were transferred to nucleus firms, who also absorbed some of the workforce, it was left to these manufacturers to offer financial compensation to those businesses which ceased production due to Concentration (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca.1942, R/3/5/203). However, this being said, due to disparities in the types of clothing produced and the prices sought for these goods, it was posed that there needed to be agreement on a universal monetary sum, along with the government outlined maintenance of factory premises of firms closed due to Concentration, unless requisitioned for other purposes (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca.1942, R/3/5/203).

Due attention was paid by the Board of Trade to the bearing Concentration may have on small business. Within industry papers, it was assured that Concentration would not favour larger clothing manufacturers. Instead, “Concentration will be on a factory basis. Amount of labour and production does not count in determining which firms shall evacuate. Premises and their usefulness for Government purposes will be key to committee’s choice” (The Drapers’ Record, 18 July 1942, p.11). However, such assurances aside, insight from industry shows that concerns over the fate of smaller outlets would be affected. An article titled *The Traders’ Problems: A Plea for the Little Man*, detailed the effect which Concentration would have on shops due to the resulting impacts of the Concentration of production, namely with regard to the

closure of retail outlets (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 4 July 1941, p.450). Here the undoubted connection between industry and trade must be noted, especially with reference to the size of business, and the continued discussions held between businesses and government which sought workable compromise in practice.

The Minute book of the Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation reveals that, in a meeting of the Emergency Committee on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 1941, it had been decided that the Employer's Council would develop "a Joint Committee of Employers' and Trade Union representatives for the purpose of dealing with labour matters arising in connection with Concentration. It was proposed that the Employers' side of the Joint Committee should consist of one representative from each main section, namely, Wool Combing, Worsted Spinning, Worsted Manufacturing and Woollen Manufacturing (5 in all)..." (Minute book of the Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 7 May 1941, p. 3).<sup>10</sup> The bringing together of such a committee to represent employers within this area of industry located in the West Riding illustrates the impact Concentration of Production would have across the textile trades more broadly throughout Britain.

### **Clothes Rationing**

The growing disparity in access to clothing – through lack of funds, manufacturing and retail focus on higher-priced lines, or rising prices due to shortages – resulted in the introduction of Clothes Rationing by the BoT on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1941, which aimed to alleviate problems of access and shortage which were becoming particularly apparent for the working classes. As discussed, in the initial period following the introduction of Clothes Rationing, adults received 66 coupons each for the year, with different garments requiring a different number of coupons to be presented along with monetary payment for clothing

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<sup>10</sup> The assertion of five main sections does not account for a fifth in the Trades' Federations description, begging the question of typographical error or missing of one area of the wool processing and manufacturing industry within this discussion of representation to government.

(Board of Trade, 1 June 1941). This early Rationing, while unexpected by consumers and retailers alike, only minimally regulated clothing manufacture and garment pricing. Instead, it was the quantity which customers could purchase which was mostly impacted at this time, therefore curbing the burgeoning consumerism of the 1930s founded in mass manufacture (Roberts, 2022), a time when people were buying increased amounts of clothing, particularly high-street retailed ready-made garments (Worth, 2020). Although Clothes Rationing sought to safeguard the industry from raw materials shortages through to made-up clothing, prices continued to increase exponentially. Further challenges came following the introduction of Rationing. Inflation rose due to high taxation, and retailers raised their prices, exploiting the market despite the expectations of early government regulations and instruction that retailers should not pass on inflation. (Reynolds, 1999). This resulted in supplies available to lower earners being reduced (Reynolds, 1999).

Further Government intervention was necessary to assure quality and stabilise pricing (Howell, 2013). Discussions on the topic of the Cost-Of-Living Index in the House of Commons on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1941 illustrate Howell's argument; despite Rationing limiting the volume of goods that could be purchased (Rationed commodities including a variety of foodstuffs and now clothing) prices continued to rise due to growing scarcity in supply, which therefore altered consumption patterns and even excluded some consumers entirely (Hansard HC Deb. 24 July 1941).<sup>11</sup>

Despite clothes Rationing being in place, there was growing awareness that the focus of production and retail was being placed on more profitable lines. In addition to the focus on profitability by manufacturers and retailers, much attention in textile and garment production was placed on the production of

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<sup>11</sup> The role of the secondhand clothing market in the garment trade must also be acknowledged. Acquisition of clothing within this form of garment procurement came in monetary trade as well as the donation or gifting of clothing as 'hand-me-downs'. Each remained a key feature of clothing acquisition through wartime. As suggested, it must also be considered that even the implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme would not eliminate the impact of socioeconomic status on the ability for a large proportion of society to purchase clothing first-hand. While measures for saving resources were part of government directive, so too was the established culture of recycling, mending, and repurposing.

uniforms required for the war effort and goods for export. In addition, the implementation of the new Purchase Tax, served to further limit accessibility to even the basics of clothing requirements, as noted in Parliamentary debate (Reynolds, 1999). The Board of Trade needed to act in order to address the resulting shortfall in supply. A number of Limitation of Supply Orders were implemented, which were met with growing concern in the textile industry, as noted in the House of Commons. With this in mind, on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1941 the Government introduced the Utility Clothing Scheme.

## **Connecting Public and Private - Introducing the Utility Clothing Scheme**

Following a series of debates on access to raw materials and finished garments, the idea of an approach which would serve to alter the fate of wartime attainment was first presented to Parliament in the form of Clothes Rationing, and industrial Concentration. Initial proposals on standardising clothing production and sale would develop to encompass a variety of actions, under what would be termed the Utility Clothing Scheme. With other aims including counteracting material shortages and rising prices and alleviating the limited access to clothing amongst civilians, the Utility label would serve as a marker of durability and affordability. The need for standardisation in production for the Scheme to be successful meant that following initial inconsistencies, specifications applied to Utility fabrics and finished garments became more rigorous (Brown, 2014). This meant that clothing made and sold bearing the cc41<sup>12</sup> stamp was of an equal quality no matter where in Britain it was made or

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<sup>12</sup> Print media from the period quotes both 'Civilian Clothing' and 'Controlled Commodity' as the meaning behind the two Cs, the former being understandable in the first instance, as initially the Scheme was devised for clothing alone. However, as the Utility Scheme itself grew so too did the volume and variety of goods to which the cc41 mark was applied, including household furnishings and textiles. Therefore, as the parameters of Utility expanded to include shoes, household textiles, crockery, and furniture through 1942 and 1943, the latter description of 'Controlled Commodity' appears decidedly more applicable. Nonetheless, it can be determined that any item to which the cc41 label was applied, the label itself embodied more than a code alone. Designed by Reginald Shipp (following an industry-wide call out for design ideas), the easily recognisable

sold. Along with this, the implementation of maximum prices and profit margins for manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, meant that prices of different garments were monitored. It was suggested that such controls being put in place, meeting the central tenets of wartime requirements under limited resources which would therefore guarantee access to necessary clothing for the British populace. In turn, this removed the capacity for the manufacturers and sellers of clothing to place emphasis on producing and retailing higher-priced apparel, which, prior to these measures, had subjected the market to increasingly wider socioeconomic gaps.

The successful achievement of the Scheme's aims lay in the effective involvement of businesses in the design, manufacture and retailing of Utility clothing. The Government acknowledged the importance of those making and selling Utility clothing needed to be on board with the Scheme for it to work. It was the textile trade and industry that was key to selling the Scheme to the public, not only in the literal sense of retailing garments bearing the cc41 label, but also in meeting the requirements that the label represented, and ensuring the public invested in the Scheme (Sladen, 1995). Initial reactions to the announcement of the Utility Clothing Scheme by the public, as well as those involved in textile and garment production, and the retail sector, were varied (Sladen, 1995), as will be further explored in future chapters of the thesis. The introduction of Rationing across Britain was obviously influential to the Utility Clothing Scheme, with discussions of the two systems running parallel. Examples of debates, such as those concerning Limitation of Supplies Orders which were impacting industry, trade, and consumers, must be highlighted as marking the acknowledgement of the need for systems including Clothes Rationing and the Utility Clothing Scheme.

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'cc41' label was colloquially referred to as the two "cheeses" at the Board of Trade (Summers, 2015, p.96).

## **Emergence of the Public-Private Business Model of Utility**

Several different instances exemplify the government's early recognition that development of a business model which would ensure the successful implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme lay in working with established manufacturers and retailers, including for example Montague Burton and Marks and Spencer. A public-private business model was necessary to enabling the Scheme to meet its aims. Clothing manufacturers and retailers already had knowledge of consumer needs and wants, and working with the government, in setting the standards for Utility, would, theoretically, fulfil the Scheme's central objective of clothing the population.

The implementation of cc41 clothing was about control; of prices, of access, and of industry (Howell, 2013). As a result, Utility, to a certain extent, also sought to democratise the fashion economy. Initially, the chief concern amongst the government was that of increasing prices and longevity of clothing, in other words, making the most of resources (Hansard HC Deb., 23 July 1942, col.213). By fixing prices, standardising production methods as well as sizing and material-makeup, quality, durability, and desirability were assured. In addition, controls were also placed on the labour force (Summers, 2015). Working to the requirements of wartime, the government involved the makers and sellers of Utility clothing in designing, revising, implementing, and altering the Scheme. The public-private business model embodied by the cc41 label was certainly a new way of working; reduced access to raw materials, the avoidance of wastage in production made the most of limited resources. Further, wartime economies in manufacture meant making the number and style of garments required by the population would, in theory, mean that all stocks would be sold. As a result, adherence the restrictions of Rationing in both production and consumption set out to standardise manufacture and retail throughout Britain, making the most of available resources and avoiding waste.

In setting the standards for Utility, industrial consultation and approval of requirements for clothing manufacture and sale was overseen by the British Standards Institution (BSI). The BSI was officially recognised in 1942 as the

only body able to implement national standards, following the increasing application of 'War Emergency Standards' since 1939. Any concerns around the level of involvement of those in the clothing industries in setting such standards were addressed in a meeting chaired by the General Council's Sir Percy Ashley, held in London on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1942. Sir Ashley stated "...the institute's specifications were adopted by an industry only when approved by a predominance of the industries concerned" (The Manchester Guardian, 21 May 1942, p. 8). Further, Sir Ashley went on to note that "The specifications were constantly revised to meet changed conditions and there was no compulsion to use them..." i.e. producers could still manufacture non-Utility clothing, "...though an increasing number of buyers desired goods to be made to the specifications" (The Manchester Guardian, 21 May 1942, p. 8). Such an assertion possibly illustrated the rise in popularity of Utility clothing with the public, the changing perceptions of what standardisation actually meant in practical application, or the need of the government for manufacturers to continue to produce Utility garments. As Utility clothing was increasingly appearing for sale, consumers were able to see the quality, design and construction, as well as be able to make an informed choice in their purchase and compare Utility garments to their non-Utility counterparts.

### **Introducing the Scheme – Public Consciousness**

Collective consciousness<sup>13</sup> was a strong unifier during wartime. Nationhood held a prominent position in which:

National identity [was] conceived... as a confection of selective memories, generating traditions and rituals in order to reinforce ideas of permanence and longevity and also supplying the plebeian masses with

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<sup>13</sup> Durkheim considered 'collective consciousness' to encapsulate "the totality of representations which are collective in the sense that they are present in several minds" (Némedi, 1995, p.42), something which Durkheim described as having decreased with the rise of individualism through the Enlightenment (Scott and Marshall 2009).

a collection of codified emblems through which to foster national belonging and a sense of identification (Goodrum, 2005, p.62).

It is important here to recognise the fluctuating nature of the idea of 'the nation'. Similar to Rose (2003), this thesis points to sociologist Rogers Brubaker's conceptualisation of nationhood as just that, a concept which connects individuals under an abstract collective (Brubaker, 1996). This gives the notion of a distinct and concrete unity (Rose, 2003), particularly significant in political discussion, especially so under the condition of conflict. Bringing the wartime population together through patriotism and a sense of national pride was hugely important factor in establishing and maintaining the 'nation', which featured across a variety of different areas of political and military debate.

Of course, the permeable nature of the nation filtered into different areas of civilian life through mass media, propaganda, and advertising. Such employment of ideas of nationhood as a propaganda tool therefore established an apparent collective consciousness and resulted in the 'othering' of those not participating in such discourses. The multiplicity of this collective national identity was certainly influential in public perceptions, for example, of the idea of 'going without' in order to contribute to the war effort; something which the government endorsed in its promotion of rationing and the Utility Scheme. As Rose (2003) acknowledges that interpretation of characteristics connected to what constitutes national identity is dependent on a range of factors relevant to individuals and groups which lay in environment and society (Rose, 2003, p.8). Circumstantial considerations played an integral role in notions of nationhood in wartime, with understandings being re-formed due to context. However, despite the wider changing feeling and connection to national identity, encapsulated through social roles, restriction, and opportunities of engagement, what remained "even during the war... was defiance, resistance, and indifference" (Rose, 2003, p.8). Therefore, the promotion of wartime restrictions was hugely important in ensuring that they were successful; the idea of endorsing a sense of national pride was centrally acknowledged within wartime fashion economy. This included the Scheme and its marketing, as will be discussed in chapter five.

The Scheme's central aim of ensuring equality of access to clothing would, for the most part, reach across the population. Of course, socioeconomic status meant that there would be some among the population who would not be able to afford such garments, despite the implication of fixed ceiling retail pricing. However, the democratisation of fashion with which Utility was to embody meant that Utility was, of course, interpreted in a variety of different ways depending on geography and individual circumstance.

### **Making and Marking - Identifying Utility Clothing**

The Utility garment itself could be identified by several key features. These altered throughout the period under which Utility clothing was made and sold; between 1941, when the Scheme was enacted, and 1952, when the making and selling of Utility clothing came to an end. Several changes can be seen, including labelling and the government stipulated regulations under which Utility garments had to be manufactured and retailed.

It was necessary to 'brand' Utility garments; demarcation would enable identification of Utility clothing from non-Utility counterparts. First and foremost, the 'cc41' mark was affixed to all Utility products. A memorandum issued by the Directorate of Civilian Clothing (3 September 1941) notified the press about the use of this identifying mark on what was being termed "Special Quota Cloth and Clothing" (p.1). It was stated that:

Under the new Limitation of Supplies (Cloth and Apparel) Order, 1941, specified cloths in the lower price ranges, of which details have already been given, may be sold on an increased quota basis and subject to price control. Manufacturers who supply this cloth out of the special increased quota must mark, with the official symbol illustrated below, each piece of cloth so supplied. Markers-up who make garments out of marked cloth must mark these garments with the same symbol (Directorate of Civilian Clothing, 3 September 1941, p1).

Following communication of this official notice to media outlets, it was then more widely shared amongst industry and trade<sup>14</sup>. Within the trade press, simple descriptions were given [fig. 14] as well as more detailed explanations of application of the cc41 mark [fig. 15]. In itself, the cc41 label had several stipulations to its application, which revealed much about the product to which it was attached. Cc41 was representational of government definitions of quality, standardisation and resulting equality of product, accessibility in price, and as a result, what has been proposed in existing literature to be democratisation. Some press reportage stated that “it also seems important that none of the Utility Articles should create an unpleasant class distinction by being obviously dissimilar from more expensive non-utility types” (By a Correspondent, 29 December 1941, p. 4). However, as *The Manchester Guardian* (21 May 1942) suggested “the original idea of utility clothing was to cover a certain range of incomes, probably up to £400 or £500 a year. Since then there had been an extension of the programme, but the Government had no intention of covering the whole of the income levels in the country” (p.8). The parameters of the Utility Clothing Scheme, while standardising production and price, did not equitably level access.

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Industry’ is used within this thesis to demark cloth and clothing manufacture. ‘Trade’ is applied to trading, in retail selling of clothing to the public.



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Figure 14 - Illustration and description of the Utility Clothing Scheme identifying 'CC41' mark. 6 September 1941. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2821, p. 11. [Accessed 13 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU. LD167.



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the author of this thesis for  
copyright reasons.*

Figure 15 - Illustration and description of the Utility Clothing Scheme identifying 'CC41' mark. 12 September 1941. *Textile Mercury And Argus*. [Heritage Quay]. 105, p.227. [Accessed 9 May 2022]. Available from: Heritage Quay. HUD LB/2/9/2/18.

The cc41 marker enabled consumers to identify Utility merchandise when shopping, while also allowing those making and selling Utility pieces to easily see which of their fabrics and finished garments were made to the regulations of the Scheme. Initially, these were plain labels, woven, as in the Marlbeck jacket's label [see page 82] (a feature of labelling which can also be seen on some post-1948 produced Utility garments), printed, or stamped, and featuring only the cc41 mark. Specification numbers soon came to be featured [fig. 16], as did branding [fig. 17 and fig. 18] alongside the distinctive cc41. Seemingly inconspicuous, the cc41 label itself holds a vast material culture. Born out of seeming necessity, it is representative of a zeitgeist. The stamp signified wartime politics, economy, society, technology, environment, legality, and

ethical considerations, further justifying the use of the outlined PESTELE investigative framework.



Figure 16 - 'cc41' Utility label. ca.1941-1952. [printed ink on cotton].  
At: Author's own collection.

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Figure 17 - St Michael. ca.1948-1952. detail of printed 'cc41' Utility mark with specification number (7/X9071), Utility girdle. [cotton, boning, elastic side panels, and attached suspenders].  
At: Halifax: Bankfield Museum. 1961.325, BF BCB 178.



Figure 18 – Kangol. aa.1941-1952. *Detail of printed 'cc41' Utility label, Utility beret. [Wool].*  
At: Author's own collection.

In saying this, as the Utility Scheme itself grew, so too did the volume and variety of goods to which the cc41 mark was applied. Accessibility of Utility Furniture, and associated goods which came under this banner, were ascribed through priority attribution (Board of Trade, Utility Furniture Traders' Leaflet UFD/8, 1942, p.1) [fig. 19]. Utility clothing, in contrast, was deemed accessible across society, under the universal restriction of Clothes Rationing. Control of consumption, in this sense, differed. The number of different garments able to be produced were restricted to a smaller range of designs which were manufactured in longer runs. This significantly impacted both wartime production processes and fashion. Reynolds (1999) suggests that a single production run of one design could measure over 1,000 identical garments. Different fabric types and prints were therefore used to introduce distinctiveness [see chapter four, section two].

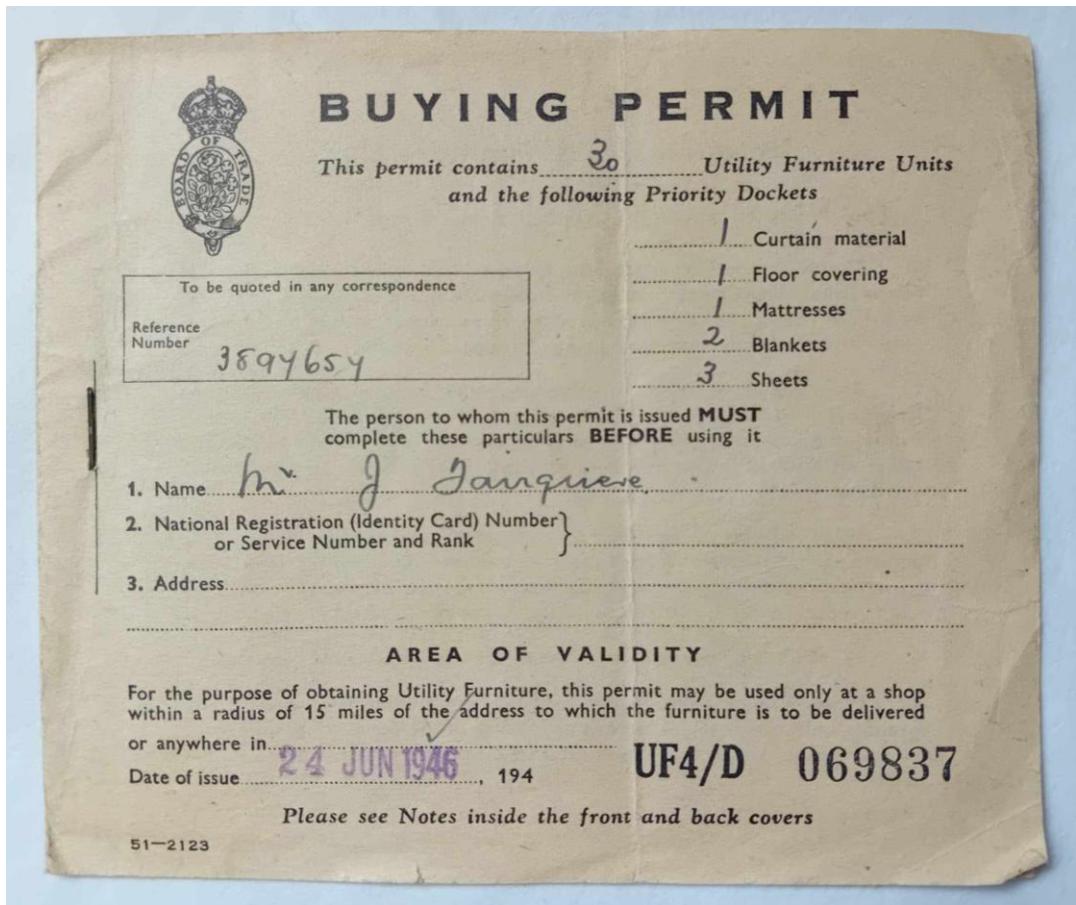


Figure 19 - Board of Trade. 24 June 1946. *Utility Furniture Buying Permit Priority Docket Booklet*. [Paper]. Southport: Utility Furniture Office. At: Authors Own Collection.

### Consensus, Control, and Conformity? The Argument of Industry

Prior to the introduction of the Utility Clothing Scheme, the *Drapers' Record* (19 July 1941) reported:

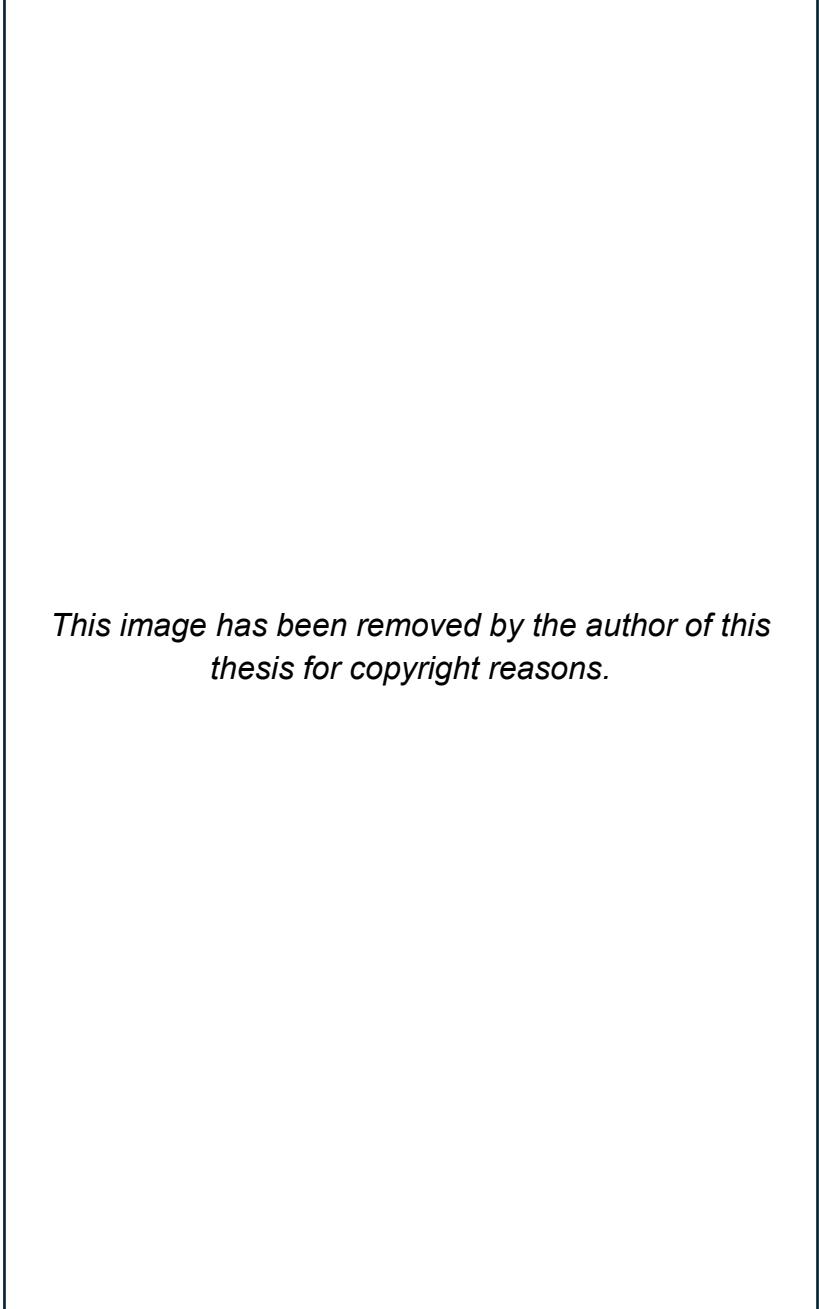
The intention to use, if necessary, strong measures of coercion on manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers to market certain cheaper types of garment at fixed prices, with profits controlled at every stage from raw material to shop counter, was announced on Tuesday by Mr. M. Watkins, a director of the John Lewis Partnership, who has just been given the title of Director-General of Civilian Clothing. To use the word "standardisation" in connection with the project is premature, asserted Mr. Watkins (p.8).

Though some two months before the Scheme was enacted, this discussion portrays concern within industry and trade, over potential ramifications for manufacturers and retailers of clothing under what would become the Utility Clothing Scheme. Such unease was also cited to have been aired in an issue of Drapers' record earlier in the year (The Drapers' Record, 19 July 1941, p.8). Though the contested use of the word standard and associated imagination of standardisation is charted within existing historiography (Sladen, 1995), the realities of its impact on industry, trade, and consumer shaped not only the politics of production, but also those of promotion.<sup>15</sup>

Acknowledging experiences of living, both in collective understanding and individual feeling towards wartime, is paramount to understanding the actualities of living and working under the Scheme. Transitioning to the production of Utility clothing, manufacturing cc41 garments was not something which was undertaken solely by a firm; Utility lines would be produced concurrently with non-Utility garments. This demonstrates that, though Utility would come to account for 80 per cent of clothing manufactured in wartime (Hansard HC deb., 23 July 1942), there was still huge demand for clothing which fell outside of the Scheme. Nevertheless, garment manufacturers sought to establish connections with cloth producers, which would enable them to commence production of cc41 clothing from cc41 fabrics [fig. 20], applying cc41 labels which could be acquired from specialist label manufacturers [fig. 21].

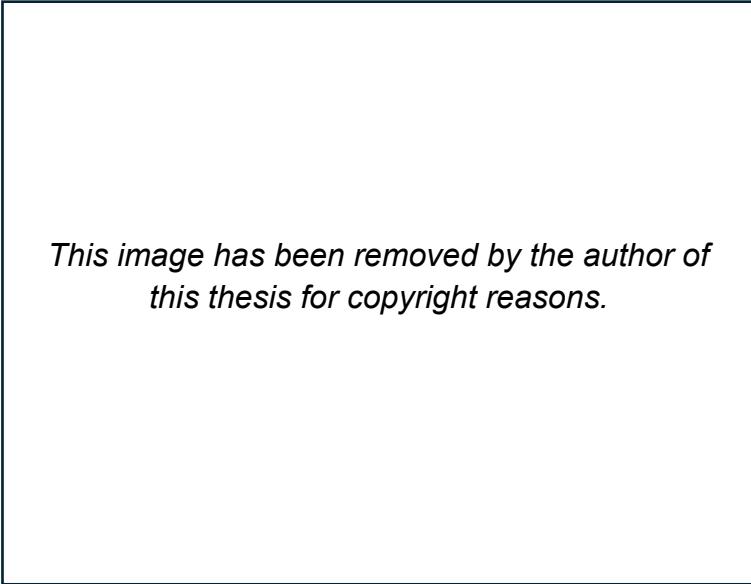
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<sup>15</sup> The impacts of terminology, namely that of "standardised" will be explored in understanding promotion and retailing of Utility clothing within section three of the thesis.



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Figure 20 - Advertisement requesting collaboration with Utility cloth producers from select London clothing manufacturers in order to commence production of Utility garments. 11 October 1941. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2826, p. v [supplement]. [Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.



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Figure 21 - Advertisement, Name Labels for Civilian Utility Clothing, Phipps & Son Ltd. 6 September 1941. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2821, p.19. [Accessed 13 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

With the Utility Clothing Scheme announced to the public on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1941, and discussion of 'quota control' amongst industry and trade for some time before this, forthcoming industry discussion of concerns were rife. The *Textile Mercury and Argus* (29 August 1941) argued "it seems inevitable that Government schemes for the control of industry and trade should break in parts soon after they become operative" (p.181). In this particular article, note was paid to the requirements of the significant task of attempting to control manufacturing and retail, particularly in relation to the time required of such an undertaking (Textile Mercury and Argus, 29 August 1941). However, it was also acknowledged that consultation with practitioners making Utility garments was pertinent, with objection over the amount and convoluted nature of associated paperwork for regulations debated (Textile Mercury and Argus, 29 August 1941, p.181). Following the introduction of the Scheme, complaint was voiced by makers and sellers of Utility cloth and clothing for a range of different reasons, as will be explored in case study within future chapters of the thesis. The collaborative working of the Utility Clothing Scheme meant that, though control was needed, consensus needed to be met with mutual understanding. This in itself emphasises the active engagement of businesses under the public-private

model of Utility, proving to expand understanding of the Scheme's inner workings in greater detail.

Prior to the establishment of the Scheme, the *Leeds District of the Association of British Clothing Designers* proposed an index of consistent sizing which could be uniformly applied throughout the industry (Association of British Clothing Designers Leeds District, 21 February 1939, p.130/131). This was rejected by the London club, being deemed "impractical" (Association of British Clothing Designers Leeds District, 21 February 1939, p.130/131). However, in the days before the end of the Second World War, it was recorded that the Scottish delegation was in support of the implementation of standardised sizing, something which was integral within the Utility Clothing Scheme and would endure in clothing manufacture after the end of the War. It was stated that:

For Gents and Ladies Ready-to-Wear apparel and the preparation of a statement giving the most economical and suitable widths for cloths, pocketings, body and sleeve linings, etc. and also recommending that discussion be opened with appropriate Associations regarding the proper shrinkage of cloths. (The Leeds Association of British Clothing Designers and Production Managers, 29 August 1945, p.151).

Early discussion of differing opinion over the standardisation of sizing as proposed from within the industry leads to greater understanding of why government-imposed restrictions through the Scheme were not immediately universally accepted. Instead, having undergone several incarnations until, for the most part, consensus was reached, different opinion and working practices were influential in the informal economy of the clothing making-up industry.

In this regard, the Leeds District of the Association of British Clothing Designers having drawn up a workable outline of sizing, endorsement by another northern sector of industry highlights the progressive nature of centres of production outside of London. It must therefore be stated that application of standardisation through the Utility Clothing Scheme cemented the place of earlier proposed innovations, proposed by practitioners of the West Riding. This further evidences the role of the West Riding industry in developing techniques and practices which would come to be imbued within the Utility Clothing Scheme,

challenging and adapting government directives to make them practicable for industry and trade. The standard-sized garment did, however, mean consumer engagement and alteration was encountered.

## **Designation of Clothing Factories**

Prior to the implementation of Designation, *The Manchester Guardian* noted “utility clothing... receives special attention from most sections of the industry.” (16 January 1942, p.7). Through Designation, production focus became officially recognised. Under the Board of Trade’s Apparel and Textiles Order of 1942, a list of “Designated” factories which identified the names and addresses of all manufacturing sites producing for export, in collaboration with the Government, and making Utility clothing was drawn up (Board of Trade, 1 June 1942). By meeting the requirements laid out by the BoT, namely turning the majority of their production over to the manufacture of Utility garments in the quantities and styles required prior to Designation, Designation ensured a stable workforce was maintained, access to raw materials was guaranteed, and production output of finished garments would secure business viability (Board of Trade, 1 June 1942). When deciding whether a clothing factory should be Designated, regard was also paid to each regional area’s production requirements, in relation to employment in, manufacture and storage of armaments (Woollen and Worsted Trades’ Federation, 8 May 1942, p.2). Once Designated, these factories would not be requisitioned for other war production, such as munitions (Board of Trade, 1 June 1942, BT 64/861). Designation, therefore, fulfilled the Scheme’s requirements of maintaining production of and access to clothing, while also securing orders for manufacturers, keeping manufacturing sites viable, and maintaining a stable clothing manufacturing workforce.

In a copy of the Designation List held by The National Archives, a typed note with pencil amendments provided for a “Mr. Carruthers with Mr. Linnot’s compliments” (Board of Trade, 1 May 1942, BT 64/861) provides detail on the

required labour force to meet the production of Utility clothing [table 5]. This letter stipulates that non-Designated firms were also tasked with the making of Utility garments to meet Utility output. The letter's author, Mr Pares, raises concern over the potential "considerable risk in relying on undesignated firms – for which [the government] have taken certain steps to encourage the elimination – for so large a proportion of our total requirements" (Pares, 1 May 1942, BT 64/861), particularly as manufacturing by these un-Designated firms would be centrally focussed on Utility clothing.

### Making-Up Industry

<u>Present labour force of designated firms</u>	160,000
of which engaged on Government work	40,000
leaving for civilian work	120,000
and on non-utility	22,000
<u>To meet the ration we require the labour of</u>	163,000
of which for utility	120,000
and for non-utility	30,000
<u>We therefore rely on non-designated firms for</u>	40,000
of which for utility	34,000
and for non utility	9,000

Table 5 - Facsimile table of labour and output figures for the manufacture of Utility clothing taken from Board of Trade. 1 June 1942. *Board of Trade Apparel and Textiles Order, 1942: Designated Clothing Factories.* [Leaflet]. At: Kew: National Archives. BT 64/861.

Amendment to the Designation List is suggested, or changes to the age range of those covered from withdrawal of labour (Board of Trade, 1 May 1942, BT 64/861). However, manufacture of Utility clothing following the introduction of Designation was assigned in greater proportion to significant, established manufacturers. Within the West Riding, Utility clothing producers represented a

range of different garment types across womenswear, menswear, and garments for infants and children. For example, Kamella Ltd. of 37 Bolton Road, Bradford, incorporated through take-over of the Kamella Woollen Company 1934, specialised in clothing for both children and adults (National Archives, 1934, D-HID). Conversely, Heatons (Leeds) Ltd. of Heaton House, New York Road, Leeds 2. focussed production on womenswear, for wholesale. Tailoring, carried out by well-known names such as Montague Burton Ltd. and J. Hepworth & Son Ltd., both of Leeds, had become a feature across the West Riding from the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries. Noteworthy in their important contributions to the manufacture of and trade in menswear, with many innovations in tailoring practice, the multiple tailors of Leeds had cemented their position in constructing suits in mass production prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. Mass-tailors also proved to significantly contribute to the war effort, in the making of component parts of service uniform garments (Sprecher, 2020, p. 109).

Of the 1,006 different manufacturers named on the Designated Clothing Factories list, a total of 266 were located in the West Riding (Board of Trade, 1942, BT 64/861) [map 1]. Different sizes of firms, some with several factory sites which produced a diverse range of garments, were Designated. It is important to acknowledge the types of Utility clothing made, and the fabrics used in the making-up of these garments, in this assessment. This is because the types of clothing made varied in greater or lesser degrees across these different manufacturing sites, something which, according to area specialisation, may have been quite distinct. However, though the cc41 garments they produced differed, Designated manufacturers were allotted individual “specific buying allocations spread over various types...” (The Manchester Guardian, 7 May 1943, p.7) which meant that manufacturers had a limited allocation of Utility cloth from which to make Utility clothing. Production output was therefore determined by allocated fabrics, as well as the ability of the manufacturer to produce the required amount in relation to rationing and labour.

In the case of Montague Burton Limited, for example, the Hudson Road Mills site located in Leeds was not the only registered works listed as producing

clothing under the company name. Making-up ready-to-wear and “wholesale-bespoke” suits were several factories registered in Lancashire and London, alongside the Leeds Mills (Board of Trade, 1942, BT 64/861, p.2). In saying this, the Designated Clothing Factories list does not account for the Hudson Road Mills being Burton’s main manufacturing location; further detail of this exemplar is explored within case study presented in chapter four.

The number of Designated factory sites located across the West Riding illustrates the importance of the county and its production centres to the Scheme. Though the number of sites in other areas can be argued to account for a far greater number of manufacturing concerns which turned over much of their production to Utility clothing, the West Riding’s standing in large scale, mass manufacture cannot be overlooked.<sup>16</sup> While 706 of the 1,006 Designated clothing factories were situated in London, the type, size, and manufacturing output of such sites must be acknowledged (Board of Trade, 1942, BT 64/861). Garment production in London was carried out on a comparatively smaller scale of manufacture to the larger sites of mass-production of northern centres (Riello, 2012). London was a diverse producer, focussed upon intensity in manufacture through the nineteenth century (Riello, 2012, p.506). Comparatively, manufacture in the West Riding, though also on a ‘mass’ scale, was undertaken in larger factory settings than the garment producing sites of London. The physical size of the clothing factories of the West Riding enabled manufacture to be carried out on one site, undertaken through a subdivisional system, rather than the subcontracting which occurred in London (Riello, 2012).

Tregenza (2023) draws attention to both home-workers, and the relocation of manufacturing sites formerly based in London to other centres during the war. It must be acknowledged that the Designation List (1942) points to factories still being sited in London despite their moving. For example, Charles Kuperstein, listed as being located at 119 Wardour Street, London, W1 (Board of Trade, 1942, BT 64/861, p.6), despite being highlighted by The Drapers’ Organiser (January 1941) as having moved premises to Nottingham (Tregenza, 2023,

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix Two for the full list of Designated Clothing Factories located in the West Riding.

p.33). Having London addresses registered on this official document, rather than being seen as a discrepancy on the Designation List, could be related to London's status as a fashion centre, or hopes of Charles Kuperstein to return to their original premises. The likes of Leeds, having 161 Designated Clothing Factories, and Manchester with 210 Designated Clothing Factories (Board of Trade, 1942, BT 64/861) therefore may be a more accurate statistical depiction of regional manufacture of Utility garment production. However, these numbers could also mean that businesses which moved their manufacture to the West Riding during the war were not accurately represented on the Designation List. As a result, there may have been a larger number of factories producing for the Utility Clothing Scheme in the north due to relocation necessitated by the impacts of the War on London, for example.

It was intended that Designated firms would handle 80 per cent of Utility cloth, with the Wool Controller agreeing to the provision of 26 million yards of woollen and worsted Utility cloth over the four months following the publication of the designation list (Board of Trade, 1942, BT 64/861). With woollens and worsteds being the main textile products of the West Riding, the work of textile and finished garment manufacturers based in the county was essential in ensuring the output of Utility garments made of such fabrics was reached. Furthermore, this was represented within both the light and heavy sectors of the industry according to expected outputs of Designated manufacturers. The names and addresses of those producers Designated with making-up Utility garments reveal insight about the different types of makers and the variety of clothing products being manufactured in the West Riding, and in which locations [see map 1].

The established nature of manufacturers which were Designated connects with output levels required to clothe the population. During wartime production, Utility garments measured 85 per cent of clothing manufactured in Britain (Breward, 1995). As will be detailed in chapter five, this was also reflected in the sale of cc41 clothing, which was for the most part largely carried out by bigger names and chain stores. Designation shaped places of production, and as a result, also influenced processes, being reserved to sites of mass-manufacture.

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Key

Barnsley – 5
Batley - 1
Bradford – 20
Brighouse – 1
Castleford - 2
Cleckheaton – 2
Doncaster – 1
Goole – 1
Halifax – 13
Hebden Bridge – 29
Huddersfield – 9
Keighley – 2
Leeds – 161
Mytholmroyd – 4
Ossett – 1
Otley – 1
Royston – 1
Selby - 1
Sheffield – 6
Skipton – 1
Sowerby Bridge – 2
Todmorden – 1
Wakefield - 1

Map 1 - Map of Yorkshire, depicting areas with manufacturing sites identified on the *Board of Trade Apparel and Textiles Order, 1942 Designated Clothing Factories List*.

Colour is indicative of number, with locations containing manufacturing sites implied by encirclement. Map taken from Mee, A. 1941. *The King's England: Yorkshire, West Riding*. London, Hodder and Stoughton Limited.

Discussion within the West Riding industry demonstrates reasons for garment manufacturers securing Designated status. Meeting in Bradford, the *Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation* Executive Committee's Acting President, Mr Haigh, presiding over the gathering, cited "the considerations which determined whether or not a clothing factory became designated included the local demand for labour for munitions, and for production and storage space, as well as the type of Government and Civilian work carried on at the factory" (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 8 May 1942, p.2). This statement from a body based in the West Riding, made up of practitioners within the industry, demonstrates the reasoning for larger-scale manufacturers, established and adept at producing a range of different garment types, being central to the Utility Clothing Scheme, and therefore receiving Designated status. Manufacturers had to prove their ability to create Utility clothing to the parameters required. Evidence was sourced from costs of production and speciality (Barlow, 12 March 1942); therefore the Designation List itself underwent change, acquiring clothing manufacturer names and shedding others, ahead of official publication (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 8 May 1942).

Though Designation appeared to secure the practice of hundreds of clothing manufacturers, making-up garments to government directives challenged the established connections between businesses. Prior to the implementation of Designation, Order No. 480, which was in place from March 1942 until 31<sup>st</sup> May 1942, reduced the amount of woven wool Utility fabric which could be distributed to a singular clothier (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 30 June 1942, p.5). With Designation in its earliest incarnation, prior to the publication of the Designated Clothing Factories List on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1941, some firms had already secured Designated status. This meant that Order No. 480, already, was limiting access to woven woollen cloths to manufacturers' established customer base. The Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation advocated:

Representations were immediately made to the Board of Trade protesting against this Order which restricted manufacturers' delivery of utility cloth to regular customers and attempt to direct supply to designated firms, some of whom the manufacturer may not desire to do business with. The effect this Direction had on the sanctity of contract

was stressed. We were unable to secure cancellation or even amendment of this Direction (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 30 June 1942, p.5).

Control established in this instance, under enactment Order No.777 provided a General Licence to producers of woven wool Utility fabrics enabled provision of such cloths to Designated clothing manufacturers (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 30 June 1942, p.5). While in theory, Designation seemed easy to put into action, the above discussion alone shows that in practice the reality was somewhat different. Comment from garment manufacturers and fabric producers highlight the actuality of adapting to Designation. In a letter addressed to Matthew Walshaw & Co, presumed to be either a clothing manufacturer or retailer, dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 1942, two months before the enactment of the Designation Order, Taylor, Livesey & Company (fancy woollen manufacturers of Huddersfield) attempted to strike a deal for their Utility output:

Designated Firms – according to our reading of the order, the maker up applies for licence to purchase in excess of 30% & we need only approach the Board of Trade if we have goods which we are unable to sell. We prefer to sell Utility cloth rather than under the general non-utility quota so that if a designated firm approaches you with the necessary licence, we can give early delivery (Taylor, Livesey & Co., 26 March 1942, KC526).

It appears from this interaction that Taylor, Livesey & Company wished to focus their manufacture on Utility fabrics, but were able to also meet non-Utility lines, if sale of this product was ensured. The letter also makes apparent that understandings around Utility were still being contested some six months after the introduction of the Scheme.

Utility Cloths - We are still learning that different people put different interpretations to the order. It is asked if goods delivered as essential clothing etc are counted in the 30%. We believe not, but the situation will clarify itself. In the meantime, we are going through the accounts & where it will be possible to send goods as Utility, we shall do so, early next week (Taylor, Livesey & Co., 26 March 1942, KC526).

This letter, therefore, brings into question the practices of manufacturing businesses. By reviewing fabrics which had already been sold and those remaining in stock, it could be suggested that rules around the production of

cloth for the Scheme were being bent by labelling fabric in stock as Utility. Furthermore, the letter also questions whether following the protocols laid out for such production should entail, in terms of overall manufacturing practices.

Wider industry discussion of the initial requirements of Designation demonstrates the interconnected working required between government and cloth and clothing manufacturers. Certification from the Wool Control Board was required in order to “obtain supplies of utility wool cloth for the fulfilment of their approved garment production programmes” (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 5 June 1942, p.372). This certificate would permit four months of collaboration between fabric producer and clothing manufacturer, direct from the factory or through a wholesaler, with some cc41 fabric obtainable by makers-up without the required certificate (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 5 June 1942, p.372). For the Designated clothing manufacturers presented with the required documentation, it was essential that they “place their orders for the whole of the cloth required for their programmes within a fortnight of the receipt of certificates.” (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 5 June 1942, p.372). This meant that garment manufacturers Designated to make Utility clothing had to plan for output levels which met with demand as well as government directive.

### **Changing Demands, Changing Employ**

Access to essential elements of production were affected by the war in different ways, including staff being called-up to the forces, population shifts, and import and export of goods. The Secretary of the Wholesale Clothing Manufacturers’ Federation Executive commented that:

We have an obligation put on us as an industry to clothe the population, and we can't do that if we don't get the raw materials and the labour to do it with. Somehow, a balance has to be maintained between the needs of the fighting Services and munitions requirements, and the production of Government contract work and utility clothing (Kay, 27 March 1942, p.212).

The responsibility placed on manufacturers grew under the Utility Clothing Scheme. The impact of the conflict on employment levels meant that resultant difficulties were encountered in output levels in both textile production and in the clothing making-up industry. Prior to the implementation of Designation, this was founded in numerous reports comment on such occurrences, with reference to Utility. With reference to the Leeds clothing manufacturing industry, *Textile Mercury and Argus* reported:

Firms making the new utility garments, both for men and women, are consistently busy, although much work is being held up through lack of labour. Producers of these garments for home consumption, like those engaged on exports, may apply to the Government for a definite guarantee for so much labour to meet pressing needs of civilian buyers (14 November 1941, p.381).

To avoid further issues encountered due to reduced staffing levels, retired cutters, machinists, and finishers re-entered the industry. While the export trade continued, clothing manufacturers in Leeds, for example, also focussed on pieces including “overalls, hard-wearing Oxfords shirts, and caps suitable for those engaged on essential war work” (*Textile Mercury and Argus*, 21 November 1941, p.397). In order to meet with consumer demand, employ in production of such garments was reserved, including for those who had re-entered the workplace, (*Textile Mercury and Argus*, 21 November 1941, p.397). However, by 27<sup>th</sup> March 1942, a meeting was called in Leeds by the Wholesale Clothing Manufacturer’s Federation Executive and the National Union of Tailors’ and Garment Workers’ Executive, made up of “clothing manufacturers and representatives of workpeople in the tailoring trade” (*Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear*, 27 March 1942, p.212). The assembly aired anxieties “at the way labour is being withdrawn from the industry” (*Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear*, 27 March 1942, p.212). It was cited that almost 75 per cent of the workforce in some businesses had been recruited to other forms of war work, such as the military or munitions, which as a result impacted ability to fulfil government contracted manufacture (*Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear*, 27 March 1942). The changing nature of wartime employment shifted the make-up of the garment manufacturing workforce across Britain. This was a cause for concern in the West Riding, as the region was perceived as a centre for the mass-production of clothing with many government contracts focused on

creating cloth and clothing for the use in Uniform production for the Forces, under the eye of the state in the Utility Clothing Scheme.

## **Employment in the Wartime Clothing Manufacturing Industry**

The ramifications of wartime requirements proved to shape employment in the Homefront, as well as those stationed across the world in the military. The garment making industry was shaped by this. Resultant regulations, such as industry Concentration, shifted the nature of workforce make-up, with regulations re-inventing the nature of the production of clothing through standardised processes, inventiveness through restrictions in fabric use, and the need to follow rules in the range of garments which could be made and the prices which could be asked for them. The Designation of Clothing Factories, implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942, under the Board of Trade Apparel and Textile Order 1942, indicated that Clothing Factories were authorised to produce Utility clothing by following strict requirements, though these sites could alongside this output still produce non-Utility garments [Appendix Two]. Agreeing to be Designated, employers were guaranteed employees, under certain stipulations, and would not be requisitioned to other essential war work. The following proposals were outlined in *The Times*, published 13<sup>th</sup> November 1941, some seven and a half months before Designation was enacted [fig. 22].

To maintain production, and the right range of production to meet prospective demand, two steps have been taken, both offering inducements to firms to produce what may be broadly defined as clothing of general utility. Firms which comply with specified conditions will be "designated" by the Board of Trade and will receive protection for their labour.

#### WOMEN OF 20 TO 25

In the "light" section of the trade "designation" will be given to firms engaged in 75 per cent. or more on the production of clothing of general utility. They will have protection for all their female labour, including women in the 20 to 25 age group.

Both in the "light" and "heavy" sections of the trade there will also be "designation" for firms engaged in 75 per cent. or more on utility clothing and Government and export orders combined, and they will have protection for their female labour, excepting only the women in the 20 to 25 age group.

The "heavy" side of the trade has not hitherto suffered the same reduction of labour the "light" side has been subjected and orders are now becoming less.

The protection means the Ministry of Labour and National Service will not take a workwoman from the designated firms without first providing a substitute. As the onus of finding a substitute is on the Ministry, the guarantee is a strong one.

Figure 22 - Facsimile excerpt of text from newspaper article. 13 November 1942. Workers in Clothing Industry: Maintaining Supply of Utility Garments. *The Times*. [Online]. pp.9. [Accessed 28 May 2021]. Available from: <https://www.gale.com/>

While this excerpt [fig. 22] suggests that much employment within the garment manufacturing industry would be secured, enabling maintenance of workforce, conversely, following the introduction of Designation, recordings from within industry suggested there was dissatisfaction over employee make-up, as well as manufacturing sites.

Already most firms in the clothing industry are having to carry on with a high proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled labour. Moreover, further demands are being made for the release of labour and factory space.

The Board hope that the arrangements they are now making for simplification of design will help the industry to maintain the general level of its production and secure to the public supplied of well-styled clothing (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 28 August 1942a, p.562). <sup>17</sup>

The suggestion posed within Tailor & Cutter and Women's wear (28 August 1942a) could be interpreted in several ways. Classification of "unskilled" and "semiskilled" may potentially have been derived from the gendered nature of employment within the garment trade prior to the War, with men working mainly as garment cutters, and women in making-up areas. This area would have been classed as "skilled", having an embedded history in tailoring and pattern cutting (Gamber, 1997). The description of "unskilled" and "semi-skilled" may also have

<sup>17</sup> This is a typographical error on the original document.

been founded in the levelled hierarchy of types of garments being produced. With the “light” industry noted for manufacturing women’s and children’s clothing, the “heavy” clothing industry, as suggested by the name, worked with heavier fabrics, making menswear, such as suits and coats, as well as coats for women (The Times, 13 November 1941, p.9). Requests for release of workers continued as the war progressed. Reductions in availability of materials was timely, corresponding with movement of textile workers to other employ (The Manchester Guardian, 18 March 1943) in the military, the production of munitions, or roles in other industry, including cloth and clothing manufacture. At this time, employers were urged to account for the necessities of war, particularly women in employ aged 18 to 46, which “firms must be prepared to release” in “specific numbers” (The Manchester Guardian, 18 March 1942, p.2). This calls into question the established hierarchy within garment manufacture, as it was reported that businesses “have been warned that they should not seek to retain the most efficient, as the younger and more adaptable workers will probably adjust themselves to new occupations most readily” (The Manchester Guardian, 18 March 1942, p.2). The changing fabric and garment manufacturing environment in wartime, with factories turned over to the production of uniforms or munitions, employees moving to different types of work, and the clothing requirements of the home market impacted employment within the industry. This necessitated protection, in the form of directives from government, namely, those founded in the regulations of Designation.

## **Wartime Production and Political Problems**

The Board of Trade have no wish to adopt the role of Fashion Dictator (Board of Trade, 11 May 1942, p1).

The above statement, issued by the BoT offers insight into the potential ramifications for government in attempts to place controls over industry and trade in wartime. Industry, trade, and consumers interpretations of the meaning of standardisation were important considerations in promoting the Utility Clothing Scheme. The assertion that support for the war effort could be found in

the intersecting and aligning approaches to accessibility through the Utility Scheme enabled industry to continue to have influence in the design and creation of clothing. In turn, this also impacted desirability.

Systematic reorganisation of practice was rife with politicisation in production. This was visible in the specifications for Utility garments. By 8<sup>th</sup> November 1941, The Drapers' Record reported on *Suggested Specifications for "Utility" Frocks* [table 6], some two months after the Scheme had been introduced. That such specifications were still under consideration was, no doubt, affecting manufacturing as well as trade, as both facets were eager to know what Utility garments would look like, which also affected the retailer's ability to promote Utility clothing to consumers.

		ins.						
Bust	... ... ... ...	34	36	38	40	42	44	46
Waist (with placket)	... ...	26	28	30	32	34	36	38
Waist (without placket)	...	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
Across back	... ... ...	13½	14	14½	15	15½	16	16½
Shoulder	... ... ...	4¼	4¾	4½	4¾	4¾	5	5
Inside sleeve	... ... ...	17½	18	18	18½	18½	18½	18½
Outside sleeve	... ... ...	23½	24	24	24½	24½	24½	24½
Length	... ... ...	41	42	43	44	45	46	46
Armhole	... ... ...	16½	17	17½	18	19	20	21
Back neck to waist	... ...	15½	16	16	16½	17	17	18
Front shoulder to waist	... ...	16¼	16¾	16¾	17¼	18	18	19
Across chest	... ... ...	12½	13	13½	14	14½	15	15½

Table 6 - Facsimile taken from article. Anon. 8 November 1941. Suggested Specifications for "Utility" Frocks. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2830, p.9. [Accessed 13 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

With the Utility Scheme initially in place, amendments were commonplace. It was quickly found within industry that certain regulations were practicable, and others less so. Such instances led to heated debate within cloth and clothing creation, and as a result, also with government, due to the conflicting and changeable requirements. Further argument originated in the subsequent

confusion which resulted from the moving parameters of regulatory measures.

The Huddersfield Chamber of Commerce resolved:

THAT owing to the multiplicity of conflicting Orders, apparently necessitated by the daily change of mind of the Directorate of Civilian Clothing and the Board of Trade, the Wool Textile Industry is in a complete state of uncertainty as to the Laws governing the production and sale of its products, and

THAT in the opinion of the Council of this Chamber, there is immediate need for clear policy in connection with the production of Wool Textiles governed and controlled by one body only, and

THAT in order to relieve the industry from the present confusion and uncertainty, the urge upon the President of the Board of Trade that the administration of the Wool Textile Industry in all its phases, be placed under the sole control and direction of the Wool Control. This body not only understands the industry, but was set up at the outbreak of War by the Government itself presumably for that purpose (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 16 October 1941b, p.5).

Such sentiments being aired so early into the Scheme, and only four months after the introduction of clothes Rationing, demonstrates contention within industry surrounding the unpredictable nature of regulation directed by government onto industry. The need for amendment to Orders was understandable due to their operability in practice, however, the pace with which many changes were instituted made making and selling Utility clothing difficult.

The Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation General Council suggested:

Within ten days of the Cloth and Apparel Order becoming operative, the first amending Order was issued, in this the list of Utility Cloths contained additional numbers. Amending Orders followed at regular intervals until the Industry did not know whether it was on its head or on its heels. The Federation was sending out circulars nearly daily with a view to assisting members, rulings were obtained and points clarified as difficulties arose (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 30 June 1942, p.5).

Such governmental intervention would have made implementation of regulations of the Scheme practicably difficult. The inconsistency in stability of Order enactment demonstrated the need for industry and trade involvement. The necessity for manufacturers, and retailers, to hold an active role in the development of directives of the Utility Clothing Scheme exemplifies several

points. These included contention versus conformity, consensus versus questioning, and in clarity of and application to the process of directive enactment.

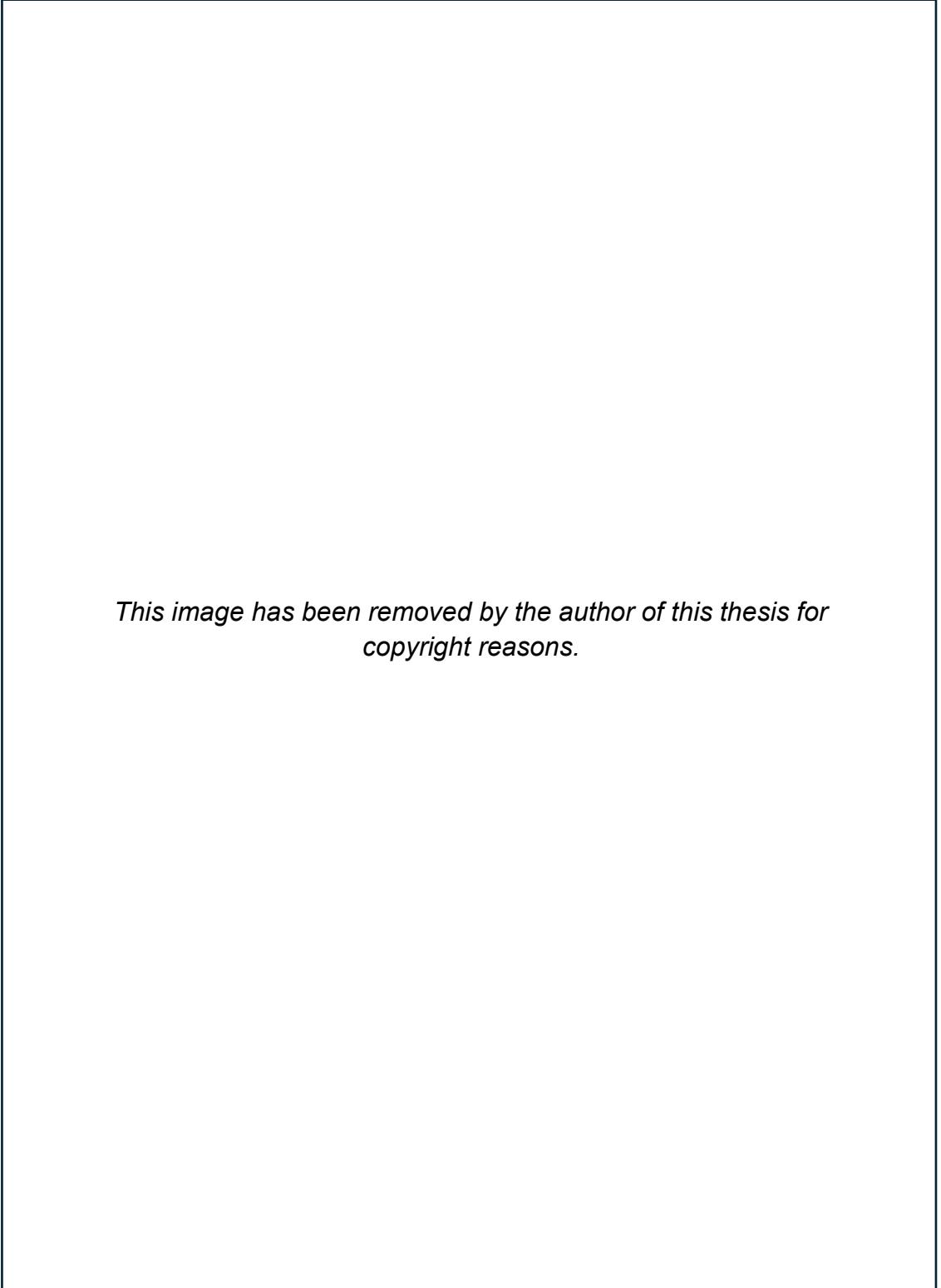
Furthermore, the Huddersfield Federation challenged the Board of Trade regarding the matter of Order amendments. Such government action was in turn contested by the Wollen and Worsted Trades' Federation. Having reached consensus within industry, concerns could be presented in a more systematic and holistically representational manner to the likes of the BoT. For example, discussion amongst the associations would be submitted to the government by the Federation (with regard to 'Manufacturing Interests') or, if in relation to the entirety of the industry, then this could be posed by the Wool Textile Delegation (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 9 April 1942, p.2). This debate illustrates the wider political nature of the Utility Clothing Scheme alongside the internal politics of industry and trade. While further demonstrating the contention industry held with government with regard to the changeable nature of regulations, this note in particular shows the variability within industry itself. Essentially, consensus amongst the different firms and bodies had to be achieved and accounted for first before approaching the state. Such a collective approach would prove a united front and make the argument of and influence which industry could have more viable.

## **Regulation, Specification, and Realisation**

Media reportage highlighted the importance of quality in both manufacture and in consumer investment in clothing. It was suggested in *The Economist* (19 June 1943, p.799) that:

In the production of goods there is usually a choice between producing a large quantity of poor quality goods and a smaller quantity of better quality articles. It has been well proven that, for example, a good suit will outlast two or three of shoddy quality. It appears, at any rate for some articles of utility clothing, the former policy has been adopted by the Board of Trade.

The above statement implies that certain Utility pieces were not reflective of the quality assured by the governments' assertion of the meaning behind standardisation. This was reflected in industry insight and consumer feedback on goods. As manufacturers continued to challenge implemented regulations, communication between industry and the Board of Trade ensured that adaptations were made in order to meet with manufacturing requirements for the Utility Clothing Scheme. An article published ca.1941 suggested that, due to the changed nature of much of womenswear – made up of trousers and overalls – as a result, changes to underwear were necessary (Mass Observation, ca.1941, TC 42 - POSTERS 1939-47 (Box 3). However, for example, with the introduction of brassieres to the Utility Clothing Scheme in 1943, Brown (2014) suggests there was evidence of initial public dissatisfaction with the quality of these pieces, which was founded in alterations to the material make-up of undergarments were also needed to save resources under Austerity measures. Much work was needed to be undertaken in order to meet with requirements of consumers. This early Kestos advertisement points to reasoning behind the deviation from the expected visual appearance of their brassieres, suggesting disappointment with government regulation [fig. 23]. It is important to note that the public were however reassured of the quality of the Kestos Utility bra, indicating that restriction was limited to materials and availability without changing the overall construction of the company's brassieres (Kestos, 24 February 1943, p.111).



*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for  
copyright reasons.*

Figure 23 - Advertisement for Kestos Utility brassieres. 24 February 1943. *The Sketch*, [Online]. 198 (2568), p.111. [Accessed 10 March 2022]. Available from: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Further into the wartime period, the Utility Wool Cloth Scheme underwent amendment for the production period between March and June 1944. This instance of change was due to objections by fabric manufacturers and clothiers to the Wool Control Board concerning allocation of materials and manufacture of certain cloth and clothing specifications (The Woollen and Worsted Trade Federation, 26 January 1944, 1347/1348). Active industry contribution, through arguments posed to the Board of Trade, meant that West Riding manufacturers working woollen cloth and clothing were able to have positive influence on regulations, amending them to fit with practical requirements.

Different regulations were put in place which affected garment construction in a range of different ways. In the making-up of womenswear, as well as clothing for girls, the ascribed "Simplified Clothing" measures affected hem measurements, number of buttons and buttonholes, pleats, lengths, trimmings, pockets, belts, and fastenings (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 28 August 1942, p.561) [table 7]. The prolonged life of a piece of clothing which bore features of the aims of Utility regulation, it was proposed, would aid manufacture as well as consumer use and wear. Analysis of the garments themselves alongside discussion by industry, trade, and in the media, demonstrate the actualities of enactment.

IT WILL NOT BE out of place to give in this special number, a list of the various restrictions made for women's and girls' clothes.

#### SCHEDULE

Women's and Maids Civilian Clothing and Girls' Civilian Clothing (in respect of which Purchase Tax is chargeable) of the following descriptions.

##### **Overcoat:**

Not to have:

- More than two pockets, more than five buttons and four buttonholes.
- Nor must there be more than one inverted or box pleat, or two knife pleats, pressed or unpressed (underlap of any pleat not to exceed seven inches when fully extended).
- Only one vent is permitted and no more than two rows of additional stitching to reinforce seams.
- Ornamental stitching is only allowed on collar, revers, front edges, pockets or belt (such ornamental stitching in each case not to exceed four rows).
- Braid, embroidery, appliquéd, or ornamental quilting must not be used.
- Pin or other ornamental tucking is not in order.
- No pleats or bellows must be put on pockets.
- Imitation pockets and imitation buttonholes are not allowed.
- External epaulettes are not permitted.
- Restrictions are places on turn-back cuffs, tabs, buttons or buttonholes on the sleeves.
- Belts other than those of self cloth are restricted.
- Fur, fur fabric, velvet, velveteen, silk, rayon; or leather trimmings must not be used.
- Overcoats must be made without flares.
- Capes, fixed or detachable are not in order.
- Slide fasteners are not permitted.
- Sleeves are not to measure more than fourteen inches at the wrist.
- Width of collar must not measure more than six inches.
- Hem should not be more than two inches deep.

##### **Jacket** (including blazer unlined or saddle lined):

Not to exceed 28 inches in length.

Not to be double breasted.

Not to have:

- More than two pockets.
- Nor more than two rows of additional stitching to reinforce seams.
- Ornamental stitching is only allowed on collars, revers, front edges, and pockets (such ornamental stitching in each case not exceeding four rows).
- No vents or slits are allowed.
- No pleats of any description are permitted.
- Pleats or bellows on pockets are restricted.
- Imitation pockets and imitation buttonholes are not allowed.
- Braid, embroidery, appliquéd, or ornamental quilting must not be used.
- Pin or other ornamental tucking is not in order.
- Fur, fur fabric, velvet, velveteen, silk, rayon, or leather trimmings must not be added.
- No buttons or buttonholes should be put on sleeves.
- Open cuffs or imitation open cuffs are not in order.
- Belts of any description must not be used.
- Jackets are not to have slide fasteners.
- Hem must not be more than two inches deep.

##### **Waistcoats:**

No cloth or fabric waistcoats must be made.

**Skirt:**

Not to have:

- More than one pocket.
- Nor more than three buttons.
- Nor more than two inverted or box pleats, or four knife pleats, pressed or unpressed underlap of each side of any pleat not to exceed seven inches when fully extended).
- It must not have more than six seams.
- Or more than two rows of additional stitching to reinforce seams.
- Ornamental stitching, except on pocket or at waist or hem (such ornamental stitching in each case not to exceed four rows).
- Braid, embroidery, appliquéd, or ornamental quilting must not be used.
- Pin or other ornamental tucking is not in order.
- Accordion or all round pleating is not permitted.
- Pleats or bellows on pockets are restricted.
- Imitation pockets and imitation buttonholes are not allowed.
- Skirts must be made without flares.
- Fur, fur fabric, velvet, velveteen, silk, rayon, or leather trimmings must not be added.
- Bib or brace suspension is not permitted.
- Slide fasteners must not be added.
- Hem is not to be made more than three inches deep.

**Slacks:**

To have plain trousers bottoms with a maximum width (circumference) of 21 inches at the bottom.

Not to have:

- More than six buttons and six buttonholes.
- More than two pockets are not allowed.
- Pocket flaps are not permitted.
- Neither are slant pockets.
- Permanent turn-ups do not find favour.
- No pleats must be put in slacks.
- Imitation pockets and imitation buttonholes are not used.
- Side straps or back straps are restricted.
- Detachable belts are not in order.
- Elastic must in no case be used on waistband.
- Rubber or fabric device (other than belt loops) for maintaining slacks in position are not allowed.
- A stitched crease is not in order.
- Raised seams have been ruled out.
- Bib or brace suspension is not permitted.
- Slide fasteners must not be used in slacks.

Table 7 - List of specifications for women's and girls' Utility clothing. All typographical errors commensurate with original document. Information quoted from Anon. 28 August 1942. Women's and Maid's Simplified Clothing. *Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear*. [British Library]. Lxxvii (3958), p.561. [Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD163.

## Chapter Conclusions

Where uniformity through regulation is often central to discussions of the Utility Clothing Scheme, differentiating lived experience and the experience of living enables more in-depth understanding of the realities of working to create garments to be retailed as part of the Scheme (Loiskandl, 2001). A mythologised account of the Utility Clothing Scheme, and, more broadly, of fashion during the Second World War, has been questioned by authors such as Sladen (1995). Rather than industry and trade being dormant bystanders who

conformed to controls put in place without question through the period of conflict, consensus was reached through collaboration. The contemporaneous written record challenges orthodoxies in numerous ways. Where investigation favours chronological charting of controls and their impact on clothing, consumption, and design, and as a result overlook the role of manufacturers and retailers (Summers, 2015), detail founded in accounts of wartime histories position industry and trade centrally (The Drapers' Record, The Leeds Association of British Clothing Designers and Production Managers, Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, Woollen and Worsted Trades Federation). From inside the textile and garment industries and trades, it can be observed that, rather than being passive within the wartime fashion economy, manufacturers and retailers were active participants.

The politics of implementing the Utility Clothing Scheme continued throughout the lifetime of the Scheme. With Parliamentary debate serving as a central source of evidence, this chapter considered the Utility Clothing Scheme within Austerity Regulations of the Second World War. Policy was shaped through back-and-forth communication, as proven by the incremental implementation of regulations to control clothing production, sale, and consumption. This was reflected in clothes Rationing, the Limitation of Supplies, and the Utility Clothing Scheme. Policies appealed to notions of national identity. The collective experience of wartime was drawn upon to urge not only the consumer public but also private businesses to support wartime economies of Austerity. Communication was integral to such endorsement, particularly around language attribution in discussion of the Utility Clothing Scheme – standardisation imparted ideas of uniformity in presentation, removing individualism in design. Here, collaboration with the makers and sellers was necessary to allaying concerns within industry and trade, as well as those of the public.

While it initially appears from regulations that the stipulated requirements of making and selling practices of wartime were effectively adopted with harmonious consensus, discontent lay beneath the surface of the Acts, Orders, and Regulations imposed, as will be evidenced within the future chapters of this thesis. Each of these elements connect with PESTELE; within this chapter, the

Political, Social, Legal, and Ethical (PSLE) have been illustrated through Parliamentary debate, which highlighted misgivings of the Scheme. Where members of the government and the structures within aired concerns, so too, did industry, trade, and the consumer. The emergence of the public-private business model, representative of place and connection, needed to be collective and collaborative in order to reach consensus. As such, this relationship required communication. While innately connected to the Political due to necessary adoption by the government and those working to Utility directives, it is also demonstrative of the Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal and Ethical due to the nature of involvement in the Scheme by these partners, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

## Chapter Four

### Section One - Production

War time conditions call for simple practical styling and in particular the elimination of all unnecessary ornamentation. The good sense of the trade and public is already leading fashion in this direction (Board of Trade, 11 May 1942, p1).

The fashion economy is, and always has been, one of relative informality. Difficult to control, clothing manufacture, from fabric to finished garment, has a long history with area specialisation, linked to marked individualism particular to different counties across Britain (Briscoe, 1971). These ways of working, unique to manufacturing centres, made the ability for the government to fully control production under Utility, and through wartime necessity more broadly, extremely difficult. Under the Utility Clothing Scheme, questions were posed around whether the fashion system could be controlled, and if so, whether this system would be able to fulfil the clothing needs of the civilian population. If regulated to the extent which government directives detailed, transition to wartime production, information dissemination, and 'propaganda' therefore required collaboration between a diverse range of actors and approaches. One such example being the involvement of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers (IncSoc).

This chapter aims to address the actualities of government controls and their influence on the garment manufacturing industry. Critical analysis of the key features of the public-private model embodied by the Utility Clothing Scheme within the manufacturing sector in Britain are conducted. Referring to key contemporaneous discourse from within industry itself, arguments presented in minuted meetings of representative body and committee meetings, alongside

industry related published material, will be analysed. Such analysis presents understanding of differing standpoints of industry and government, juxtaposing arguments while also serving to highlight the reality of Utility clothing manufacture in practice, to enable the manufacture of pieces as part of the Scheme, including the Marlbeck jacket. Placing the Scheme within the context of wartime measures on the Homefront within this analysis of the politics of production, through exploration of governmental collaboration, the Utility Clothing Scheme will not be viewed in isolation. Therefore, conceptualisations of control and democratisation (Howell, 2013) will be questioned in relation to the extent that control could be exerted over the implicitly tacit mechanism of garment production. As a result, the established cultures of the cloth and clothing industries will be positioned within context to illustrate how established practices ran in conjunction with the collaborative, formalised system of regulation of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

In analysis of industry, this chapter is formed around case studies of West Riding cloth manufacturing and the Utility Clothing Scheme. This chapter includes an evaluation of fabric production of the West Riding in the years immediately prior to the Second World War. By detailing a sample of producers making fabrics for the Utility Clothing Scheme, primary source material referenced is formed namely of contemporaneous industry publications, including *The Drapers' Record*, *The Leeds Journal*, *Leeds Industrial Cooperative Society Monthly Record*, and *Textile Mercury and Argus*. From these sources the arguments and active engagement of this area are presented. In addition to this published material, minutes of regional trade body representative meetings and working textile sample books will form the basis for investigation. Through approaching such material to inform investigation, this chapter seeks to understand the realities of the public-private collaboration of the Utility Clothing Scheme. By building on initial contextualisation of the manufacturing economy of the West Riding region, evidence of production of Utility fabrics through dynamic collaboration to establish consensus is developed.

The politics of production of the public-private business model of the Utility Clothing Scheme are indicative of collaboration. However, evidence concerning clothing manufacture, sourced from popular media, trade press including *The Drapers' Record, Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, Textile Mercury and Argus*, as well as trade representative bodies, suggests that consensus was not instantaneously met between state and industry. In understanding the production of Utility garments, this chapter investigates the experience of living and its impacts on ideals of democratisation under the wider context of conflict and its impacts on the Homefront. The extent that a 'national wartime spirit', as defined in chapter three, actually existed will be tested using surviving documentary sources pertaining to Utility and cc41 garments. Evidence is drawn from local and national representative body discussion, business records of West Riding based cloth and clothing manufacturers comprising working documents and in-house publications, and exemplar garments including those from Alexandre, Montague Burton, Marlbeck, Marks and Spencer, Shibden Valley Garments, as well as un-labelled pieces inform analysis. Within this examination, by drawing on industry debate, manufacturing measures, the politics of promotion, and workforce employment in cc41 clothing manufacture, analysis seeks to understand production through the public-private business model.

## **Battles on the Homefront**

Active bombardment through enemy Air Raids were combined with material shortages in food, clothing, and furniture came to a head in 1940. Several bombings were carried out across the wider Yorkshire region, directed on different areas. Rugg (2004) points to York being a repeated target, experiencing ten air raids throughout the period of conflict, with Price (2013) citing the most severe as taking place "on the early morning 29 April 1942" where "the city of York endured its only large-scale air raid of World War Two, one of the 'Baedeker' series aimed at English cultural centres" (p.299).

Recording 56 deaths, irreparable damage to sites of historic importance (Rugg, 2004) demonstrate the targeted nature of this attack.

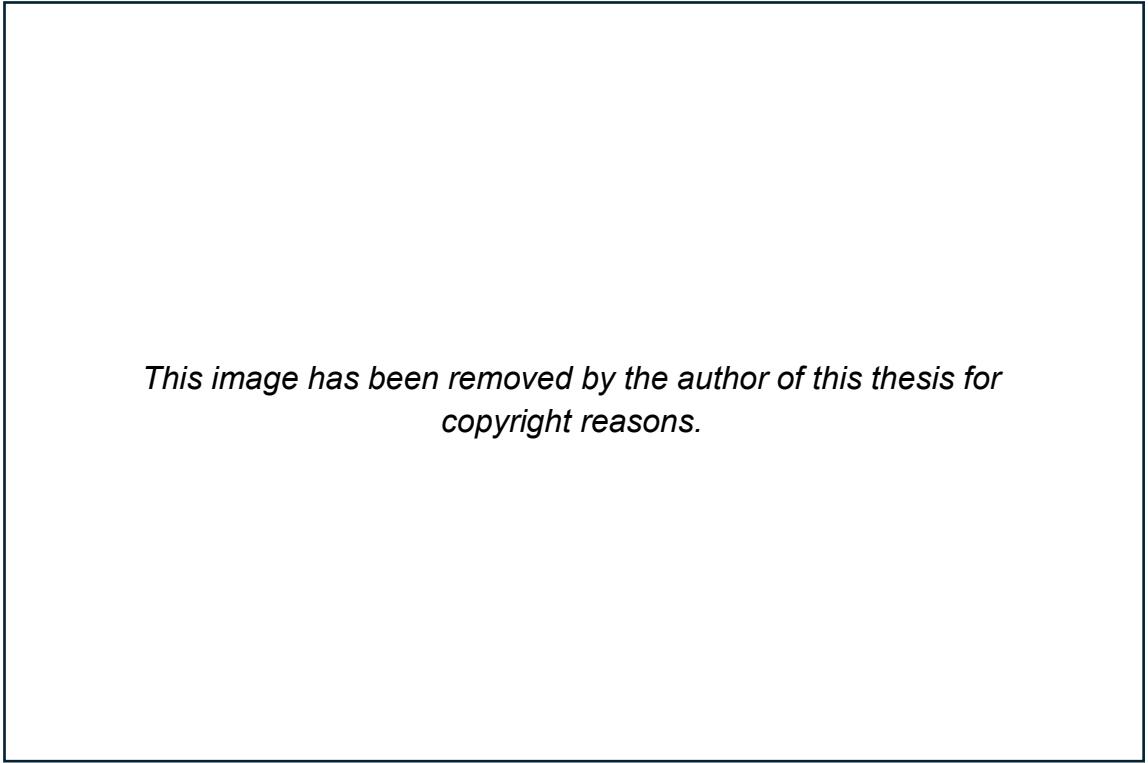
Conversely, incendiaries, high explosives, and fire outbreaks caused by enemy fire in the West Riding were enacted for a different reason. This region was targeted due to its position as a centre for manufacturing and communications. Following the offensive of 14<sup>th</sup> March 1941, which centred on Leeds, and also affected areas of Bradford, Castleford, Doncaster, Huddersfield, Rotherham, Holmfirth, Sheffield, and surrounds, alongside unspecified detonated explosives, a range of unexploded bombs and shells were also found littered across the region [fig. 24]. A landmine was located near Damflask Reservoir in Sheffield on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1941 [fig. 24].<sup>18</sup>

The attack of 14<sup>th</sup> March presented the government with the opportunity to establish notions of connection through joint experience. Miller suggests that “politicians and the media emphasized the unifying and levelling power of the Blitz, labelling the conflict a “People’s War” and claiming that wartime changes in gender roles and class relations might lead to post-war social reform” (2009, p.1). Government viewed action on the Homefront through the lens of its democratising power – the ability to alter perceptions and to bring people together. Such shared experience establish connection between homes and workplaces. Production centres were enemy targets and therefore required constant precautionary monitoring. Businesses worked with the state to ensure employee safety, and in protection of manufacturing and retailing sites. This collaboration was necessary following the seeming initial neglect of the north in consideration of possible enemy attack, and came in the form of precautionary measures and insurances. Established work with government in Air Raid Precaution demonstrates the politics of wartime practice (Marks and Spencer Report and Accounts, 31 March 1941, CR/D/1/16). In addition, businesses took out ‘War Risk’ insurances to cover stocks and equipment (Marks and Spencer,

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<sup>18</sup> This map, created as part of a research project by students of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Leeds Beckett University (published online 2021), shows the impact of what is now referred to as the Leeds Blitz. Highlighted are a range of different devices used during the Air Raid and their resultant impacts, located either on 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> March 1941, including unexploded devices and outbreaks of fire. Information for this project was drawn from records held by the West Yorkshire Archive Service.

22 May 1940, HO/15/1/2/1), and the government enacted the War Damage Act (War Damage Act 1941). Protection for staff, security of factory sites, and maintaining production output, are all factors which must therefore be considered when evaluating the role of government intervention in the manufacture of clothing in wartime. In turn, effects on garment availability, and the iterative changes which the system underwent as the war progressed must be founded in the active position of the Homefront.



*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

Figure 24 - West Riding ARP Bomb map, 14th/15th March 1941. Public History Project students at Leeds Beckett University. 2021. Available from: ©2024 Google.

The universal related experience of active bombardment which was often strategic and focussed on sites of production proved a poignant reminder of the changes inflicted by war. These would be replicated through government campaigns including employment drives, changes to worker's roles, Rationing, Utility, and programmes like Make-do and Mend. These were combined through a principle of joint cause and doing one's bit for the war effort, a central propaganda strategy which encouraged civilian cooperation. However, as Miller

(2009) and Rose (2003) point out, consensus through joint experience was not guaranteed, as the “disparities among individual accounts of the Blitz” bring into question “...the assumption of a unified cultural understanding of the People’s War” (Miller, 29, p.1). Breaking down understanding of the Homefront experience, both collective and individual, accounts for the realities of measures enacted through war, including those experiences of industry and trade.

## **Utility Cloth Creation and Consumption in Context**

In the two years immediately before the outbreak of the Second World War, import and export statistics detail a range of different goods being bought and sold in the United Kingdom [table 8]. The spending and remuneration on these goods, as import and export respectively, illustrates the wide range of commodities being made in the United Kingdom, those which were imported, either as raw materials or finished products, and those which were exported for sale on international markets. While raw wool materials being imported far outweighed quantity being exported, finished woollen items were exported at higher rates than those being exported in the 1937 and 1938 period. A value of £725,706 of “Woollen and Worsted Yarns and Manufactures” were imported, much lower than the £5,270,973 of wool-based finished goods exported from the United Kingdom in the same two-year period (*The Leeds Journal*, November 1938, p. 150).

It should be noted that the value of exported goods quoted would not have purely been made up of the woollen and worsted products made in the West Riding. However, the region’s output would have comprised a significant proportion of this. Exports of wool products to the United States from the West Riding alone in 1937 and 1938 cumulatively measured £209,088 (Statistical Information: West Riding Exports to United States of America. *The Leeds Journal: Incorporating the Leeds Chamber of Commerce*, November 1938, p.150). It must be noted that not all of these wool goods were finished manufactures. Woven, woollen fabrics exported to the United States totalled

£144,961 (Statistical Information: West Riding Exports to United States of America. *The Leeds Journal: Incorporating the Leeds Chamber of Commerce*, November 1938, p.150). Following the outbreak of the war, but prior to the implementation of Rationing, the government encouraged the continuation of exporting raw materials and finished wool cloths not essential to military use as being in ‘the national interest’ (Textile Mercury and Argus, 15 September 1939, p.315). However, problems were soon encountered in the civilian clothing production industry, something commented upon within the House of Commons (Hansard HC Deb., 28 February 1940), and in trade press. Reporting on West Riding textile manufacture in early 1941, the *Textile Mercury and Argus* (10 January 1941, p.37) suggested that “the chief difficulty of those producing fabrics for the civilian trade is that raw material is not always forthcoming, hence the delay in the delivery of goods promised as near as possible to the date agreed upon”. Such orders were to meet the needs of the home market as well as exports to America, Canada, and South Africa, among others (Textile Mercury and Argus, 10 January 1941, p.37).

## UNITED KINGDOM IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CERTAIN COMMODITIES

	IMPORTS.		EXPORTS.	
	MONTH ENDED 30 <sup>TH</sup> SEPT.		MONTH ENDED 30TH SEPT.	
	1937	1938	1937	1938
	£	£	£	£
Coal	1,774	988	3,544,684	3,126,889
Iron Ore and Scrap	1,417,547	462,987	39,562	67,652
Wood and Timber	7,828,948	4,397,626	9,250	5,608
Wool, Raw and Waste, and Woollen	2,240,0947	1,740,178	655,030	477,411
Rags	2,296,088	1,375,765	86,276	53,905
Hides and Skins, Undressed	2,228,388	780,682	3,955,733	2,995,622
Irons and Steel and Manufactures				
Thereof	2,003,515	1,634,956	4,253,164	4,471,846
Machinery	771,455	500,573	101,688	112,562
Manufactures of Wood and Timber	357,145	368,561	2,982,630	2,288,343
Woollen and Worsted Yarns and				
Manufactures	771,890	683,930	1,038,324	869,842
Apparel	263,685	271,806	204,179	175,883
Footwear	1,235,037	1,170,142	2,046,380	1,726,474
Chemicals, Drugs, Dyes and Colours	3,659,155	3,597,711	595,379	391,054
Oils, Fats, Resins, Manufactured				
Leather and Manufactures Thereof	873,672	582,351	454,745	345,567

Table 8 – Facsimile table showing import and export statistics of the United Kingdom for 1937 and 1938. Data taken from Statistical Information: United Kingdom Imports and Exports of Certain Commodities, *The Leeds Journal: Incorporating the Leeds Chamber of Commerce*. Number 6 Volume 15, November 1938, p.150.

Addressing these statistics of import and export, on a global scale as well as in more specific focus on trade of the West Riding with the United States, can serve several different functions within this thesis. The previously noted foundation of the production and trade of the West Riding, which had an established role in the home trade market as well as in export, show the different manufactures of the West Riding. This data is also illustrative of the goods which needed to be brought in, either to enable making-up in the West Riding, or which were not produced in the United Kingdom. In addition, these statistics prove to highlight the output of a wide range of producers, encapsulating raw material processing, textile weaving, clothing making-up, and footwear trades [table 8]. Furthermore, this exemplifies the changes which

occurred in wartime trade, in both import and export of raw materials and finished products, as will be discussed.

With reference to exports of manufactures of the West Riding of Yorkshire, *The Leeds Journal* (November 1938) reported on the specificities of the trade with America. With statistics sourced from the American Consul in Bradford, this reportage displays the breadth of the West Riding's fibre working. Products exported to America from the West Riding in 1937 and 1938 included raw materials, industrial machinery, woven cloths, and finished fabrics [table 9]. The quantities of wool-based products in this table of export data alone highlight the focus of a great proportion of the region's manufacturing output was based in woollens.

## WEST RIDING EXPORTS TO UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ARTICLES.	DECLARED VALUE. SEPTEMBER.		ARTICLES.	DECLARED VALUE. SEPTEMBER.	
Sheeps' and lambs wool and hair of camel, goat, alpaca, etc.	1937.	1938.		1937.	1938.
	£	£	Cotton	£	£
Wool	37,067	26,157	Cloth	2,734	4,493
Hair	667	236	All other	4,418	468
Wool, etc., manufactures of:-			Textiles :-		
Noils	8,478	34,281	Miscellaneous	1,109	1,867
Wastes	1,534	1,078	Iron & Steel, Manufactures of		
Rags	4,174	2,559	Wire and manufactures of		
Tops	2,227	3,081	Card Clothing	7,440	5,110
Yarns	2,983	11,877	Textile Machinery	5,210	1,625
Woven Fabrics :-			Other Machinery	384	1,517
Wool and other hair	28,070	21,741	Leather Dressed upper and lining	8,830	3,433
Mohair	1,456	2,055	Other	5,186	5,654
Pile fabrics and manufactures of	1,725	1,646	Miscellaneous	9,147	6,054
All other	9,203	6,793			
TOTAL WOOL PRODUCTS..	£97,584	£111,504	TOTAL	£44,458	£30,221
TOTAL SHIPMENTS TO AMERICA :- SEPTEMBER, 1937, £142,042; SEPTEMBER 1938, £141,725					

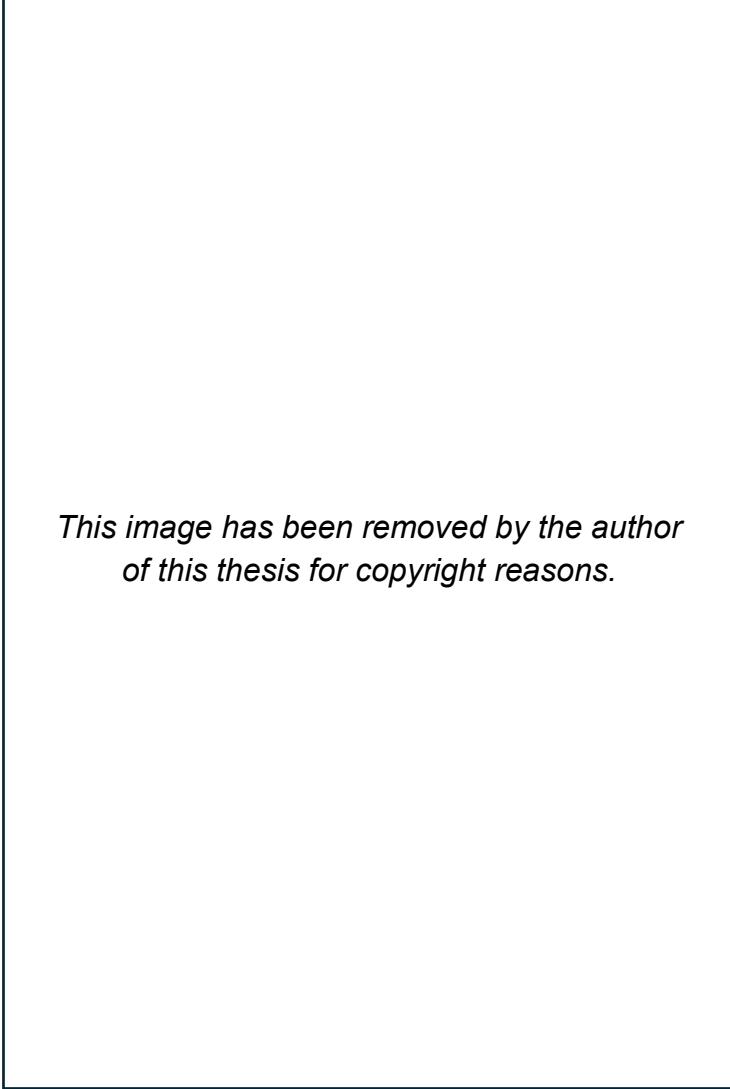
Table 9 – Facsimile table showing statistics for exports from the West Riding of Yorkshire to the United States of America for 1937 and 1938. Data taken from Statistical Information: *West Riding Exports to United States of America, The Leeds Journal: Incorporating the Leeds Chamber of Commerce*. Number 6 Volume 15, November 1938, p.150.

With shortages in raw materials, changes to import and export, and reduced output, government controls were enacted to ensure adequate provision. With the implementation of the Order stipulating the *Rationing of Cloth, Clothing, Footwear and Hand Knitting Wool* in 1941, industry discussion highlighted the role of makers in the process of consumption. The discerning customer was positioned strongly in stipulating what should be found in the shops, meaning:

The textile manufacturing industry may look forward to the possibility of change in the class of goods likely to be required, because in the laying-out of their coupons the buying public will be the governing factor in deciding which of the rationed articles the retailers will be required to stock as the most important for meeting future needs. (Textile Mercury and Argus, 13 June 1941, p.551).

Knowledge of their market reach and the different demands on certain products placed fabric manufacturers centrally in informing on which textiles should be produced for Utility garments. How consumers chose to spend their coupons on different garment types largely affected manufacturer output. With regard to wool-based cloths produced prior to the announcement of the Scheme, it was reported within industry papers that “the public will tend to use their coupons for essential coupons of the utility type and this will cut out to a large extent what may be regarded as purely luxury lines.” (Textile Mercury and Argus, 4 July 1941, p.6). In this sense, ‘utility’ refers to the practical fabrics with cost implications, durability, and the short-lived essential clothing. Despite the difference in the use of the word utility here, what it does imply is that a wide range of consumers, having used rationing coupons for clothing for a little over a month at time of publication, were considering different elements of woollen garments which the Utility Clothing Scheme itself was proposed to embody.

Consumers sought practicality and longevity (Mass Observation, FR 2539, 5 May 1942). This, of course, shaped the direction of manufacture, with coupons largely affecting the amount and type of clothing higher income earners could purchase (Textile Mercury and Argus, 4 July 1941, p.6). For example, Rations of raw materials directed for use in fabric for the civilian clothing trade were found by the Yeadon and Guiseley Manufacturers’ Association to be inadequate for the requirements of wool-based clothing (Woollen and Worsted Trades’ Federation, 22 November 1939, p. 3). Consumer requirements, such as changes in work and the need to extend the life of garments, also influenced the development of different fabrics and finishes. For example, crease-resisting textiles [fig. 25], were beneficial to the wearer due to the new requirements of wartime work. This further evidences the role of manufacturer’s ability to advise on consumer demands on the market. By considering market drivers such as cost, accessibility, and longevity (The Drapers’ Record, 27 September 1941, p.4), fabric production was tailored to shifting wartime consumer demand, directly influenced by the ramifications of the conflict.



*This image has been removed by the author  
of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

Figure 25 - Advertisement by The Bradford Dyers' Association for Triple-Three Crease-Resisting Finish Fabric. Three Manufacturers who know what women will buy *The Drapers' Record*. 27 September 1941. [British Library]. 2824, pp.4.  
[Accessed 13 June 2023] Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

Within fabric manufacturing, assurances were made to affirm that those working in the industry need not compromise their product. It was reported that “the scheme aims at avoiding waste of raw materials in the production of worthless articles, ensuring adequate output of clothing of the types needed, and preventing prices rising beyond the reach of the mass public” (The Times, 4 February 1941, p.2). Because of such statements around what was deemed necessary and, conversely, “worthless”, early concerns around Utility were widespread. The Woollen and Worsted Trades’ Federation Executive Committee noted “firms catering for the higher grade type of cloths were not

required to make the lower grade types. Steps had been taken to ascertain the amount of Utility Cloth required and if it was found that supplies were greater than the demand orders would have to be reduced" (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 16 October 1941, p.1). Raw material rationing therefore would shape production output along with consumer demand for Utility garments.

For the making-up of Utility clothing, identifiable Utility cloths were produced. Marks and Spencer (M&S) proposed that "within the framework of the Utility Scheme it is possible to produce an extensive range of attractive-looking fabrics.". (Marks and Spencer Forces Bulletin, March 1945, HO/3/2/2/7/11). Different material types were attributed a corresponding number which was associated with the make-up of the fabric. As suggested by the title, *The First List of Cloths which May be Sold Under the Special Quota and the Types of Garments to be Made from Them*,<sup>19</sup> published in the 30<sup>th</sup> August 1941 issue of The Drapers' Record, laid out the initially drawn up classification of Utility fabrics, and the Utility clothing which could be manufactured from the stipulated textile categories. As reported in The Times, "some 60-odd types of cloth that may be produced for the Scheme are specified, and the garments covered by the order fall into 12 groups... various articles covered by the order would be of really good material" (The Times, 4 February 1942, p.2).

From the published First List of Cloths, 29 specification numbers were ascribed to corresponding specified textile types. These fell under three distinct broader categories: various woollens and worsteds identified under 16 different specification numbers, different weights of cottons with 10 specification numbers attributed, and rayon fabrics falling under three specification numbers (The Drapers' Record, 30 August 1941). Each of the broader catagories were broken down further into quite specific types within their groupings. In addition, exactly what kinds of garment that were permitted to be made from the different fabrics were stipulated [fig. 26]. These correlated with material type, weave quality, patterning, and colouring (The Drapers' Record, 30 August 1941).

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<sup>19</sup> For ease of reference, *The First List of Cloths which May be Sold Under the Special Quota and the Types of Garments to be Made from Them* shall be referred to, simply, as The First List of Cloths.

FIRST LIST OF CLOTHS WHICH MAY BE SOLD UNDER THE SPECIAL QUOTA AND THE TYPES OF GARMENTS TO BE MADE FROM THEM							
No.	Cloth (a)	Sale Price (before Deducting Cash Discount) Not to Exceed:-			Type of Garment into which to be made		
		Width in inches (see note 1.)	Price per yard (b)	(See Note 2.)			
<b>WOOLLEN AND WORSTED</b>							
*201 Grey union flannel, 15 oz.	... ... 54-56	3s. 3d., W.M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' trousers.			
				Boys' lined suits or lined knickers.			
*202 Navy Melton, 20 oz.	... ... 54-56	3s. 11½ d., W. M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' trousers.			
				Boys' lined knickers.			
*203 Woollen Tweed, 14 oz.	... ... 54-56	3s. 6d., W. M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' trousers.			
				Boys' lined knickers.			
*204 Woollen Tweed, 14 oz.	... ... 54-56	4s. 6d. W.M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' suits or sports coats.			
				Boys' lined knickers.			
*205 Woollen Tweed, 14 oz.	... ... 54-56	4s. W. M.	... ... ...	Boys' lined suits.			
*206 Woollen Tweed, 14 oz.	... ... 54-56	5s. 6d. W. M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' suits or trousers.			
				Women's or maids' skirts or slacks.			
				Boys' lined suits.			
*207 Navy Melton 22oz.	... ... 54-56	4s. 4d. W. M.	... ... ...	Boys' overcoats.			
*208 Woollen, woollen and worsted mixture, or tweed 14 oz.	54-56	6s. 6d. W. M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' suits.			
209 Scottish tweed, Yorkshire woollen tweed, or "all worsted, 13½ oz.	54-56	7s. 9d. net.	... ... ...	Women's or maids' overcoats or costumes.			
210 All-worsted, woollen, woollen and worsted mixture, or tweed, other than Nos 203, 204, 205, 206, 208, or 209 above.	54-56	5s. 6d. net.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' suits.			
				Women's or maids' overcoats or costumes.			
211 Navy Melton, 22 oz.	... ... 54-56	5s. W. M.	... ... ...	Women's or maids' skirts, dresses or blouses.			
212 Woollen tweed, 20 oz.	... ... 54-56	9s. 6d. W. M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' overcoats.			
213 Grey union flannel, 16 oz.	... ... 54-56	4s. 3d. W. M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' trousers.			
214 Solid Botany worsted flannel	... ... 54-56	7s. 10d. W. M.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' trousers.			
				Women's or maids' costumes or slacks.			
215 Union gabardine	... ... ... 54-56	6s. net.	... ... ...	Boys' raincoats.			
216 Union shirting	... ... ... 28	1s. 6d. net.	... ... ...	Men's or youths' shirts.			
<b>COTTON CLOTHS</b>							
301 Flannelette or winceyette pyjama cloths, woven stripes, plain dyed or printed.	36	1s. net.	... ... ...	Women's pyjamas or nightdresses.			
				Men's or boys' pyjamas.			
302 Cambric or poplin shirtings, white, plain dyed or printed.	36	11d. net.	... ... ...	Men's or boys' shirts.			
303 Harvard dyed drill, twill or winceyette shirting.	36	1s. 0½d. net.	... ... ...	Men's shirts.			
304 Dress fabrics, white, plain dyed or printed.	36	1s. 3d. net.	... ... ...	Women's or maids' cotton dresses or blouses			
305 Ginghams, zephrys and other woven design cotton dress fabrics.	36	1s. 3d. net.	... ... ...	Women's or maids' cotton dresses or blouses.			
306 Overall cloths, white, plain dyed or printed.	36	10d. net.	... ... ...	women's or maids' overalls or house frocks.			
307 Terry towelling	... ... ... 36	1s. 6d. net.	... ... ...	Babies' napkins.			
308 Cotton gabardine	... ... ... 54-56	2s. 7½d. net.	... ... ...	Raincoats.			
309 Fustians - Bedford cord, 8 oz.	...	-	For grey cloth, 2s. 8d. per lb. For finished cloth, 25 per cent. above grey cloth price, subject to maximum for finished cloth of 3s. 4d. per lb.	Men's or youths' trousers or breeches.			
				For grey cloth, 2s. 8d. per lb. For finished cloth, 33½ per cent. above grey cloth price, subject to maximum for finished cloth of 3s. 7d. per lb.			
310 Fustians - other than Bedford cord, 10 oz.	-	For grey cloth, 2s. 8d. per lb. For finished cloth, 33½ per cent. above grey cloth price, subject to maximum for finished cloth of 3s. 7d. per lb.	Men's or youths' trousers or breeches.				
<b>RAYON CLOTHS</b>							
401 Woven dress and blouse cloths, plain dyed or printed.	33	3s. 6d. net.	... ... ...	Women's or maids' dresses or blouses.			
402 Woven lingerie cloths, plain dyed or printed.	33	2s. 6d. net.	... ... ...	Women's or maids' slips, knickers or pyjamas.			
403 Locknit fabric, plain dyed or printed	36	1s. 9d. net.	... ... ...	Women's or maids' slips, knickers, pantees, pyjamas or nightdresses.			

\*Coupon free until October 31, 1941, to makers-up for their immediate use.

Notes. - 1. For other widths the maximum prices shown are to be proportionately adjusted.

2. Any of the cloths listed may be used for making up into infants' or girls' garments or sizes not chargeable to Purchase Tax.

"Cotton" cloths are those containing 85 per cent. or more of

cotton or rayon or a mixture of the two but not more than 15 per cent. of rayon. "Rayon" cloths are those containing 85 per

cent. or more of cotton or rayon or a mixture of the two and more than 15 per cent. of rayon.

(a) Weight per lineal yard not less than stated.

(b) Price W. M. is woollen measure; net is net measure.

Figure 26 - Facsimile of the First List of Cloths which May be Sold Under the Special Quota and the Types of Garments to be Made from Them. 30 August 1941. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2820, pp.16. [Accessed 13 June 2023].

Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

While Utility textiles were regulated by price controls, so too were non-Utility fabrics and finished garments. Control over maximum prices which could be ascribed for non-Utility goods were reported to have been enacted, as it was “intended to stop further rises in prices at the manufacturing stage and by limiting the distributive margin” which would, as a result “bring about substantial reductions in the price to the public” (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 31 July 1942, p.497).

In relation to Utility cloths, the implementation of ceiling prices as well as maximum profit margins by the BoT, following discussions with the Central Price Regulation Committee, affected retail, wholesale, and manufacture alike, with prices of cc41 fabrics and finished garments reduced at acquisition by retailers following the removal of Purchase Tax on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1942 (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 31 July 1942). As various examples of Utility fabrics were also available for direct retail sale to the consumer, different fabrics such as cottons were produced with this market in mind [fig. 27 and fig. 28]. These cloths could be used in all manner of projects including home dressmaking or furnishings.



Figure 27 - 'Dayella' Regd. ca.1941-1952. *Detail of Utility fabric and affixed cc41 label.*  
[Fabric: Cotton. Sticker: Paper]. At: Author's own collection.



Figure 28 - *Detail of Utility fabric [front]*. ca.1941-1952. [Cotton].  
At: Author's own collection.

The example cc41 fabric shown in figure 30 calls into question the strictness of manufacture under government regulation in regard to fabric wastage. This printed cotton floral fabric appears to correspond with government regulations; measuring 36 inches in width, likely for use in making-up a dress (The Drapers' Record, 30 August 1941, p.16). Further, reduction of wastage through decorative design as a non-directional print (Bunce, 1996) aided placement of pattern cutting blocks (Andrew, 2025). However, the inked cc41 mark applied to the reverse [fig. 29] shows through to the front of the fabric [fig. 30]. As the stamped labelling is quite large in order to incorporate corresponding regulation numbers measuring 4.5 by 5 inches, this possibly renders a proportion of the fabric unusable. This could be due to manufacturer oversight, as human error or fault in equipment. Nevertheless, this fabric, at some point, was available for consumer purchase, hence its survival.



Figure 29 - *Utility fabric [reverse]* showing inked 'cc41' stamp and associated specification numbers. ca.1941-1952. [Cotton]. At: Author's own collection.



Figure 30 - *Detail of Utility fabric [front] showing visible cc41 mark and associated specification numbers. ca.1941-1952. [Cotton]. At: Author's own collection.*

## Utility Textile Production in the West Riding

As already noted, Gregory's assertion that within "woollen production in the West Riding...drive to national supremacy was largely completed in the eighty years or so before the advent of the factory system" (Gregory, 1982, p.47). Therefore, the established practices and specialised focus of the West Riding, founded in the late seventeenth century, gave the region prominence which was furthered through industrialised production methods which developed through the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Pat Hudson has also argued the West Riding's textile and garment manufacturing industry was distinctive due "...in particular, [to] its lack of homogeneity" (1986, p.25). Hudson's all-encompassing comment on the textile industries of the West Riding encapsulates a key defining feature: the unique nature of the manufacture and retailing practices of businesses in the county through into the twentieth century (Hudson, 1986). Geography, transportation, population, and historic

associations with manufacture and trade were central to the West Riding of Yorkshire's position as a key authority in the production and sale of fabrics and clothing.

The description 'Heavy Woollen District' applied to the West Riding of Yorkshire reflects the eighteenth and nineteenth century focus of woollen processing in the county, and it is a label that is still recognised today. The undertaking of production processes relating to the two products of wool and worsted grew significantly in Yorkshire through the eighteenth century, where the county came to overtake rival production centres including the West Country and East Anglia (Fowler, 2016). This served to establish a market position for Yorkshire, where the West Riding became a hub made up of several commercial centres, for example, Bradford's industry centred around worsted<sup>20</sup> and broadcloth,<sup>21</sup> while Leeds concentrated on the production and trade of woollens (Shell, 2014). Yorkshire therefore became associated with early large-scale textile manufacturing as well as sizable market trading, primarily centred on a focussed and specialised range of woollen fabrics.

The shift from a mainly domestic or 'cottage' manufacture to the factory system in turn led to the expansion of centres of production and trade in the West Riding, particularly in Bradford, Leeds, and Wakefield, through population increase and the encompassing of outlying smaller towns and villages into the large towns and cities recognisable today (King, 2021). This industrial change could be seen throughout the country, with market expansion providing incentive to alter methods of production, moving to an increased amount of 'putting-out'<sup>22</sup> and new forms of factory production over small home-scale

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<sup>20</sup> Worsted is manufactured of combed, long-staple wool, and as such, both the spun yarns and woven cloths vary, with some more fine and others coarse (Styles, 2013). Worsted is classified as a high-quality fabric due to the finish of the fabric and processes involved in its production.

<sup>21</sup> Broadcloth, from the nineteenth century, was identified as "a cloth made of fine merino yarns in plain twill weave, heavily milled with dress face finish" (Cumming, Cunnington, and Cunnington, 2017, p.304). Earlier examples were manufactured from wool, and woven of a plain weave (Cumming, Cunnington, and Cunnington, 2017, p.304).

<sup>22</sup> 'Putting-out' or 'out working' was a method of production in which individuals worked in their home and sold their outputs, often at piece-rate (price paid per item made) to a capitalist (Amor, 2023, p.263).

manufacture to cater for rising demand from the late eighteenth and into the early nineteenth century (King, 2021). The West Riding represented clothing manufacture in its entirety, through subsidiary trades which processed raw materials, to weaving of fabric, garment making-up, and wholesale and retail trade [fig. 31].

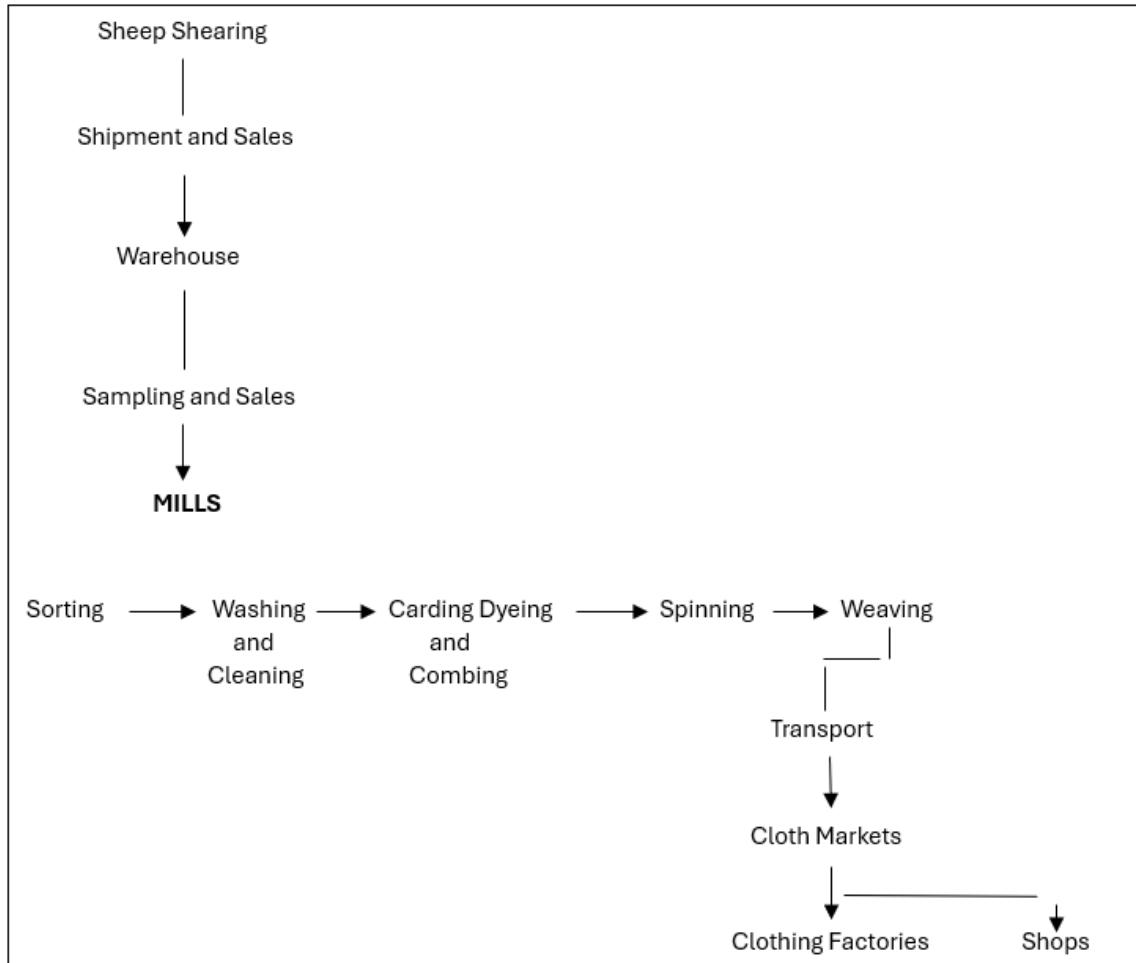


Figure 31 - Flow chart depicting processes in the wool textile industry. Facsimile informed by Clayton, R. 1962. *A Textile Town in the West Riding*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 29.

Along with wool and worsted, there were also several other branches to the woollen trade of the West Riding. These included kersey, a coarse and lower priced wool twill fabric typically used for working dress, which was a staple of early large-scale production in Halifax, and shalloon, a light twill weave worsted lining fabric (Smail, 1999). The higher quality fabrics produced in Yorkshire not

only fulfilled practical purposes but also played to consumer desires for fashionability (Smail, 1999), an important market force which was becoming pivotal, particularly during the nineteenth century. Colour, pattern and composition of textiles were all exploited by large-scale manufacturers who gained insight into consumption patterns from merchants, enabling them to alter production dependent on market forces and fashion, catering to a growing range of consumers (Smail, 1999). The interconnected nature of industry and trade, from raw material processing, to weaving and garment production, through to wholesale and retail sale, is of important note in consideration of customer demand which drove industry direction.

As shown, fabrics of the West Riding ranged from practical, sturdy, everyday fabrics, to fashionable and high-end textiles of all kinds, with a particular emphasis on worsted and quality woollen weaves. In the nineteenth century, textiles produced in the region also included shoddy. The recycling of old, worn clothing and of wool waste from garment manufacturing was credited to Benjamin Law in 1813 (Shell, 2014). Proving to be a specialist process in itself, shoddy production continued into the early twentieth century. This branch of trade was undertaken centrally in Batley and Dewsbury, as well as in other sites contained within the bounds of what was dubbed the 'geographic triangle' of Leeds, Bradford, and Wakefield (Shell, 2014, p.375). Though cheaper woollens were certainly a marked feature of the West Riding output at this period, the assortment of weaves created across the county signalled a market reach which reflected prominence for incorporating superior quality textiles.

The range of fabrics created in the West Riding was indicative of a range of focussed specialisms in production connected to different locales of the county (Hudson, 1986). The influence and nature of such multiplicity in textile manufacture was illustrated further in the making of such fabrics as shalloons, camblets, and tammies, worsteds of a lighter weighting than those of Bradford manufacture. While shalloon production was mainly concentrated in Halifax during this period, Wakefield expanded its established manufacture of 'heavier milled cloths' to incorporate tammies; so vast was this extension that a Tammy Hall was founded there in 1776 (Hudson, 1986). Hudson (1986) describes how "some of the finest quality cloths were produced around Huddersfield" (p.26),

with such textiles as kerseymeres and ‘fancy’ woollens, alongside other different narrow and broad cloth weaves produced in the district (Hudson, 1986, p.26). In addition, after the turn of the twentieth century, a reputable specialisation in “all-wool worsted suitings” noted as “an important fashion trade” emerged in the Huddersfield area (Jenkins and Ponting, 1982, p.237/238). Further, in nearby Batley, Dewsbury, and Mirfield, for example, textile manufacture focussed on ‘white cloth’; undyed and less decorative than the finer weaves produced in Huddersfield (Hudson, 1986, p.26). Further to wool-based fabric production, another specialty within the West Riding was light-weight fabrics, based in cotton and silk, used for the making of dresses, recognised as the “Bradford trade” (Clapham, 1906, p. 520). The production of such a range of different textile types in the West Riding was representative of practice in the region. Accounting for different sections of the market, ranging from fine and fashion fabrics to shoddy, the cloths created across the locale were indicative of environment, market drivers, technological development, and industrial practices.

The varied nature of employment within the textile industries and trades in the West Riding demonstrates several long-standing features unique to the region. Writing in 1901, Clapham gave insight into employment levels in woollen and worsted, citing a typical Yorkshire woollen or shoddy works as having 95 employees, and a worsted manufactory as employing 195 in 1889. By the year of publication (1901), Clapham highlighted that “seven-eighths of the worsted factories of the United Kingdom are in the West Riding” (Clapham, 1901, p.516). In business enterprise culture, the labour force present in the West Riding was enabled to cement a prominent role in the manufacture and retail of Utility clothing. Namely, workforce make-up and networks were characteristic of the region, alongside ways of working, including mass manufacture. These attributes enabled those in the cloth and clothing fields, with businesses based in the area, to not only contribute to the Scheme but also to shape it through the modes of practice they employed, even before the Second World War.

Following what the Bradford Chamber of Commerce described as “considerable controversy with regard to the introduction of State Control of the industry” during the First World War (*Bradford Chamber of Commerce Centenary*

*Review*, 1951, p.21), the Wool Textile Delegation was founded. The Delegation centralised the voice of this area of the textile industry, which, when in discussion with the State, demonstrated active involvement of the labour force, business, and industry. Such active debate shows the continued agency of industry, challenging notions of consensus within control. The demands of production during the Second World War meant that established sites turned their looms over to different weaves and qualities required on both the home front and the battlefield. Where production of cloths for use in uniforms commanded special considerations, so too did the making of fabrics for use at home. Throughout Britain, textile manufactures represented both Utility and non-Utility fabrics alike in their output, and many manufacturing sites located throughout the West Riding region reflected a range of such different fabrics, founded in the previously noted range of different textiles created here for some time prior to the Second World War, as discussed.

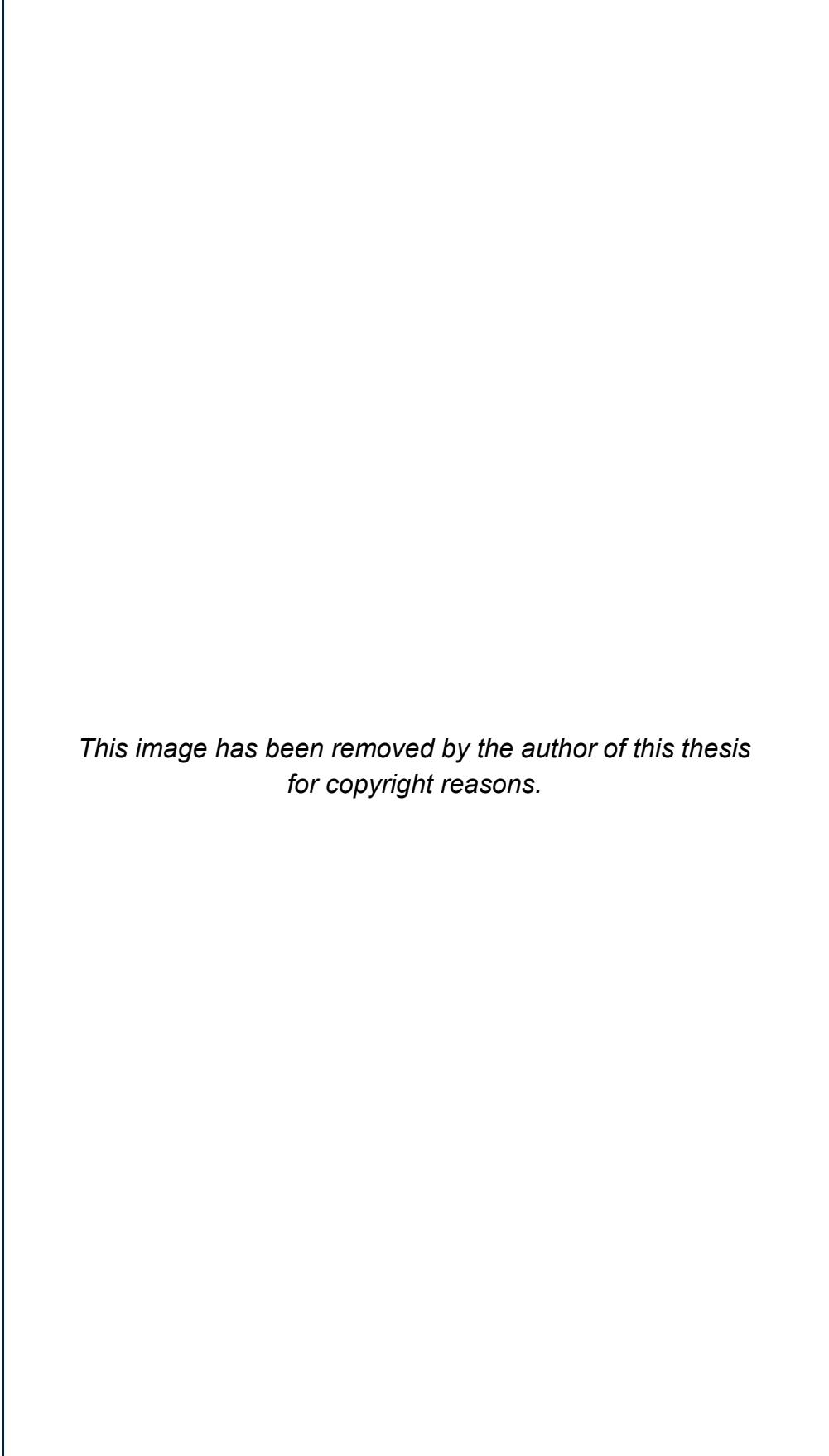
The West Riding had an established a reputation for producing fancy<sup>23</sup> and fashion fabrics, as well as those for everyday wear. This is reflected in the breadth of manufacture through the region, which continued through the period of conflict. Innovation in textile production showed unique weaves associated with different sites, recognised the world over. Tweeds and suitings for tailored garments including suits, coats, and jackets, are notable features of the West Riding output. During the inter-war and immediate pre-war period, the changing fashions in fabric styles were therefore represented in the regions output. Pinstripe wool-weaves, in wool or worsted, are prominent features of two- and three-piece men's suits that exemplify weaves produced throughout the region [fig. 32]. So too were colourful, patterned tweeds for use in both women's and menswear of the period [fig. 33 and fig. 34]. The textile types produced in the West Riding for some time before the Second World War, and into the period of conflict, correspond with the different fabrics described as being for use in Utility garments on The First List of Cloths. In the State of Trade Reports for the West Riding, published 6<sup>th</sup> January 1939, it was noted that new patterns of tweeds were being produced for use in womenswear, with popular receipt of lower and

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<sup>23</sup> "Fancy" fabrics were a class of cloth which were made-up of the most expensive materials, such as worsted and silk (White, 1837, p363).

mid-priced cloths by customers (Textile Mercury and Argus, p. 20). Conversely, established classes of “higher grade” seasonal spring suiting fabrics for use in menswear, including “Botany worsteds, flannels, tweeds and gaberdines for trouserings” (Textile Mercury and Argus, 6 January 1939, p. 20) maintained their popularity. The different patterned weaves at a range of price points were used in a range of different clothing types. The widespread use of tweeds would remain a trend which would continue under the Utility Clothing Scheme.

The textiles and weaves discussed here endured into wartime, and were particularly dominant under regulations which shaped fashion through the period of conflict, including in the making of cloth and clothing under Utility Clothing Scheme. Woollen fabrics, like those shown, were used in a range of different kinds of garments, including those for children, as in the infant’s coat shown in figure 35. Though place of manufacture of both cloth and garment itself cannot be certain – due to a lack in associated labelling – what this coat reflects is types of woollen fabrics produced in the West Riding, particularly when compared with the surviving plainer samples of cloth included in W. & E. Crowther’s Index Book [fig. 33]. The infant’s coat, however, is illustrative of Utility garments produced for children, bearing a cc41 label [fig. 36]. That the back vent maintains its tacking stitches [fig. 37 and fig. 38], which suggests that this may be a ‘deadstock’ garment, possibly never having been sold, or, never having been worn once purchased.

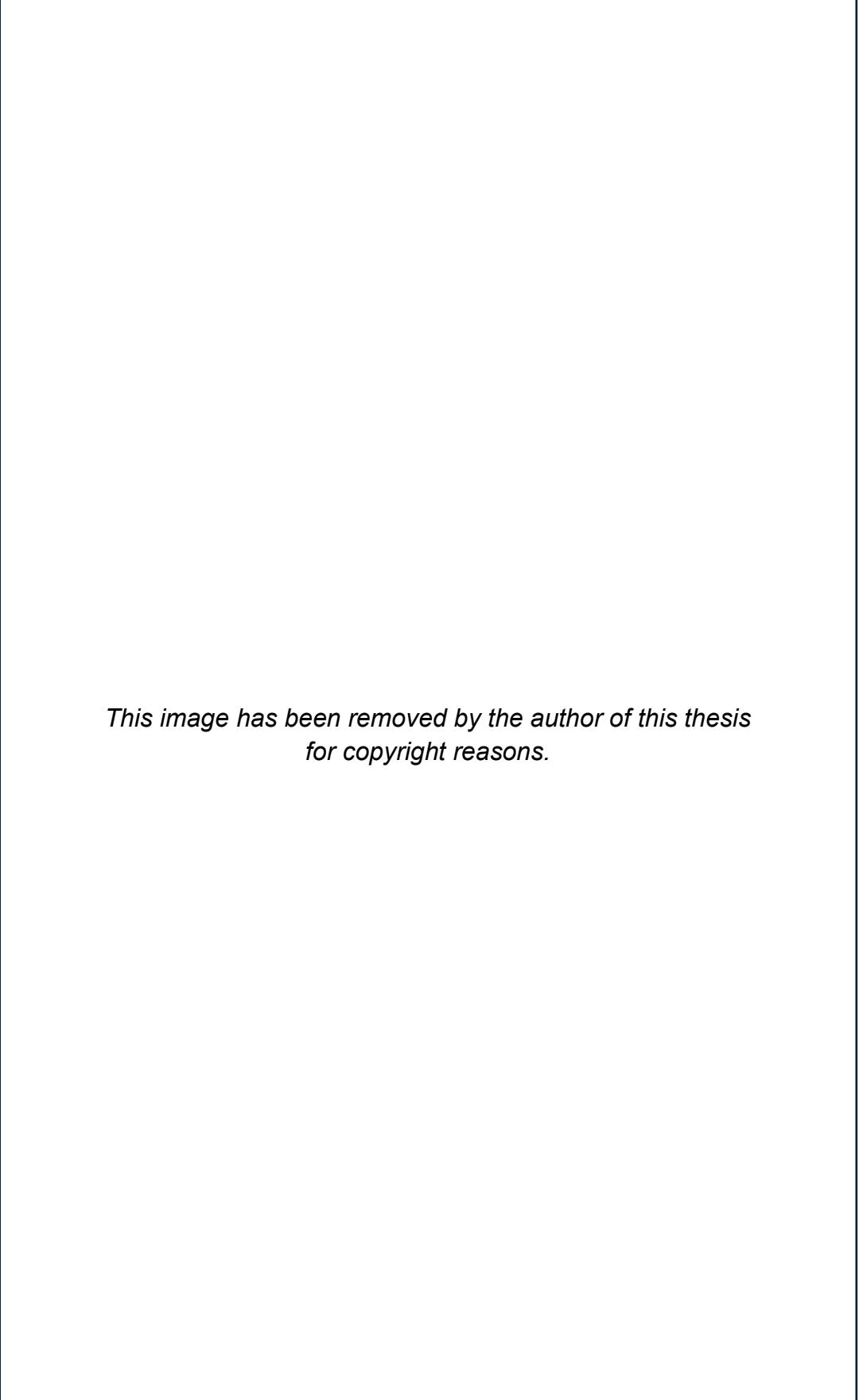


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Figure 32 - F. M. Crispin. ca.1940s. *Patterns for weaving and affixed sample swatches,*  
*Rookery Mills Pattern Books.* [Paper and wool].  
At: Kirklees: West Yorkshire Archive Service. B/CH/39.

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Figure 33 - W. & E. Crowther. ca.1938-1959. *Fabric sample swatches, Index Book 0100 9500. [Paper and wool].* At: Kirklees: West Yorkshire Archive Service (Kirklees). B/WEC/27.



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Figure 34 - James Watkinson. ca.1941-1945 [query 1937-1942].  
*Fabric sample swatches, Pattern Book. [Paper and wool].*  
At: Kirklees: West Yorkshire Archive Service. B/JW/32.



Figure 35 - *Infant's Utility coat [front]*. ca.1941-1952. [Wool with synthetic lining].  
At: Author's own collection.



Figure 36 - Detail of 'cc41' label from infant's Utility coat. ca.1941-1952.  
[Wool with synthetic lining] At: Author's own collection.



Figure 37 - *Infant's Utility coat [back]*. ca.1941-1952. [Wool with synthetic lining].  
At: Author's own collection.



Figure 38 - *Detail of back vent tacking stitching on infant's Utility coat. ca.1941-1952.*  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.

Longstanding associations of Huddersfield with fine quality fabrics were demonstrated into the interwar years, and continued through the duration of the Second World War. As shown in the examples of woollen textile samples woven by F. M. Crispin, W. & E. Crowther, and James Watkinson depicted in the above figures 32, 33, and 34, the fashion fabrics of the Huddersfield area endured. Such longevity is confirmed within the records of Rowland, Mitchell & Co., woollen manufacturers, which show production of wool fabrics for use in both Utility and non-Utility garments at the company's mill in Lepton, Huddersfield. On 6<sup>th</sup> October 1941, weaving of fabrics to the sum of £81 17s. 2d. is logged for Joseph May & Sons (Leeds) Ltd, with order being recorded as being placed on "special licence" (Rowland, Mitchell & Co., 6 October 1941, p.2). Special licence production is noted on orders for several different companies purchasing from Rowland, Mitchell & Co. through the period of use of this Sales Book (October 1941 – March 1947). Similarly, the appearance of "special quota" is notable, mentioned on orders for garment manufacturers including Bairstow Sons & Co. Ltd, as is the note of "Registered Firm", which was recorded for A. W. Roberts Ltd., among others (Rowland, Mitchell & Co., 1941). Additionally, mention of export fabrics, equally appears throughout sales for Rowland, Mitchell & Co., documented for New York, Buenos Aries, Cairo, Havana, Jerusalem, Palestine, and Tel Aviv (Rowland, Mitchell & Co., 1941).

With such an international portfolio of production, record of Utility fabrics began to appear for Rowland, Mitchell & Co. from September 1942 – the first order of such textiles being placed by the afore mentioned Bairstow Sons & Co. Ltd. clothiers, of Huddersfield, a Designated Utility clothing producer. Such cloth, "o/5563 Shrunk 702½ yds 6/4 @ 36." was, it appears, ordered of 7<sup>th</sup> May 1942, being fulfilled 28<sup>th</sup> September that year (Rowland, Mitchell & Co., 28 September 1942, p. 89). Early orders of Utility regulated fabrics such as this, as well as other clothing manufacturers and tailors based in the West Riding, including Montague Burton Ltd. (Leeds), Joseph Hepworth & Son Ltd. (Leeds), the Melbourne Clothing Co. (Leeds), Ashworth Brown & Co. Ltd. (Leeds), and Fisher & Co. (Huddersfield) Ltd., are illustrative of a number of Utility fabric purchases by clothing makers in the region. The number of such sales, to West Riding producers, alongside others located nationally, indicative of the increase in Utility production over time, alongside orders of non-Utility textiles, including

those made by the Ministry of Supply. In Addition, this record alone illustrates how as the war years progressed, namely from late 1943 through to 1945, exports reduced dramatically, with intermittent recordings of sales to New York (Rowland, Mitchell & Co., 1943-1945). Focus placed on home-production and home sales reflecting the impacts of war, highlighting the role of Utility products in civilian consumption.

This is further emphasised in the depletion of stocks of non-Utility textiles. *The Man's Shop*, located on Albion Street, Leeds, prompted readers of the *Leeds Industrial Cooperative Society Monthly Record* of June 1942 to:

See them now! We have a fine stock of cloth. No two ways about it, when these stocks of pre-Utility cloth are exhausted we shall not be able to replace them at any price. To those people, therefore, who prefer not merely the finest quality but also a wide range of patterns to choose from, we would say BUY NOW! (Leeds Industrial Cooperative Society Monthly Record, June 1942, p.100) [fig. 39].

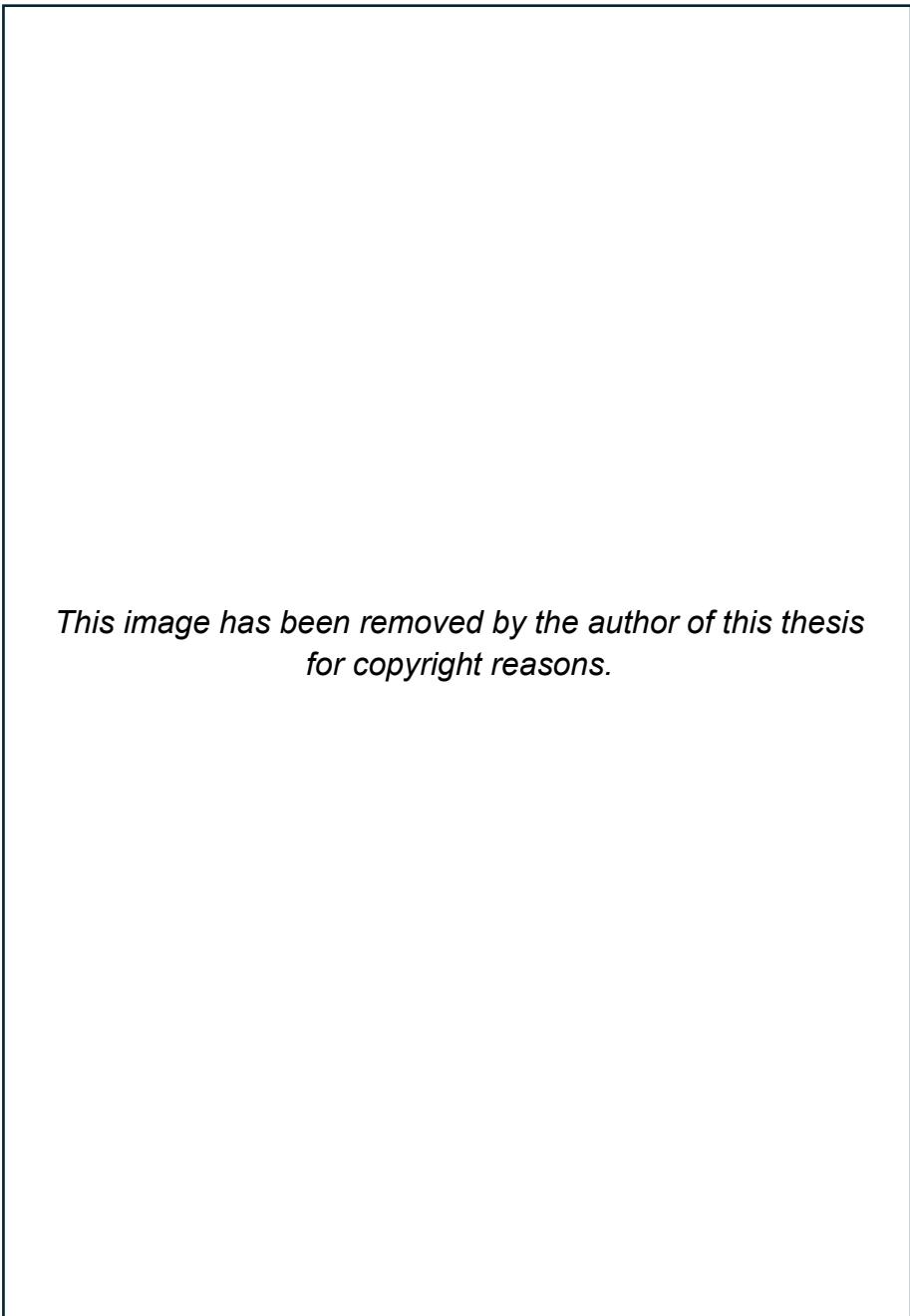


Figure 39 - Advertisement for the Co-op Man's Shop. June 1942. *Leeds Industrial Cooperative Society Monthly Record*. [University of Leeds]. 65(6), p.193.  
[Accessed 18 January 2023. Available from: University of Leeds Library.]

Upon examination, such seemingly innocent comments in advertising pre-Scheme fabrics suggest several things. First and foremost, it was impressed that that industry and trade were convinced Utility would account for all fabrics produced. That Utility textiles were in some way not as high a quality as those made prior to the implementation of the Scheme, nor would they be produced in as vast a selection of designs. Object-based research coupled with documentary analysis calls such sentiments into question, as will be shown in future analysis within this thesis.

Along with manufacturing a range of different woven fabrics, textile producers of the West Riding were also involved in shaping measures for standardisation of processes. The Huddersfield Woollen and Worsted Federation put forward the case for standardising measures for the whole of the cloth production area of industry, meaning a yard measure would be normalised at 36 inches (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 30 June 1942a, p.7). Though it was deemed untimely for this to take place, such interest within one area of the West Riding cloth producing community in standardising fabric measures demonstrates active involvement of the industry in offering insight which impacted change through wartime. The active role of the fabric-manufacturing industry was not limited to material matters alone. A special meeting between the Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation and the Wool Controller raised questions over Utility cloth production in relation to pricing. On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1942, Sir Harry Shackleton addressed representatives, explaining the purpose of the meeting was to address "certain statements which I feel certain were not quite correct, and had they been correct, should not, I think, have been said in a letter addressed to the Board of Trade" (Shackleton to the Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 2 September 1942, p.1). The letter disclosed understanding that only higher grades of Utility fabrics were being produced, therefore fetching the highest ceiling price possible under government stipulation (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 2 September 1942, p.1). Shackleton argued against the legitimacy of this statement, arguing:

That if it were true, it was the very last thing that ought to have been said to the Board of Trade, because it was a certain way of inviting direction in the industry on to standard cloths, and in view of the Board's decision that the cost of living must come down – the cost of clothing is one of the foremost factors that pushes it up. It was felt that if that state of affairs did exist and cloths were being produced at the top price, the Government would have to take steps to see that they were produced throughout the group, and may even have to use the law to see that they were produced (Shackleton to the Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 2 September 1942, p.1).

The acquisition of approximately 300 fabric samples from different Utility clothing manufacturers for what were deemed "entirely different purposes" (Shackleton to the Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 2 September 1942, p.1) prior to knowledge of the Federations' letter, alongside gathering of knowledge of their cost to the manufacturer, established that the Federations' assertion was false. As such profiteering measures were deemed incorrect (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 2 September 1942, p.2). Sir Harry Shackleton's stark warning of legal action due to this statement demonstrates argument between industry and trade. The nature of the fashion economy of the West Riding of Yorkshire, in its informality and independence endured in many ways under wartime controls. While continuing to manufacture popular fabric styles, adaptation to the specifications of the Utility Clothing Scheme was essential in order to maintain production through the war. Alongside these changes however, practitioners also proved to put forward their own ideas and implement systems of working. The unique networks forming the fabric manufacturing industry in the region played a huge part in this.

In connecting cloth and clothing, "Merchants and Clothiers [had] to give to Wool Control and Manufacturers at the month end a certificate of cloths accepted for Utility Clothing and Manufacturers [had] to attach these to a monthly statement to Control. Excessive booking of orders for Utility Cloth was certainly to be deprecated and firms concerned may ultimately regret their action..." (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 16 October 1941a, p1/2). The certification of cloth was evidently highly important, as such process informed both fabric and finished-garment manufacturers on the demand for different Utility cloths and clothing on the market. As it was left to manufacturers to demonstrate

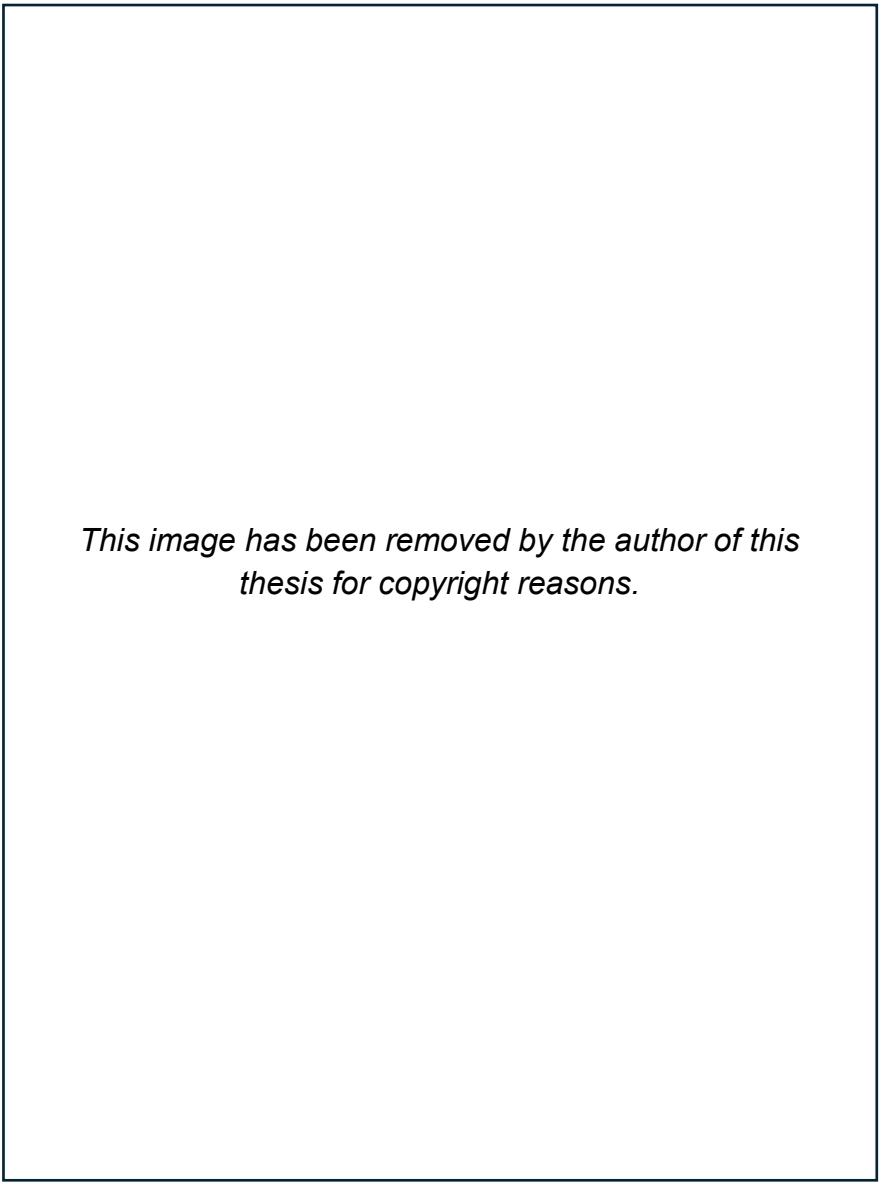
compliance with regulation through provision of certificates of fabric acquisition by clothing manufacturers, discourse between trade, industry, and state were integral to maintaining supply and understanding consumption of Utility products.

Ceiling prices were a frequent matter of contention, and as a result, some garment producers were reported to have taken to their own rationing of Utility fabrics without government approval. It was suggested that “the present tendency seemed to favour the production of “Utility” cloth” (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 10 July 1942, p.453). London and Yorkshire dealers limited trade with tailors not working to Utility directives, instead giving preference to mass-manufacturers (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 10 July 1942). Industry insight here discussed the propensity to focus on Utility cloth for Utility clothing manufacture. While government involvement in regulating the industry was responsible for the shift in cloth and clothing production towards Utility, direct participation by manufacturers demonstrates how industry itself took its own action in controlling practice and output, in the form of self-regulation.

The inventive use of fabric proved to be hugely important selling points to many Utility garments; limitations did not restrict the ability to provide ornamentation through weave. Depictions of tailoring and the wartime silhouette in woollen fabrics used in womenswear show the importance of striking cloths used in construction along masculine tailored lines. This advertisement of January 1941 for *Sumrie*, featured in *Vogue*, highlights the now established shape of wartime fashion, while also reflecting the contributions of West Riding based fabric producers [fig. 40]. A striking weave, similar to those heavier tweeds in figure 33 and figure 34 [see pages 167 and 168], provided decoration to suits of the style depicted in figure 40 [see page 179] even in the period before Rationing and Utility.

Carl and Charles Sumrie established as tailors C. & M. Sumrie during the First world War and developed their business to become a Wholesale Clothiers by the Second World War. Trading with international, national, and local outfitters, their main output was ‘high quality’ garments with a focus on design (Honeyman, 2000). Initially, Sumrie concentrated on producing garments for

men and boys, expanding their range to include tailored womenswear as demonstrated in the advertisement featured in *Vogue* [fig. 40]. Collaboration between clothing manufacturers C. & M. Sumrie and cloth manufacturers Gaunt demonstrates the quality of garment produced at C. & M. Sumrie; Gaunt of Sunny Bank Mills was renowned for traditional woollens aimed at the higher-end of the market due to their quality and cost (Moaby, 14 June 2018, Sunny Bank Mills). This further connects to the contributions of both firms to the Utility Clothing Scheme – high-quality cloth and clothing makers creating products featuring the cc41 label, adapting their outputs to incorporate a wider product range.



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Figure 40 - Advertisement for Sumrie clothing. Tailored by a Man's House. January 1941. *British Vogue*. [University of Huddersfield Library]. January p.49. [Accessed 5 May 2022]. Available from: University of Huddersfield Library.

Following Designation of C. & M. Sumrie, the number of orders placed with Gaunt from their Utility fabric range increased in number (Sunny Bank Mills Sales Sheets, 1943-1945). An order placed by Sumrie registered by Gaunt on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1943 was made up of various types of fabric 209 [fig. 41] – from The First List of Cloths, this textile was noted as being made-up of Yorkshire wool, tweed, or all worsted, for use in a range of menswear, womenswear, and in garments for children (The Drapers' Record, 30 August 1941, p.16). Different weave types corresponded with different attributed codes.

Messers C & M Sumrie Ltd.,  
York Road,  
Leeds.  
Tax No.

1<sup>st</sup> September 43.  
4% 10<sup>th</sup> Oct,  
Purchase  
Leeds 22/4.

o/134.

11 Pieces      6/4 Suiting.  
UTILITY CLOTH SPECIFICATION CLOTH NO. M209/69

M209/69	FT8739/8	A11597		67 3/4 Yds
"	"	A11598		67 3/4 "
"	"	A10971	67 3/4 s 1/4	67 1/8 "
"	"	A10970		67 1/2 "
"	"	A10969		68 "
"	"	A10968	67 1/2 s 1/4	67 1/4 "
"	"	A10967		67 3/4 "
"	"	A10974	67 1/4 s 1/4	67 "
"	"	A10958	67 3/4 s 1/4	67 1/2 "
"	"	A10950		67 3/4 "
"	"	A10948	69 1/2 s 1/4	69 1/4 "
744 3/4 Yds @ 8/1				301-1

Coupon Value. 3,351

Per Carrier,      Less 1/19<sup>th</sup>      15 16 10 £285 3 3

Figure 41 - Facsimile of C. & M. Sumrie Order. 1 September 1943. *Sales Sheets from September 1<sup>st</sup> 1943 to August 31<sup>st</sup> 1945.* At: Leeds: Sunny Bank Mills Archive.

Working in raw material processing through to the creation of finished textile goods positioned the West Riding strongly in producing fabrics and finished garments for the Utility Clothing Scheme. At the introduction of the Scheme, this included cloth makers, such as Gaunt of Sunny Bank Mills, Farsley, Leeds, for example, who produced both Utility and non-Utility fabrics for civilian consumption, alongside those for use in uniforms for the forces, as well as textiles for export throughout the war (Gaunt, Sales Sheets September 1943-August 1945). The diversified output of companies like Gaunt enabled their market reach to expand through making Utility cloths. Woollen suiting fabrics remained central to style. A plain background of navy, dark grey or black which featured a distinctive repeating pin-stripe denoted similarity between the Utility fabrics featured in figure 42 with non-Utility fabrics they were produced situated alongside at Gaunt, and featured next to in the company's Guard Books. The popularity of pinstripes in menswear, based in navy blues, black, or brown, as well as more striking weaves, are ever present in Utility, as exemplified in object analysis presented later in chapters of the thesis.

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Figure 42 – C&M Sumrie. Winter 1941. *Guard Book 13830 to 14299, Utility Cloth (33082 qual).* [Paper and wool]. At: Leeds: Sunny Bank Mills Archive.

## Industry Insights: The Workforce Behind Wartime Weaves

Problems were reflected in cloth production through wartime regulation as they were in clothing manufacturing and retail. These impacted a range of different aspects, including employment. With the West Riding's employment of women in the industry, the government's quota employment regulations did not enable textile manufacturers to avoid shifts in labour. Restrictions on the number of workers able to leave their employment in this sector of industry did not account for movement of employees "from one firm to another and one district to another, and the migration of female labour outside the quota ages" while remaining within the sector itself (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 30 December 1941a, p.3). The shifts in labour would reflect in output, with some businesses fulfilling their labour requirements and others with reduced staffing levels.

Positioned alongside established Shadow Factories, constructed for use by the Air Ministry in the late 1930s, manufacturing premises and land formerly used in processes of garment making were requisitioned for the war effort, including for the production of munitions. The people who worked in the textile industries, too, were subject to such change in employ. An ever-present concern within industry was that of the seemingly transient nature of the wartime workforce. For example, records of Jonas Horsfall & Sons Ltd., Huddersfield commission weavers, demonstrate the instability in the number of workers throughout the War. Fluctuations in the number of staff became more stable towards the end of the period of recording between 1939 and 1944, with new names appearing on wage listings in place of blank spaces next to the names of employees which likely moved to other wartime employ (Horsfall, 1934-1940, WYK1095/1 and Horsfall, 1941-1944, WYK1095/2). The stability of employee levels secured by government regulations which aimed to maintain the workforce, as a result, also secured production output levels.

The fluctuating nature of wartime employ is further exemplified in statistics from within wool manufacturing as a whole. By the end of January 1942, it was

conceded that 12,000 women working in this area of textile production alone would be withdrawn to other wartime employ (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 16 December 1941, p.5). However, because of the attractive draw of such employ (posed by promotional posters relating to national pride and the war effort as well as the ability to work in traditionally male roles), many women were leaving the industry before becoming recommended for transferal to alternative work, which meant some individual manufacturers or wider regions were experiencing staff losses in higher numbers than predicted (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 16 December 1941, p.5). Further, it was also noted by the Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation that many women workers were actually moving to other manufacturing firms in order to secure their employment, an important consideration, ahead of the implementation of Designation (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 16 December 1941, p.5).

The British Employers' Confederation challenged the prior procedure of calling-up by government. Previously, this was undertaken as follows - when a woman had been informed her name had been added to the National Work Register notification, the employer was informed at the same time, which resulted in prompt transfer of the employee without time for their former employer to contest this move (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 7 August 1941). In place, the Confederation had secured change in guidelines, whereby "employers will in future be afforded an opportunity of submitting observations to the local Labour Exchange before any of their employees are transferred for other work" (Woollen and Worsted Trades Federation, 7 August 1941, p.5). While many young people still moved to other wartime employment, this at least meant there was time to question their placement on the Register or hire new workers into these roles. This would ensure greater stability in production rates and reduce pressure on those remaining in different sections of manufacturing, including the garment manufacturing industry.

In industry practice and employ through standardisation, consensus connected with local and national working cultures in the production of clothing. Women were integral to the textile and garment industries. Because of the work of

women, questions over the reinstatement of labour force following the culmination of the conflict shaped debate between executive and firms. The National Association of Unions in the Textile Trade posed question to the Employers' Council, as well as the various textile associations, with regard to the restoration of women to their former work in the industry. Having transitioned to 'war work' or the services, it was agreed that the *National Service (Armed Forces) Act, 1939* and the *National Services (No.2) Act* would be equivalent in application to women as to men (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 30 December 1941, p.1). Consideration by representatives of workers for such realities as postwar reconstruction highlights the role of women within the textile industry and trades. A huge number of the workforce, in textile manufacture, as well as in garment manufacturing and in retailing within the West Riding, were women. Through the nineteenth century, in areas such as the shoddy trade, and in factories operating powerlooms, as well as in dressmaking, women held numerous positions (King, 2021). For example, within Montague Burton Limited's Hudson' Road Mills site, where in 1934 one in 20 of Britain's tailoring workers were employed, there were 3,000 tailoresses, as well as 2,600 making-up waistcoats and jackets, and a further 3,000 in the trouser department (Burton, 1934, p.9-10). Recognition must be given to workers and workplace cultures in discussion of the public-private business model of the Utility Clothing Scheme as networks highlight the Sociocultural, Economic, and Technological influences, all elements explored further within case studies presented later in this chapter.

## **Places, Processes, and Production: Manufacturing a Utility Garment**

A defining component of Utility was assurance of access. However, soon after the introduction of the Scheme, industry reports cited queries over supply of fabric for use in both Utility and non-Utility apparel (The Drapers' Record, 6 December 1941, p.10). Availability of raw materials was a central factor in this, however, regulations relating to output quota were hugely influential, with

complicated and changeable instruction, alongside the new related paperwork (*The Drapers' Record*, 6 December 1941, p.10). Many changes were implemented due to concerns aired by cloth and clothing manufacturers, which required understanding within industry. Government regulations impacted the manufacture of cloth and clothing in multiple different ways. The changeable nature of regulations under the Utility Clothing Scheme required the input of those producing material and making-up finished articles for sale. In 1942 advisors from within the clothing manufacturing industry were brought together to provide suggestions government on garment simplification (*Financial Times*, 26 March 1942, p. 2). Recommendations posed to the BoT in the first instance were in relation to men's suits (*Financial Times*, 26 March 1942), which resulted in material savings through the removal of turn-ups to trousers, double-breasted coats and jackets no longer being available, and buttons to sleeve cuffs being strictly forbidden (*The Economist*, 7 March 1942, p.338). In what was reported as "cutting out all unnecessaries and by limiting the number of available colours" material savings were made; economy of resources also resulted in shaping wartime style, through availability of different garments, such as double-breasted coats, jackets, and waistcoats, as well as reducing skirt lengths (*The Economist*, 7 March 1942, p.338). Collaboration was central to shaping industry practice under the Utility Clothing Scheme; the active voice of those working in industry could not be overlooked.

Throughout the lifetime of the Scheme, several different Orders were put in place in attempts to combat shortages, to regulate production, and to standardise garment manufacture throughout Britain. It was stipulated by the Board of Trade that style need not be compromised by the necessary wartime restrictions implemented within clothing production. However, *The Drapers' Record* reported on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1942 that manufacturers should expect *More Stringent Style Cuts Coming*. The article provided in-depth analysis of the imminent governmental restrictions on sizing, style and shape of different cuts, such as bishop sleeves and the fullness of skirts, the suspension of manufacture of certain styles of garments, and use of decorative articles on garments, all of which were required to be put in place for women's clothing (*The Drapers' Record*, 25 April 1942, p. 24). Further, the article also outlined a

comprehensive description and table of measurements, standardising dress sizes [table 10]. Such standardisation in sizing would result in equality of garment construction, no matter where in Britain an item of clothing was made-up. The progression of application, and assumed growing acceptance within industry and government, of the term 'standardisation' in relation to clothing produced as part of the Utility Clothing Scheme raises points of interest. Early governmental debates, as considered, emphasised the negative connotations of using the term 'standard' (Sladen, 1995, p. 28).

*“The new size classification (based on body measurements) for women’s dresses contained in British Standard Specification BS/B o T 1, which is to replace the old abbreviations SW, W, WX, etc., is as follows:-*

Body measurements in inches.			
Size.	Hip.	Bust.	Waist.
A1 .. ..		- 29	- 22
A .. ..	32-34	29-31	22-24
<u>A2</u> .. ..		31-32	24-26
B1 .. ..		29-31	22-24
B .. ..	34-36	31-33	24-26
<u>B2</u> .. ..		33-34	26-28
C1 .. ..		31-33	24-26
C .. ..	36-38	33-35	26-28
<u>C2</u> .. ..		35-36	28-30
D1 .. ..		33-35	26-28
D .. ..	38-40	35-37	28-30
<u>D2</u> .. ..		37-38	30-32
E1 .. ..		35-37	28-30
E .. ..	40-42	37-39	30-32
<u>E2</u> .. ..		39-40	32-34
F1 .. ..		37-39	30-32
F .. ..	42-44	39-41	32-34
<u>F2</u> .. ..		41-42	34-36
G1 .. ..		39-41	32-34
G .. ..	44-46	41-43	34-36
<u>G2</u> .. ..		43-44	36-38
H1 .. ..		41-43	34-36
H .. ..	46-48	43-45	36-38
<u>H2</u> .. ..		45-46	38-40
J1 .. ..		43-45	36-38
J .. ..	48-50	45-47	38-40
<u>J2</u> .. ..		47-48	40-42
K1 .. ..		45-47	38-40
K .. ..	50-52	47-49	40-42
<u>K2</u> .. ..		49-50	42-44
L1 .. ..		47-49	40-42
L .. ..	52-54	49-51	42-44
<u>L2</u> .. ..		51-52	44-46
M1 .. ..		49-51	42-44
M .. ..	54-56	51-53	44-46
<u>M2</u> .. ..		53-54	46-48

Table 10 – Facsimile of standardised dress sizing information. Data taken from: Anon. 25 April 1942. More Stringent Style Cuts Coming. *The Drapers’ Record*. [British Library]. 2854, p.24. [Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

Change, even in the proliferation of use of 'standardisation' in such a short period, from governmental discussion prior to the introduction of the Scheme in September 1941, to the overt statements of articles in industry and trade press, suggested there was an accepted understanding of the need for such collaborative working in these areas, and implied the development and extension of the public-private business model of Utility. However, such use of language in articles as the above, must not be seen as indicative of extensive approval and consensus in accordance with governmental regulations to ways of working.

For example, in the three years that had passed from the Scheme's establishment, by 1944 The Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation (26 January 1944) recorded that revision was made to manufacture of fabric under the Wool Cloth Scheme between March and June due to the non-viability of production using previously allocated fabrics. In this instance, government played the role of intermediary, where grievance was well received by the Wool Controller as put forward by Sir Thomas Barlow, from which "a new scheme was approved by the Board of Trade and the Clothiers. The Board of Trade drew up a programme of Garments for the Clothiers and cloth for the Manufacturers" (Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation, 26 January 1944, p.4). Where industry was able to offer insight, initially implemented regulations were able to be altered to reflect suitability to practice. Such collaborative working resulted in consensus; discussion between fabric makers and garment manufacturers was then followed by change in government directive. This continued throughout the existence of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

Several different processes were authorised by the Board of Trade which altered processes of textile manufacture in order to extend the reach of the limited materials available, as well as reduce monetary costs of both production and consumption of Utility clothing. Though blended fabrics made up of natural fibres had already been manufactured for some time prior to the war, combinations of natural, and natural and synthetic fibre mixes were endorsed to serve the function of Utility, for example, in the weaving of worsted cloths, mixes

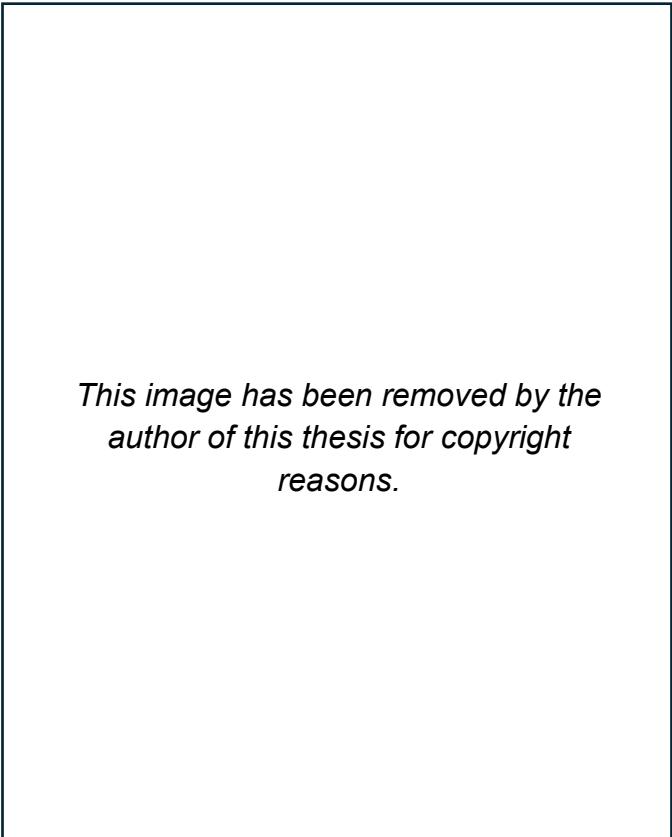
made up of rayon staple and wool (Bradford Chamber of Commerce Centenary Review, 1951, p.49/50). This will have had interesting implications for fabric and clothing manufacture in the West Riding, as well as in lasting effects into the postwar period which extended early twentieth century developments in polymer fibres to produce polyester (Smelik, 2023). From raw material to finished Utility garment, regulations were meant to be worked to and within. However, evidence suggests that these were at least challenged, and may even have been, to some extent, worked around.

On 26<sup>th</sup> March 1942, *The Times* commented on the early success of the Scheme, reporting that “The utility clothing scheme, originally intended to cover 50 per cent of clothing produced, had been extended to two-thirds, and would be further extended as circumstances permitted” (The Times, 26 March 1942, p.2). The Scheme being reported to have reached such a high proportion of civilian clothing manufacture in seven months since its introduction was testament to the producers of Utility clothing, working with the government to turn their production over to the specified levels and styles of output (Sladen, 1995). Focusing on Utility clothing manufacture, in whole or as part of their fabric and finished garment production, would prove to aid such firms in future governmental plans for Utility, and for the number of firms and sites manufacturing clothing more widely.

## **Couture Collaboration: The Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers**

In May of 1942, a collection designed by Norman Hartnell and manufactured by Berker Sportcraft Ltd., a London-based firm, was presented. This was the first Utility collection showcased in such designer collaboration. Garments were made-up from a range of different fabric types, for the summer “linen-type rayons, light-weight flannels and worsteds. Those for autumn conform to recent simplification regulations, and colour contrasts compensate for the now restricted use of tucking, pleating and fullness” (The Drapers’ Record, 23 May

1942, p.18) [fig. 43 and 44]. Hartnell's Utility pieces were described in The Drapers' Record:- "Monotone dresses appear in gay, brilliant reds, greens, royal and sky blues, and again contrasting trims are employed" (The Drapers' Record, 23 May 1942, p.18). The garments were far from "design limitation", as "over 5,000 variations could be produced from 50 patterns" (The Drapers' Record, 23 May 1942, p.18). This description of practical application exemplifies collaborative working to produce garments to the requirements of the Scheme. These pieces not only adhered to the newly implemented public-private business model, but also sought to curate seasonal Utility collections which would appeal to the public. Hartnell's Utility collection for Berker Sportcraft served as an early indication of the potential for the subsequent government invitation to the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers (IncSoc) to create a Utility collection. Widely publicised, the IncSoc designs to be replicated similarly through mass manufacturing methods. The West Riding, an established centre of production on such a scale, would prove key to this mass production.



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Figure 43 - Utility designs by Norman Hartnell manufactured by Berker Sportcraft Ltd. 23 Austerity Parade. May 1942. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2858, p. 18. [Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library: LOU.LD167.



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Figure 44 - Utility design by Norman Hartnell manufactured by Berker Sportcraft Ltd. 23 Austerity Parade. May 1942. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2858, p. 18. [Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library: LOU.LD167.

In recognition of the importance of design, and in attempts to further alter negative preconceptions of Utility, the Board of Trade sought the assistance of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, an idea which would prove to markedly change opinion of Utility clothing amongst manufacturers, retailers, and consumers alike. IncSoc, made up of fashion designers Hardy Amies, Elspeth Champcommunal (of Worth), Charles Creed, Norman Hartnell, Edward Molyneux, Digby Morton, Bianca Mosca, Peter Russell, and Victor Stiebel, were, in May 1942, invited to create a Utility collection which would adhere to Austerity regulations (Breward, 1995, p.190) and be able to be copied for mass manufacture by September 1942.

The IncSoc collection of 34 'prototype models' (Reynolds, H., in Attfield, J., 1999, p.137), which included coats, suits, dresses, and blouses for women in eight variations (Sladen, 1995, p.38-39), was debuted to the press on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1942. Alongside the designer originals, mass-manufactured counterparts were also displayed, demonstrating how the garments, once modified for mass-production, would look once made-up (The Times, 23 September 1942, p.7). Few differences could be seen, and those which were applied were only used to ease the production process. The collection could be seen to exemplify the fashionable silhouette of wartime - with tailoring forming essential components of many of the pieces and, as in Victor Stiebel's Utility Skirt Suit, referenced elements of military uniform (Stiebel, 1942, T.46&A-1942) - while making the most of materials available. Reynolds (1999) acknowledges that existing studies of Utility clothing gives the involvement of IncSoc in the Scheme an important position "because of the high profile the Couturier Scheme was given in the press at the time" (Reynolds, 1999, p.136). further exemplifying the connections made by the government with the press to promote the Scheme in aims of gaining support by the public and businesses.

Media reporting on the collection was substantial; the involvement of IncSoc in creating Utility designs was promoted by the press some months before their initial display in September 1942 (Vogue, 12 May 1942, p.2). This was also reflected in trade and industry periodicals. Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear cited in an article published 28<sup>th</sup> August that IncSoc pieces included "models of coats, suits, dresses, and blouses which [IncSoc] were commissioned to make from Utility Materials" with patterns from these pieces having "been made available for copying by the trade. A number of leading manufacturers of women's wear have been approached and have offered their services to adapt the approved models for manufacture by the trade in all sizes required by the public" (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 28 August 1942a, p.562).

Discussion here served to document this exceptional collaboration between the state and independent designers, as well as the market reach of creation of clothing by famed fashion houses under the banner of cc41 clothing. Consequently, consensus was reached between the government and

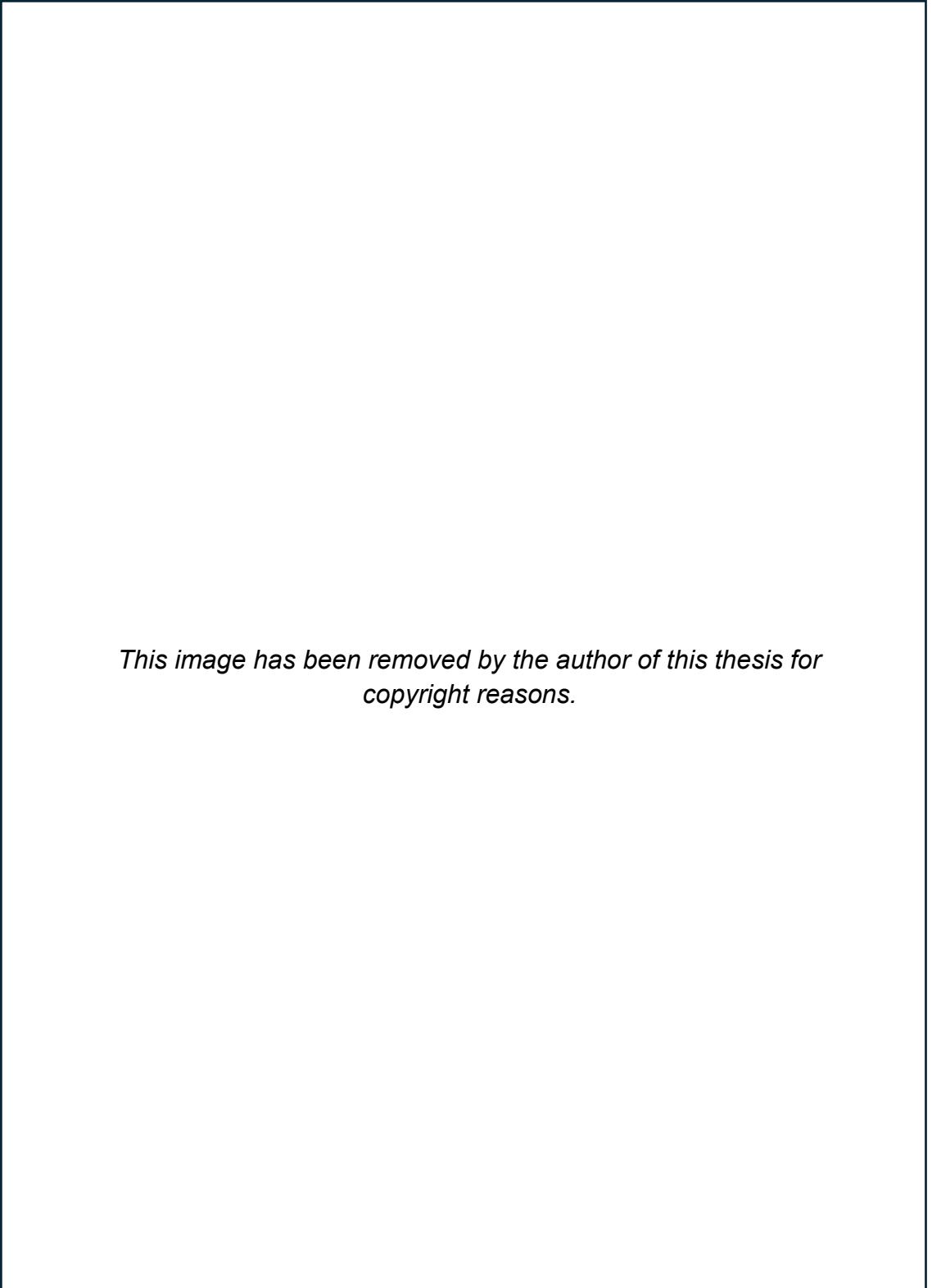
manufacturers through defined parameters of quantity output; “production in quantity and concentration on a few lines” which resulted in “economy in stocks, distribution, and labour” (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 28 August 1942b, p.562), therefore met several aims of the Scheme. In addition, it must be recognised that industry insight was further offered alongside practicability of making-up the IncSoc garment patterns; it was important to acknowledge the commercialisation of such garments. It was reported in Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear that:

In the opinion of experts from whom the Board of Trade have taken advice upon the suitability of these styles for general use, the new models do not indicate major fashion changes. They merely carry still further the trend towards simpler styling and more economical manufacture which wartime conditions have led the clothing trade and the public to support (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 28 August 1942a, p.562).

Industry knowledge and perspective aired here discerned that the collection would therefore be well received by the consumer public. Positive receipt of the IncSoc prototype collection by industry, and involvement of manufacturers in amending initial designs to meet the requirements of mass production, was reflective of the wartime fashion economy.

Articles and photographs of the collection appeared in fashion magazines as well as a variety of different newspapers. An article in *Vogue*’s ‘Fashionable Intelligence’ feature commented on how the designer collection showcased “some of the most entirely wearable clothes we have ever seen” (*Vogue*, October 1942, p.25), testament to how Utility need not result in the sacrifice of style, despite the need to make and sell under such restriction. In addition, there was also a positive promotion of the involvement of manufacturers in the Scheme; clever techniques were employed in order to ensure construction quality through shifts to wartime regulations in production (*The Times*, 23 September 1942). Collaboration with known and celebrated fashion designers and the associated promotion of this within the media meant consumer perception of the Scheme shifted further towards one of trust, seeing Utility garments as practical, quality, and of fashionable value. Minimal alterations were made from the original designer templates for them to be practicable in

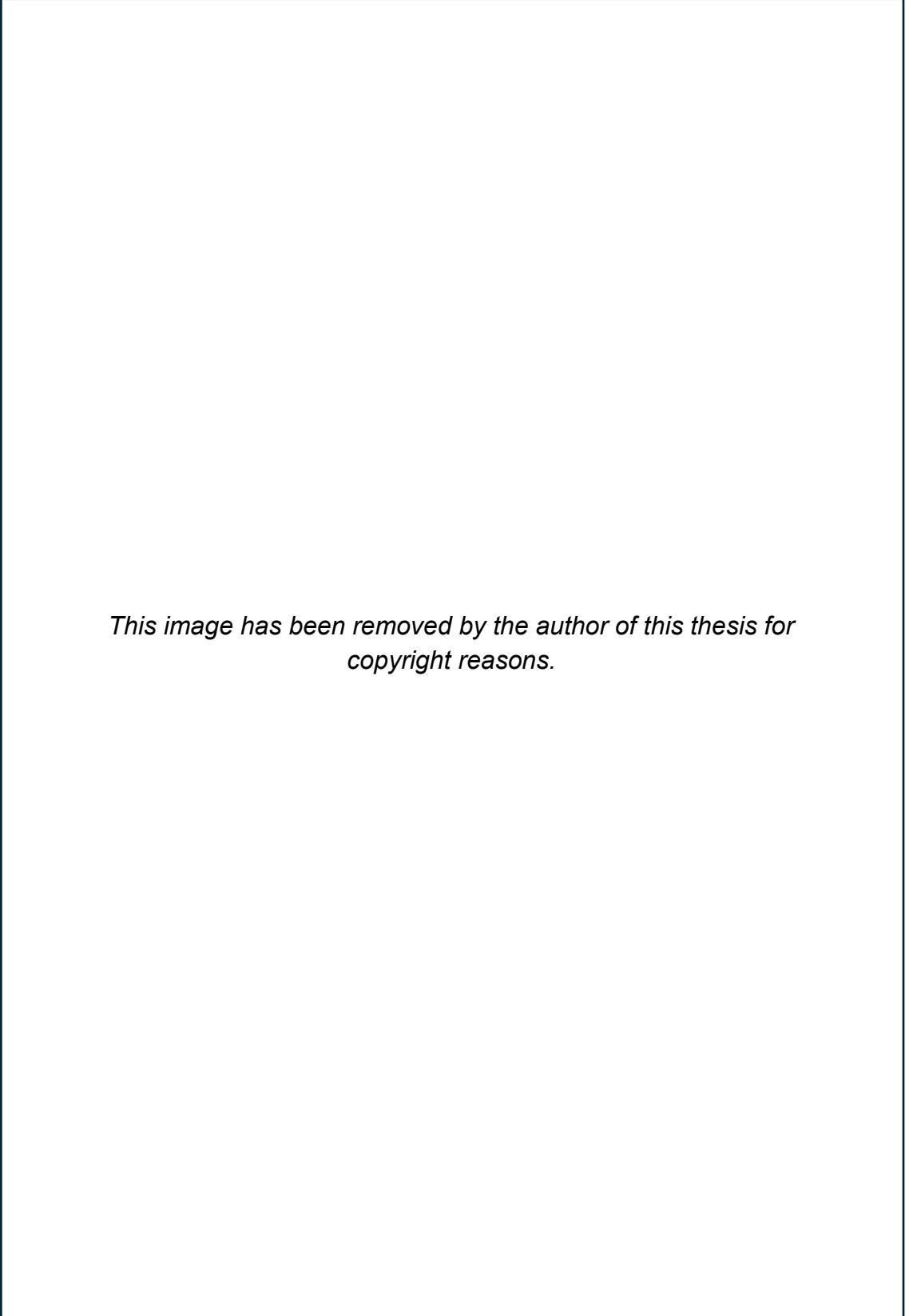
mass-manufacture, and, as shown in the *Illustrated London News* (3 October 1942, p.387) [fig. 45], few of such alterations could be seen. Therefore, consumer reaction to designer involvement in the Scheme served as an obvious draw to taking-up templates for the mass-production of IncSoc designs.



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Figure 45 - Article discussing Women's Fashions, 1942-1943. Mass Produced Utility Models. October 3, 1942 *The Illustrated London News*. [Online]. 201(5398), p.387. [Accessed 5 February 2021]. Available from: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Simplification of design gained pace from initial introduction of the Scheme. Elements described can be seen in surviving cc41 labelled apparel. With manufacturers able to acquire patterns for the mass production of IncSoc designs, consumers were prompted to invest in the Scheme both monetarily through purchasing Utility goods, and in connecting Utility with associations of quality. In such transactions, with garments sold at a capped price, the ability to acquire 'designer' clothing was presented to many for the first time. Signature elements of the wartime silhouette were set by the IncSoc designs, and are therefore visible in the original IncSoc prototypes, further adding to their desirability. Designed by Digby Morton, figure 46, a three-part suit set, follows stipulations set out both under Rationing and the Utility Clothing Scheme. This prototype model also served to showcase different methods by which attractive detailing may be added, while making the most of materials available used through careful pattern cutting. Application of design techniques to add interest through alternating the grain of the fabric in making-up can be seen on the lapels, sleeves, shoulders, and body of the *Original no. 16 Skirt Suit* jacket. The angled yet accessible addition of two pockets to the bottom front of the jacket further enhancing the noticeable, yet practical, design features [fig. 47]. Internally, Morton's Original no. 16 IncSoc prototype model also reveals remarkable features, namely, in the form of labelling the Skirt Suit. Such labels, as listed by the V&A, detail "Digby Morton's initials and 'Original no. 16' (writing; ink), 'No 16 Original DM 92/10' (label), MORTON/ 63 Grosvenor St/ London W1 (Label, blouse left side seam. Black on white.)" (Victoria and Albert Museum, 1999). The buttons fastening both blouse and jacket of the suit a fascinating detail – metal depictions of the cc41 mark [fig. 48]. No further information on these buttons has been found – it seems they may have been created for the original IncSoc model, as shown to the press. Additional research needs to be conducted to ascertain the nature of their application.



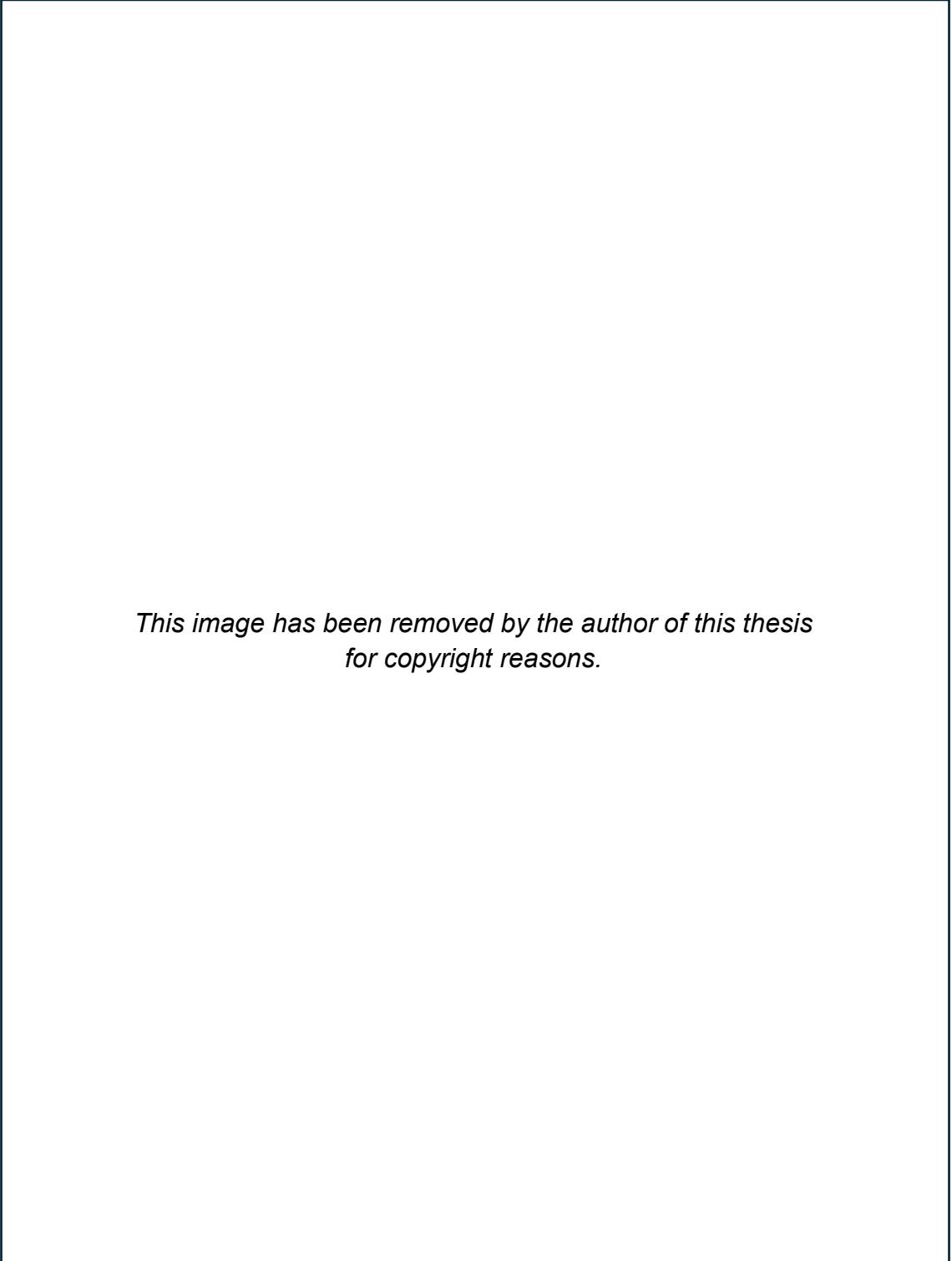
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Figure 46 - Morton, D., 1942 (designed). *Original no.16 Skirt Suit*. [Wool with metal buttons, trimmed and grosgrain bow]. At: London: Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), Textiles and Fashion Collection. T.45 to B-1942.



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Figure 47 - Morton, D. 1942 (designed). *Original no.16 Skirt Suit*. [Wool with metal buttons, trimmed and grosgrain bow]. At: London: Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), Textiles and Fashion Collection. T.45 to B-1942.



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Figure 48 - Detail of Morton, D. 1942 (designed). *Detail of button, Original no.16 Skirt Suit.*  
[Wool with metal buttons, trimmed and grosgrain bow]. At: London: Victoria and Albert  
Museum (V&A), Textiles and Fashion Collection. T.45 to B-1942.

Hardy Amies later commented that he and Molyneux found great joy in the fact that the simplicity of the designs they created prior to their work with IncSoc for the Utility Clothing Scheme, even in the garments they made before the war, were not dissimilar to the enforced minimalism required by regulations. “We have been making utility clothes for years” was sentiment shared between the two designers (Amies in McDowell, 1997, p.11). Amies noted that Molyneux was recognised for this, describing how he stated “I remove everything that is not necessary... plainness is all” (Amies in McDowell, 1997, p.11) a design mantra founded in the use of his favourite fabric – tweed – and detail founded in cut, construction, silhouette, and finishing (Amies in McDowell, 1997, p.11). Such sentiment of design process and finished garment testament to the requirements of the Utility Clothing Scheme, reflected in the quality of construction, as well as cross-collaboration required by government and practitioners.

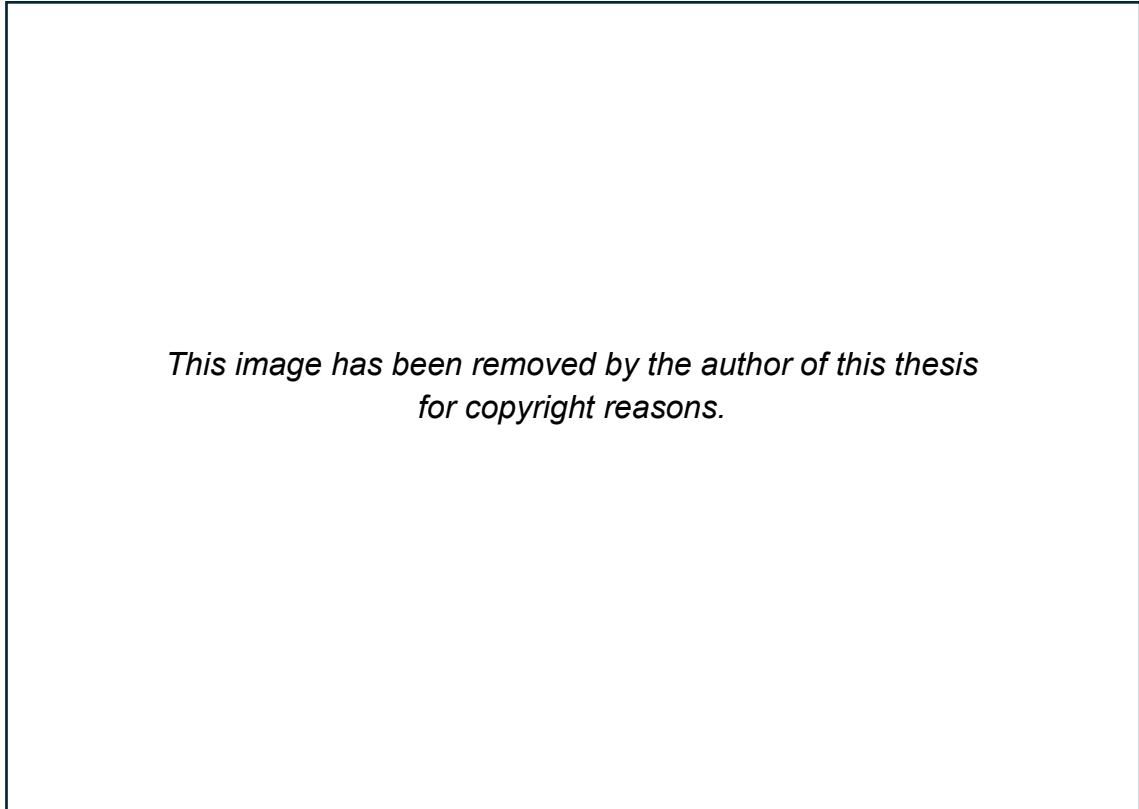
Manufacturers could acquire IncSoc designed templates for “all approved styles and in various sizes” for “costumes, overcoats and dresses” at a cost of 10s. 6d., and 7s. 6d. for blouse templates (The Times, 23 September 1942, p.7). Despite alteration for reproduction in mass manufacture, and considering the number of firms Designated (1,006 featuring on the Designated List of Clothing Factories of 1942), only 1,200 IncSoc templates were sold (Reynolds, 1999, p.137). In saying this, the working relationship between IncSoc and the Board of Trade continued for some time after the creation of the Utility clothing collection in 1942. Designs created in collaboration with the Cotton Board, the International Wool Secretariat, and the British Man-Made Fibres Federation boosted the post-war textile economy for some years after the end of the conflict (Ness, 2021). For posterity, the original 34 IncSoc prototype pieces making up the collaborative Utility collection were donated to the Victoria & Albert Museum, a move which highlighted the poignancy of the Utility Clothing Scheme within dress and textile history. Such acquisitions were an unusual method of connoisseurship for the museum during this period, which highlights the importance of acknowledging the role of museum collecting (Pearce, 1999b) in understanding the Utility Clothing Scheme. Collections policies at this time reflected the origins of the institution, in which acquisitions were identified as

exemplar pieces of decorative art, prominently positioned within the museum's aims of education in design, production, and consumption (V&A, 2025). With previous prioritisation of textiles over clothing, the IncSoc Utility collection must therefore be recognised as a design triumph, warranting its incorporation into the museum's collection. Recognised fashion designers and reputable names had huge sway in wartime fashion. The involvement of IncSoc with the Utility Clothing Scheme represented the Political, Economic, and Social, as well as the Technological, within PESTELE interpretation. The collection was representative of consensus through collaboration between government and business, remembered for its impact through design which sought to bridge with consumers as well as industry and trade alike.

## **Utility Clothing Creation in Context**

The tailored 'masculine' style which came to define the fashionable wartime silhouette of women's fashion throughout the Second World War had gradually undergone a style evolution over previous decades. Contrasting modes of dress which proliferated the 1930s, would, in turn, be reflected in different elements of clothing styles for women in wartime; while Austerity and economy were undoubtedly influential, fashion directed the design of Utility clothing (Kirkham, 1999). Minimalism and modernism in fashions of the interwar period were maintained; exaggerated shoulders, achieved through padding, as well as use of structural fabrics such as woollens remained popular for jackets, and skirts kept their length, pleats and a-line shaping (Kirkham, 1999). In addition, dresses continued to use patterned fabrics with a soft drape. Into the wartime period, defining features in reflection of military uniform were distinctive attributes of construction and silhouette of much tailored womenswear of the Second World War. Structured tailoring which used woollen fabrics for coats, jackets, skirts, and suits for women, the likes of which were promoted for the Spring/Summer collections of 1939 [fig. 49], remained sought after in both Utility and non-Utility garments throughout the wartime period, with trousers and knee-length skirts popularised for practicality. Masculine tailoring was contrasted with feminine lines of gowns (McDowell, 1997). Variation was also represented in the range of

different fabrics used – structural woollens in tailored articles, soft cottons for everyday wear (McDowell, 1997), and innovative new textiles, such as rayon, in undergarments.



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Figure 49 - Catalogue, *London art fashions (Spring/Summer 1939)*, p.8-9. ca.1938-1939.  
[Paper]. At: Kirklees: West Yorkshire Archive Service. KC588/3/5.

It was identified within industry that:

...a great deal of the success of the scheme will depend on the way the Clothiers and Manufacturers carry out its requirements (Woollen and Worsted Trade Federation, 26 January 1944, 20D81/8, 1438).

Attractive clothing was deemed essential to ensure morale remained buoyant amidst a period of social upheaval compounded by limited availability of everyday items. Attributes of garment manufacture were essential to promoting confidence in the Scheme to the state, retailers, and customers alike. Quality in production not only assured consumers that garments could still be stylish

despite restrictions, the making of clothing also ensured that the government-imposed restrictions of wartime were met.

## **Utility Clothing Production in the West Riding**

The restrictions which have been imposed on the styling of men's, women's, children's clothing are solely for the purpose of economising the use of labour and materials. They still leave it possible for variety of styles to be produced, but their general effect is to encourage simplification and practical adaptation to wartime needs. These restrictions should not interfere with the production of any garment which ought to find its place in a wartime wardrobe... (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 29 May 1942a, p.354).

Within this section, the Utility Clothing Scheme is presented in a case study of two larger clothing manufacturers whose businesses were based in the West Riding; Montague Burton and Marlbeck, both located in Leeds. Object analysis, then, focuses discussion further, as evidence for contestation of whether the Utility Clothing Scheme was, in practice, based in consensus and control of the seemingly uncontrollable fashion industry. Surviving garments serve as central points of evidence in answering the research question posed. When coupled with documentary sources, greater understanding around regulations and restrictions in practice is presented. Analysis of these two larger producers is situated alongside discussion of the implications which the Scheme had on smaller manufacturing sites in the region. Consideration of these concerns is important, highlighting the role of smaller clothiers in the wartime fashion economy.

To the surviving Utility clothing examined as part of this thesis, the garments themselves reveal much about how they may have been used following their purchase, as well as their production and sale. Distinguishing features expose the actualities, and practicalities, of their creation and retail. This is identified

within the overt signs of restriction and regulation being followed in their construction as tangible connections to contested arguments of industry and trade with government. Under the PESTELE framework, the political, economic, social, technological, legal and ethical are explored. This section, guided through phenomenological interpretation, therefore builds on earlier analysis, by further exploring how collaborative working under Utility between government and industry contributed to consensus and control in the manufacture of garments.

The manufacture of Utility clothing across the West Riding emphasised the qualities of the textile trade networks in the county. Links between businesses, established modes of working, and the politicised nature of those involved in this area of industry, situated manufacturers in a strong position to have their voice heard in devising the Scheme as well as amending regulations on practice. Different cloth and finished garment manufacturers based in the West Riding turned production towards different textile and garment requirements of wartime. The vast and varied, yet interconnected nature of the West Riding's textile economies, which had developed over many decades, exemplifies the informal economy of textile and clothing manufacture and trade. The implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme, which needed controls to reach its defined aims, questioned the established and unique ways of working in the region.

Existing accounts of the production of garments within the West Riding highlight clothing manufacturing practices of the region. Distinctive characteristics of the garment making industry, which Buckman (1983) centres in Leeds, but which can be broadened to include other areas of the county. The well-established features of the clothing manufacturing sector in the West Riding point to the ingenuity of the population working in the textile trades. The West Riding was famed as a centre of the woollen and worsted industries from the eighteenth century, producing all manner of wool fabrics from domestic and imported raw materials and recycled textiles in the form of shoddy. However, textile businesses located in the region did not manufacture woollen fabrics alone. The region was also noted for the making-up of tailored garments. The development

of the mass-manufactured tailored clothing industry took place due to the positioning of the suit as a socially acceptable and necessary, homogenous feature of menswear (Honeyman, 2011, p.53) from the late nineteenth century (Ugolini, 2016).

At the start of the nineteenth century, a total of 243 mills were producing fabrics in the West Riding (Jones, 1994). With an output of around five million tailored pieces per year, 15,000 were employed in the Leeds tailoring trade alone in 1890 (Honeyman, 1993). Such northern output is in contrast with production in London during the nineteenth century, where sweated labour was carried out in sites of production which “remained unusually small” in physical size, though their output of goods was high (Riello, 2012, p. 505). With manufacture undertaken in a factory setting, compared to earlier domestic systems, there was a relocation of populace to reflect the demands of industry and commerce. This resulted in housing being constructed for workers to reside, close to the newly built edifices devoted to textile manufacture. With changes to boundaries and expansion of villages, towns, and cities over time, the transformation of environs, industrialisation of areas, population increases and movements, the number and type of different spaces required to reside, shop, and spend any leisure time, grew.

The changing physical environment and geography of the West Riding is more widely representative of the growth in scale of increasingly urbanised centres through Britain. Positioning population shifts and the interconnection of these changes with increases in manufacture and trade highlights the rise to prominence which the West Riding obtained through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though modernising to correlate with changing technologies and practices, this remained consistent into the early twentieth century, positioning the West Riding centrally in the textile economies of the First World War (Fowler, 2016, p.245) and Interwar periods. Further, this also served to place manufacturers and retailers of the region in a central role to argue the case for industry and trade within the restrictions and regulations of the Second World War, originating in the make-up and practices characteristic of the West Riding.

In order to show detail of buildings and related manufacturing as an example of the characteristics of fabric and finished garment manufacture which could be noted throughout the West Riding into the early twentieth century, map 2 focuses on the Little London area of Leeds. Produced in the interwar period, this map was published in 1930. Highlighted features illustrate how Leeds was recognised for prominence in clothing manufacture. Notable features include several factory sites, as well as dyers, cloth finishers, and rows upon rows of terraced houses, archetypal of northern England. Just off the map is the Leeds Institute and Technical College, with buildings including the College's Printing Works to the bottom of the Map.

With reference to the position of textile education and area specialisation, the introduction of special educational provision in areas noted for the manufacture of woollen cloth types is a reflection of the acceleration of advancements and resultant change and maturation of these notable industrialised West Riding production centres (Jenkins and Ponting, 1982). Specialisation and technological innovation associated with manufacturing with associated education in locations such as Bradford, Huddersfield, and Batley, in 1878, highlights further the skill and direction of those working in the woollen cloth making industries across the West Riding. As a centre of tailoring, Leeds was home to the Leeds College of Technology, initially established as the Leeds School of Science in 1868, renamed the Leeds Technical School 1896, Leeds Technical College in 1927, and the Leeds College of Technology 1937 (Leeds Beckett University, 2025), which came to train students in tailoring techniques and practice. In addition, the Department of Textile Industries, which sought to educate in textile sciences, was established in 1874 as part of the Yorkshire College of Science (School of Design, 2024). This education was represented in employ, with area specialisation in wholesale tailoring in Leeds reflected in mass manufacturing; approximately 50,000 were working in the Leeds garment industry during the Second World War (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 6 November 1942, p.730). Leeds was known as home of "the big concerns – the giants of the clothing trade who turn out 40,000 suits a week" (Burton, 31 March 1945, citing The Times, 30 January 1940). This scale of manufacture was

carried out by the numerous multiple and wholesale tailors of Leeds [Appendix Two].

Along with education, and consequent to intensive textile and clothing production across the county, the manufacture of machinery used to create fabrics and finished garments was also well established. Proximity, local networks and connections enabled specialisation in such machinery, similar to associations of place and textile products. As Cookson (1997) notes, Keighley and Leeds were principal producers of machinery for use in the textile industry during the nineteenth century, working in conjunction to engineer both component parts and entire machines respectively (Cookson, 1997). The need to produce new machinery technologies to cater for both growing and emerging markets exemplifies the nature with which manufacturing, particularly textile and clothing production, was changing throughout Britain in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Technologies which enabled mass production, reduced prices, different textile focus, as well as the dissemination of messages and media simultaneously enabled the development of the West Riding industries. When combined with developments in retailing practices, all elements served to shape the style of clothing through the Second World War (Wadsworth, 1950, p.82). Established staples in fabric and finished garments including those made-up in the heavy and lightweight sections of industry remained popular, alongside clothing made from newer synthetics such as rayon (Wadsworth, 1950, p.82). The West Riding was in a strong position to cater to market demands, particularly in those which called for the use of natural materials.

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Cloth Factory or  
Mill  
Clothing Factory  
Cloth Finishers  
Textile Printing  
Factory  
Technical College  
(Printing)

Map 2 - Map showing clothing manufacturing sites located in the Little London area of  
Leeds (1930). 1:2,500, British National Grid (EPSG:27700).

©University of Edinburgh.

Britain's textile histories are deeply linked to migration and moving populations. Here, both domestic and international movement of people had immeasurable influence on shaping the industries and trades of Britain for decades, if not centuries, across manufacturing and retailing (Leeds Industrial Museum, 2025). Giving due recognition to the individuals who established their businesses within the West Riding highlights wartime production was no different. The benefits that the movement of people had on post-war British society remains at the forefront of public consciousness, with increased dissemination offering more inclusive perspectives which offer wider, more authentic representation of experiences of living (Korte and Pirker, 2011). The contribution of people migrating to Britain prior to as well as during the Second World War must be acknowledged as a defining feature in influencing the uniqueness of northern, and more centrally, Yorkshire-based manufacturing and retailing cultures and networks (Honeyman, 2011).

Traditionally framed market towns became industrialised centres. Previously less substantive, providing for surrounding villages and farmland, these areas became integral to the development of urbanised centres through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of population shifts. Distribution of populace focussed in areas increasingly linked with growing manufacture and trade in goods – people relocated from more rural settings to the towns and cities shaped by production and sale (Hatton, 2014). The main driver was that of the market; with mechanisation of processes, developing ability to manufacture a range of products, which was on an ever-expanding scale, and resultant increased demand for such goods, people from more bucolic settings were drawn to live in such industrial areas in order to have a more secure earning potential (Hatton, 2014). Such reconfiguring of population spread, in turn, served to grow these areas of manufacture and trade through the long nineteenth century.

Bradford, for example, was re-framed as a hugely important and influential manufacturing and trading point. The shift in Bradford's positioning was based in the area's agrarian connection. By moving to the weaving of worsted stuffs, in place of earlier fabrics made here, namely short-staple woollens (Koditscheck,

1990), concentration of such manufacture in the locality meant specialisation here, as well as near Halifax (Koditscheck, 1990). This new manufacture and trade in its output was “dynamic”, and established in as “much more capitalistically from the start.” (Koditscheck, 1990, p.33) in comparison to the domestic system which was long-held, and somewhat old fashioned comparatively. The emergence of this new manufacture in Bradford, while visible in the growth in industry, resultant urbanisation, and boundary shift, resulted, in vast growth of inhabitants. In the twenty years from 1830, Koditscheck (1990) states Bradford’s populace grew to over twice the size, welcoming 60,241 people to the centre. It is important to recognise the changing nature of production can be cited as a fundamental reason for over half of this number seeking employ in Bradford from the wider Yorkshire region (Koditscheck, 1990), with no doubt many others from other smaller-scale or domestic manufacturing sites also relocating here for similar concerns, including changing manufacturing methods and resultant security of employ and earning power. The skills of such individuals and families will, in no doubt, have contributed to the output of areas such as Bradford. The intergenerational knowledge of weaving seemingly innate, and invaluable to the areas prominence in output of such fine weaves as worsted, visible throughout the West Riding region.

Many migrants relocated to the West Riding from further afield, for a range of different reasons. Tregenza (2023) reflects on the experience of many Jewish peoples migrating to Britain through the period between the 1880s and 1930s being “under extremely challenging circumstances. Some, having to flee their homes for fear of persecution, others came to Britain seeking a better quality of life” (Tregenza, 2023, p.24). Such migration is apparent within the establishment of large concerns in the West Riding, including Montague Burtons and Marks & Spencer (originally founded as Marks’ Penny Bazaar). Many felt it necessary to change their name or anglicise spelling in order to avoid antisemitism - Meshe David Osinsky was one, becoming known as Morris, then Montague, Burton. A confirmatory identifier, name and its associations “confers on it a social durability and legitimacy” (Butler, 2014 p.152). As a tailor and clothier, Burtons’ company in one example of the unique

elements distinctive of the West Riding business cultures. Buckman (1983) cites “the Jewish branch of the Leeds wholesale tailoring industry” (p.1) as being essential to understanding the distinctiveness of this sector of the clothing manufacturing trade, particularly from the nineteenth century.

In addition, Visram (2002) describes how, though there had been numerous individuals and families “from the Indian sub-continent [who] had been living in Britain for generations” (p.254) at the turn of the century immigration from Asia grew in rate through to the end of the Second World War. The important involvement of those from India in several sectors of industry, due to requirements of the 1939-1945 conflict, was, however, limited by acceptance only to roles classified as ‘unskilled labouring’ (Visram, 2002, p.268).

Nevertheless, as Visram continues, migrants from India working in different industrial sectors, numbered over 3,000 by 1942 (p.268). This number most probably reflected employment in various lines of the textile and / or clothing manufacturing industries, identified within population measurements of urbanised centres, including Bradford and Huddersfield of the West Riding (Visram, 2002, p.268). Multicultural, integrated, intergenerational cultures of place are exemplified within the West Riding. Cross-familial ties connected businesses, and therefore practices reflected these links (Cookson, 1997, p.8).

While some migration was transient, and some more permanent, the impact which geographical population movements had on practice must be considered. Attention must be given to the cultures and communities whose contributions to the textile trades and industries of the West Riding of Yorkshire shaped and expanded manufacturing and retailing of the county. Yorkshire's textile and clothing processing and manufacturing trades hold an important role in the histories of migration; prominent names, including Montague Burton (Honeyman, 1993) and Marks and Spencer (Worth, 2020) of Leeds, founded in circumstance which necessitated relocation. As such, it must be understood, and emphasised, that those employed within these areas represent a wide diaspora. The establishment of what would become long-standing familial, intergenerational networks (Cookson, 1997, p.8) must be recognised as founded through migration in different forms.

Present across the production centres of Britain, a broad range of communities were represented in the West Riding, establishing networks and methods of working which situated the region in a prominent position to contribute to the Utility Clothing Scheme. The interconnected nature of practitioners demonstrated in active engagement with collaboration through cc41 clothing. Migration, whether as internal movement or international relocation, increased due to requirements on the Homefront in wartime, the lengthy and embedded histories and cultures of population movement is central to the influence, development, and adaptation of British industry. This is evidenced throughout centres of commerce, not least being integral to the West Riding's commercial systems. The involvement of manufacturers and retailers of the West Riding in the Utility Clothing Scheme as case studies presented within this thesis, reflect the role of this region in exemplifying the independence of the fashion economy.

Alongside migration, the role of women workers is central to the history of the garment manufacturing industry in the West Riding, and is another of the distinctive defining features of the history of tailoring in Leeds (Honeyman, 2011, p.50). One noticeable trait of the West Riding labour force was the long-standing employment of women within industry. Buckman (1983) notes that, within tailoring between 1881 and 1901, to each 1,000 men, women made up a marked proportion of the workforce. Comparative measures of Leeds' employment in the manufacture of tailored garments demonstrates the approach taken to mass manufacture in the region [table 11].

Year	National	Leeds
1881	330	1,276
1891	427	2,287
1901	471	2,420

Table 11 - Facsimile table of data recording the proportion of women working nationally and in Leeds per 1,000 men. Data taken from Buckman, J. 1983. *Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds 1880-1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Networking, the establishment of community connection, employment, earning power, and other areas of the labour market, held an essential role for women as social and economic drivers (King, 2021). Such can be identified within histories of cloth and clothing manufacture, particularly in the changing nature of employ through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Fowler (2016) acknowledges the influence of technologies in the nineteenth century on women's work in different areas of cloth production. Credit must be given to textile machinery in "the worsted industry's adoption of the Arkwright technology" (Fowler, 2016, p.238) for the beginning of women workers in processes of the mass-manufacture of fabrics, namely, spinning, within the West Riding (Fowler, 2016). Due to the machinery employed within the worsted trade, in contrast to the Lancashire cotton industry where spinning remained the purview of men, weaving also became a mass-employer of women workers in the West Riding, where women outnumbered men in the light-worsted trades through the use of power looms (Fowler, 2016). Conversely, within heavier woollens, in the 1830s two-thirds of employees in factories in Leeds and Huddersfield were men (Hudson, 1986). The established role of women within fabric manufacturing is indicative of the ability of the West Riding textile industry to adapt to wartime labour force changes. With women making up a large proportion of those employed in cloth production for decades before the advent of the Second World War, particularly in the lighter sections of the trade, this area of industry was relatively adept to maintain its established ways of working. This, of course, was in relation to the changing requirements of wartime regulations and movement of employees, and, therefore, related production output.

The mass manufacture of clothing was largely undertaken in factory settings. The duality attached to gendered divides in society, in roles of women and men, carried over to the roles which were undertaken by women and men in the construction of clothing (Gamber, 1997). Conversely, within the uniqueness of the Leeds tailoring trade "it is emphasised that the distinguishing features of the

native branch were the subdivisional system,<sup>24</sup> the intensive application of new technologies, and the employment of uniquely high proportions of females" (Buckman, 1983, p.13). This is further emphasised by Honeyman (2011), in consideration of the resilient nature of labouring women, who made up a considerable part of the workforce within the Leeds garment manufacturing industry. The features described here should be further applied to the West Riding trades and industries more broadly, demonstrated in locality, politics, and in analysis of documentary material pertaining to manufacture in the county, particularly evident in the transition to wartime cloth and clothing production. In the making-up section, women accounted for vast numbers of employees.

Within the garment industry, different roles were undertaken by women and men. Traditions of garment construction founded in dressmaking, considered women's roles, were broken down through methods of mass-manufacturing (Gamber, 1997). Processes which were ascribed to tailoring and associated with technology and science were recognised as roles for men. This was concurrent with the development of multi-layer cutting tools and pattern-drafting techniques which eased mass-production (Gamber, 1997). Perceptions of women workers carrying out certain duties within the clothing manufactory were far from the equitable nature which production of this type aimed to achieve; labelling of 'skilled' and 'unskilled', and associated gendering of such definitions was long-founded, embedded in divides of clothing manufacture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Gamber, 1997, p.129). Into the twentieth century, these perceptions continued, as demonstrated in the gendered divide of different workspaces, such as pattern drafting, cutting rooms, and garment construction [see chapter four for examples of these workrooms]. Even with the advent of War, this perception continued to permeate the factory setting.

A shifting labour force was a feature of wartime clothing manufacture, and is therefore prominent within the history of the Utility Clothing Scheme. In order for the Scheme to work effectively, it was paramount that the government enable

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<sup>24</sup> The subdivisional system of manufacture breaks down processes of production which are carried out by workers appointed to that specific element. For example, pattern cutting, pressing, machining, lining, finishing (Montague Burton, 1934).

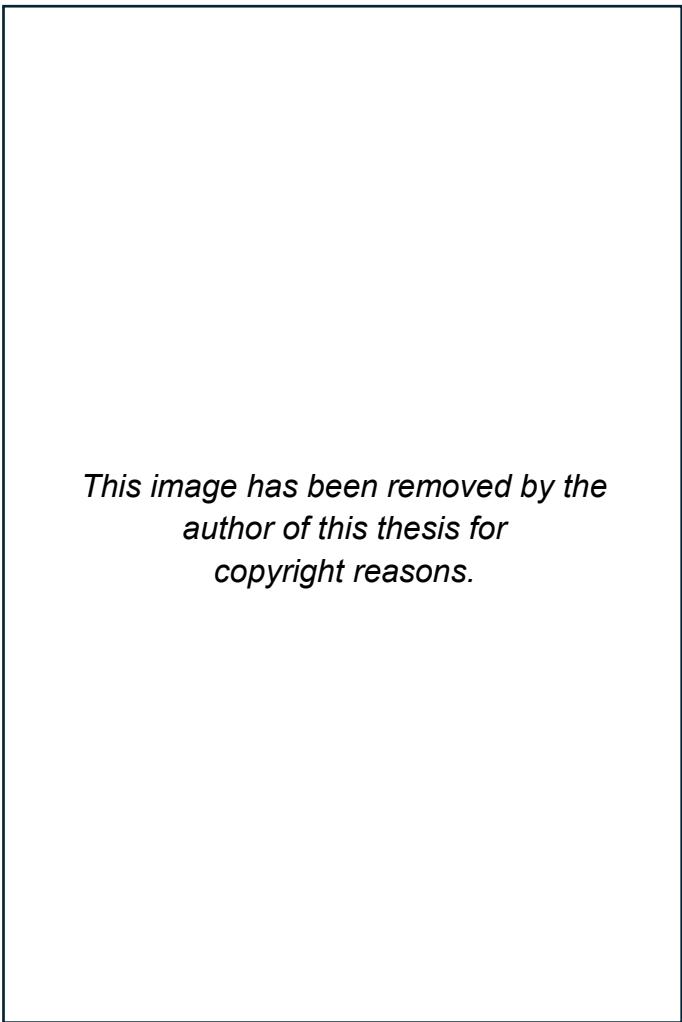
the garment industries to maintain a secure workforce. It was noted in The Times that:

The buying of clothing is limited by coupons, but will the supply of clothing be equal to the consumers' demands? There is a limitation of production, and the Ministry of Labour is threatening fresh inroads on the labour resources, mostly women, of the making-up industry (13 November 1941, p.9).

Restrictions on manufacturing output and purchasing, coupled with the need for employees in the different sectors of wartime manufacture, such as munitions, as well as the forces, impacted on employment levels within the garment industry.

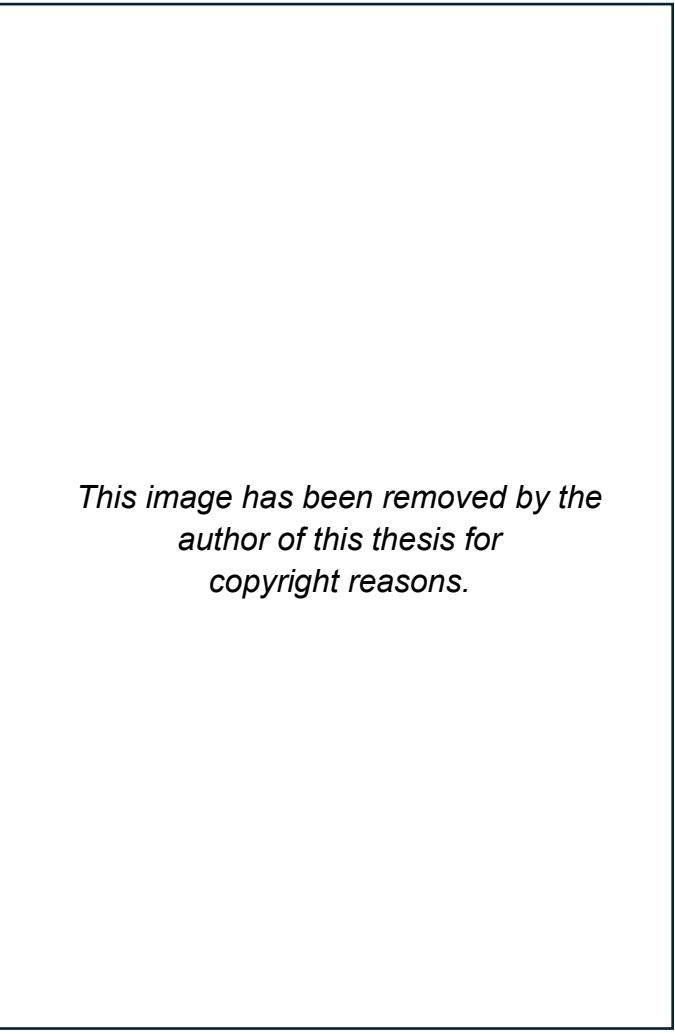
Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear (6 November 1942, p.730), reported that "the industry recruits more than 500 boys and 1,400 girls per annum", demonstrating the employment distribution of women and girls in this field. This diverse employ was also part of the wider West Riding region's industrial history; production methods and style of business practice employed in the manufacture and sale of mass-produced tailored clothing resulted in proportionate "economies of scale" which widened access to the populace (Honeyman, 2011, p.50). Several businesses had made names for themselves in the decades leading up to the Second World War by establishing themselves in this area specialism.

Alongside garments made from woven fabrics, most prominently from wool, knitted garments were also manufactured in the region. Popular goods included knitted underwear as well as hosiery. The production of these goods is clearly represented in advertisements of the 1940s [fig. 50 and fig. 51]. Such garments were promoted to civilians as well as those in the forces. Advertising illustrated how "Caressa Hosiery and Underwear is, was, and always will be leading in popularity with WAAFS, ATS and WRENS" (The Drapers' Record, 7 February 1942, p.21).



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Figure 50 - Advertisement for Caressa Underwear. 6 December 1941. *The Drapers' Record*.  
[British Library]. 2834, p.21. [Accessed 21 June 2023].  
Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.



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Figure 51 - Advertisement for Caressa Hosiery. 29 November 1941. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2833, pp.1. [Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

Knitted woollen socks were reported to have been made in “favourite shades” which were “still beige and fawn, but there is a small speciality trade in bright cashmere stockings, best selling shades being wine, royal, old gold and bottle green” (*The Drapers' Record*, 6 December 1941, p.11). An extant example of Utility socks, possibly from a slightly later date than the above comment, as indicated by their specification number bearing an ‘H’ alongside the indicative ‘52’ for knitted wool products (Brown, 2014, p.121), demonstrates the popularity of colour in design, even down to smaller details [fig. 52 and fig. 53].



Figure 52 - Stylnita Regd. Hosiery. ca. 1942-1952. *Knitted Utility socks. [Wool].*  
At: Author's own collection.

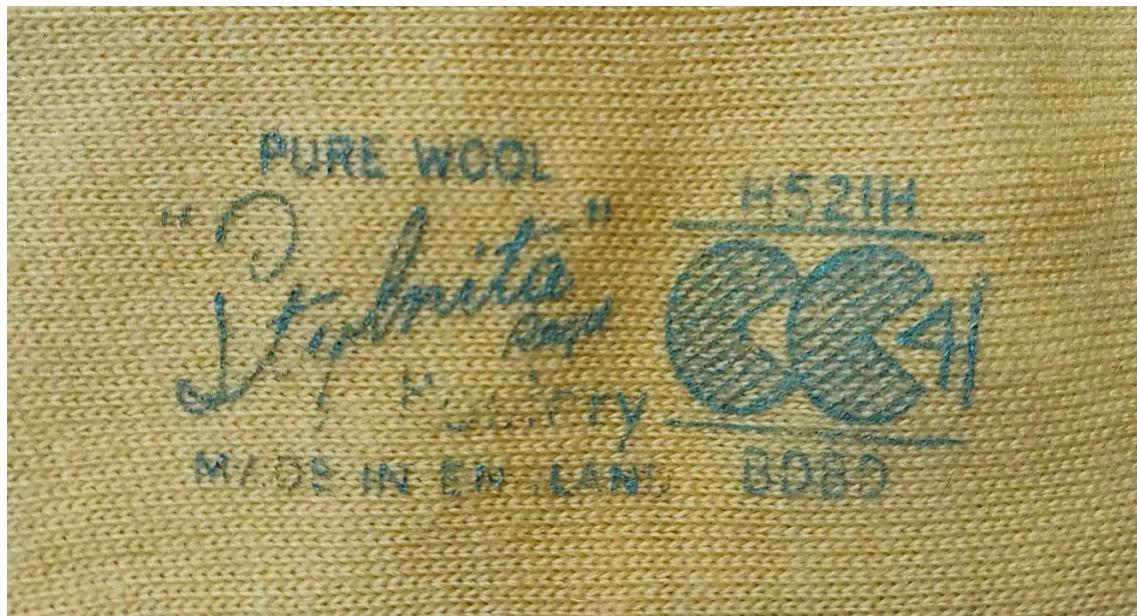


Figure 53 - Stylnita Regd. Hosiery. ca. 1942-1952. *Detail of printed cc41 stamp, branding, and associated Utility regulation coding applied to knitted Utility socks. [Wool].*

At: Author's own collection.

The West Riding garment industry produced different types of clothing and apparel, as exemplified in discussion of underwear and hosiery manufactured by Wilkinson & Warburton Ltd. above. The extent of varied manufacture was not limited to knit and undergarments. In addition, clothing for babies were made by Kamella Ltd. of Bradford, Redman Brothers (with sites in Mytholmroyd, Todmorden, and Hebden Bridge) who were recognised for early work with fustians, produced working garments from both cottons and wool. Additionally, Roscoe and Cockroft of Albion Works, Halifax, also made underclothing, to name a few of the categories of apparel – from undergarments and overalls, to shirts and childrenswear - produced by firms located in the region which featured on the Designation List (1 June 1942).

However, tailored, woven wool outer garments represented the majority of the West Riding garment manufacturing industry. In both fabric making and clothing production, wool as a raw material was central to the area, particularly when

reflecting on mass-manufacture. This is demonstrated by the types of clothing makers represented on the Designation List and the prominent role of the region in making garments for the Utility Clothing Scheme on the scale required.

As pointed out by Riello (2022b) “the somewhat complex terminology used in commercial correspondence can be supplemented by considering material evidence and visual sources” (Riello, 2022b, p.110). As shown earlier in this chapter, by analysing the different Utility fabrics made alongside written evidence, primary source material calls into question the realities of strict consensus and control, with manufacturers having a large role in the development and definition of Utility cloths. Approaching objects as source sites of material cultural evidence, examination of surviving garments in case study of businesses, practices, and the Utility Clothing Scheme through this chapter further develops considered evidence. This method builds understanding of the interactions under the public-private model of Utility.

Objects acquire associated meaning related to engagement (Pearce, 2013). Tangible, emotional connections may be formed, giving individual, collective, community, and cultural value, encapsulated by associated taxonomy surrounding the identity of the object (Watson, 2020, p.156). Such relational comprehension of the cc41 label as a marker is explained by widely accepted characteristics of Utility clothing. As recognised by Riello (2011), interpretation of environmental contextual factors and the meanings associated with each garment analysed enable interpretation of engagement in manufacture, retail, and consumption. These environmental contexts include political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, ethical – considerations of the PESTELE framework imbued within the surviving cc41 clothing addressed. This section draws on case studies of the manufacture of tailored garments by Montague Burton Ltd. and Thomas Marshall Ltd. The phenomenological approach to analysis accounts for reflective engagement with and interpretation (Petrov, 2012, p.53) of a three-piece suit and a jacket from each of these makers respectively. As insightfully posed by Walklate (2012), “even the simplest of items, as the study of conflict material culture shows, can act as

social agents, providing evidence for both their own life stories and those of the individuals around them" (Walklate, 2012, p.14).

## **Suitably Under Analysis - The Tailor of Taste**

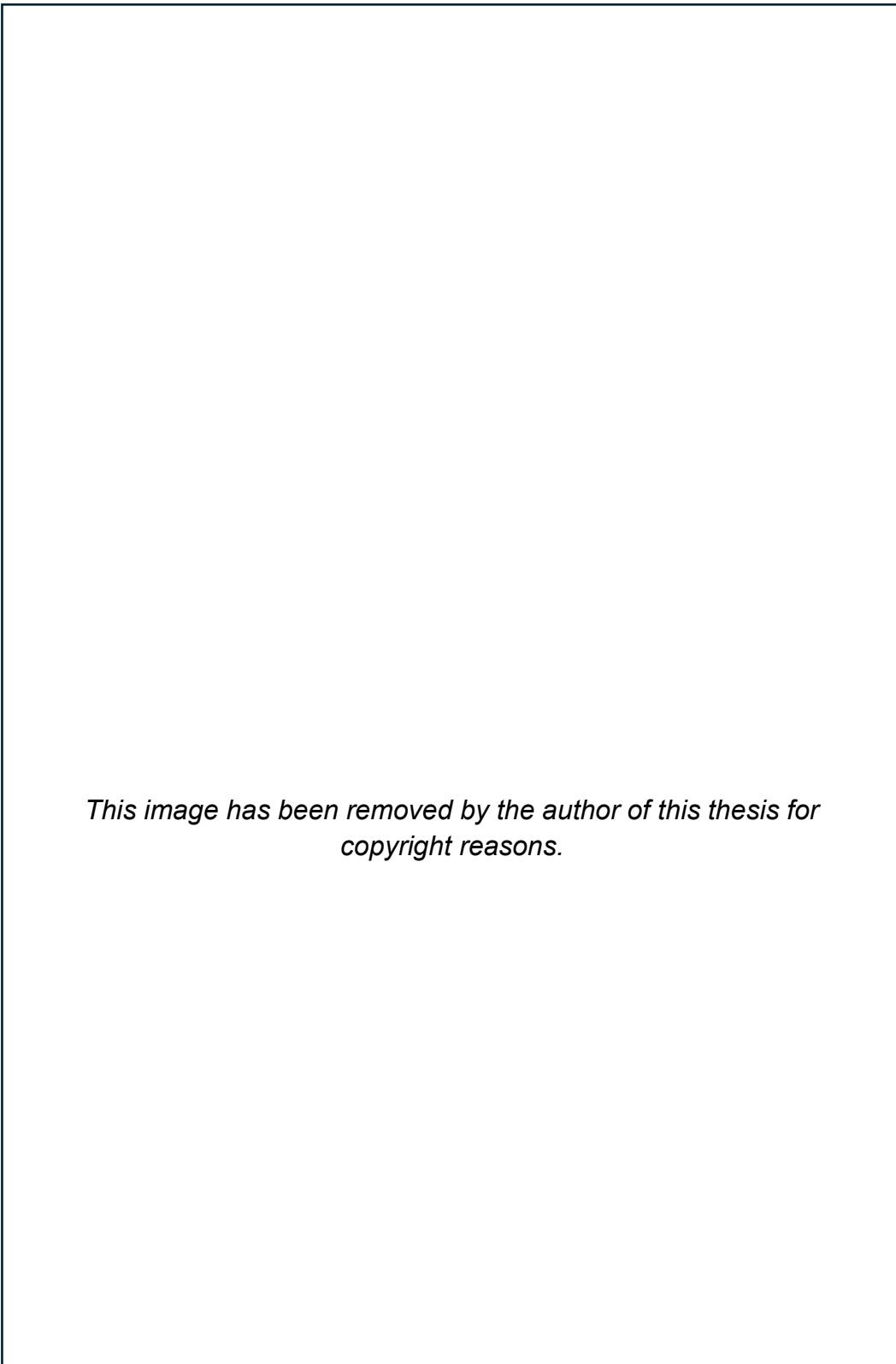
Distinctive features of both Montague Burton's manufacture and Utility are imbued within object LEEAG.2018.0038.0054, a cc41 marked suit manufactured by and sold under the Montague Burton Ltd. label. According to records from Leeds Museums and Galleries, this suit was made circa 1941 to 1952. The suit is representative of a range of indicative features which correspond with Walklate's (2012) reflection on Crooke (2012), where this everyday suit is characteristic of "not only an intersection between the private and the public, the intangible and the material, but also the past, present, and the future." (p.14). In relation to the Utility suit, this bridge between private and public takes on additional meaning – the government as public, the manufacturer as private business, and in consumption, as private ownership of the garment. This Montague Burton suit, as with all cc41 garments, therefore symbolises elements of the Utility Clothing Scheme through its defined creation under government directive. Garment construction details are indicative of stylistic features of wartime manufacture; government regulation and production details are further evidenced through employment of material culture investigation [fig. 54].



Figure 54 - Montague Burton Ltd., ca.1941-1952. *Men's three-piece Utility suit - jacket, waistcoat, and trousers [front]. [Wool].* At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0054. © Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).

Recorded as “the largest single employer in Leeds and among the top ten in the country” (Honeyman, 1993, p.186), Montague Burton Ltd. expanded to work at its greatest output to date by the 1930s (Honeyman 1993). This position was founded in the fact that “the firm surmounted the competition of the inter-war years, and became the largest clothing manufacturer in Europe in the 1940s.” (Honeyman, 1993, p.190). These statements alone leave little doubt as to why Burtons was a chief maker and outfitter of men’s suitings under the Utility Clothing Scheme. However, there is further evidence to this fact. Burton’s methods were an exemplar of innovation in the clothing trades; their wholesale-bespoke production and retailing practice making a quality product accessible to a wider range of consumers through employing innovative new ways of manufacturing and selling suits on a mass scale. Such practices, and pioneering technologies, were eagerly adopted within the Utility Clothing Scheme.

Initially, Montague Burton retailed from modest outfitting premises in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, and Sheffield, which was at this time situated in the county bounds of the West Riding (Honeyman, 1993, p.186). However, expansion of the business resulted in the establishment of a vast manufacturing site at Hudson Road Mills in Leeds. Through pioneering approaches to mass garment production which enabled made-to-measure construction, availability of garments which were made from fabrics which would ensure longevity determined defining features of Burton’s, with a focus on quality which was accessible (Honeyman, 1993, p.186). “True Tailoring”, noted a pamphlet of 1937, “truth in quality, truth in detail, accuracy, in workmanship – “True Tailoring” throughout.” (*True Tailoring*, 1937, p.1) following the current trends in cloth colours and patterns, appealing to those with an eye to fashion [fig. 55].



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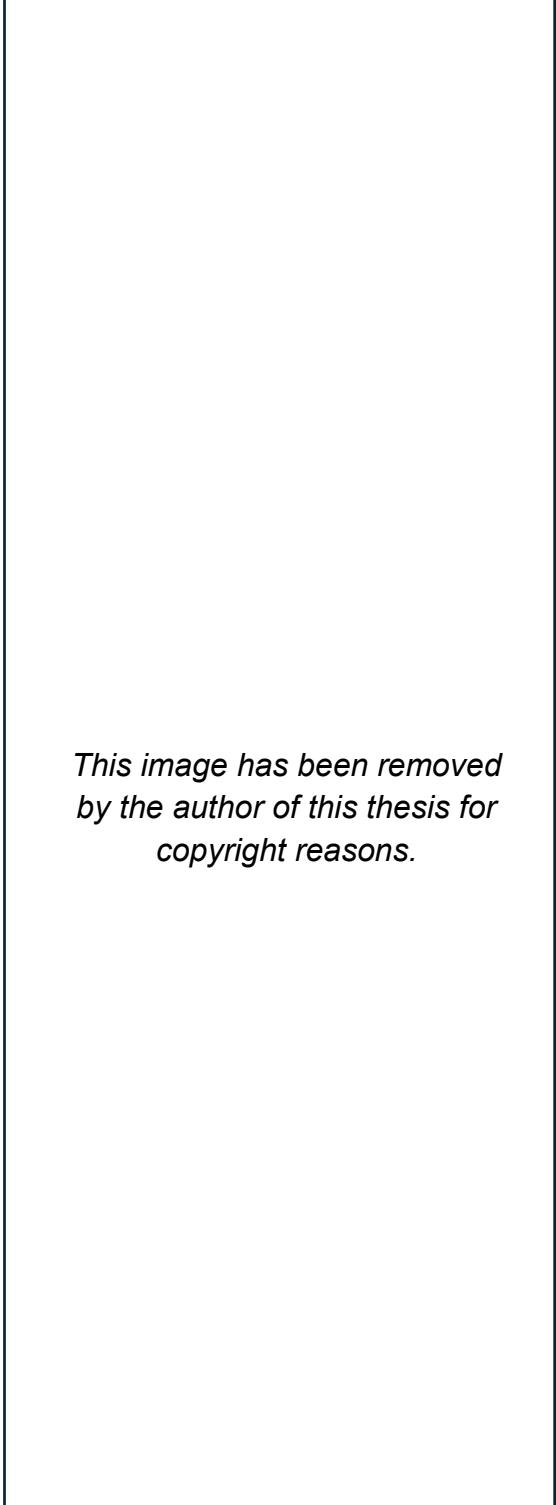
Figure 55 - Montague Burton Pamphlet. 1937. *True tailoring*. [Paper]. 6(13), p.6. At:  
Bodleian Library, University of Oxford: John Johnson Collection: Men's Clothes.

While garment manufacture at the firm had undergone standardisation through the creation of uniforms for the Great War, the lasting legacy of such practices remained a cornerstone of Burton's tailoring into the interwar period, as well as throughout the Second World War and thereafter (Honeyman, 1993, p.191). In the creation of the different component elements of a suit – namely, trousers, jacket, and waistcoat - “the simplicity of its appearance is belied by the complexity of its construction.” (Breward, 2016, p.10). Comprising 40 to 50 elements, and assembly incorporating possibly 75 processes (Owen and Cannon Jones, 2003, p. 38/39), a tailored jacket manufactured even using ready-made processes is indicative of the work involved in garment production.

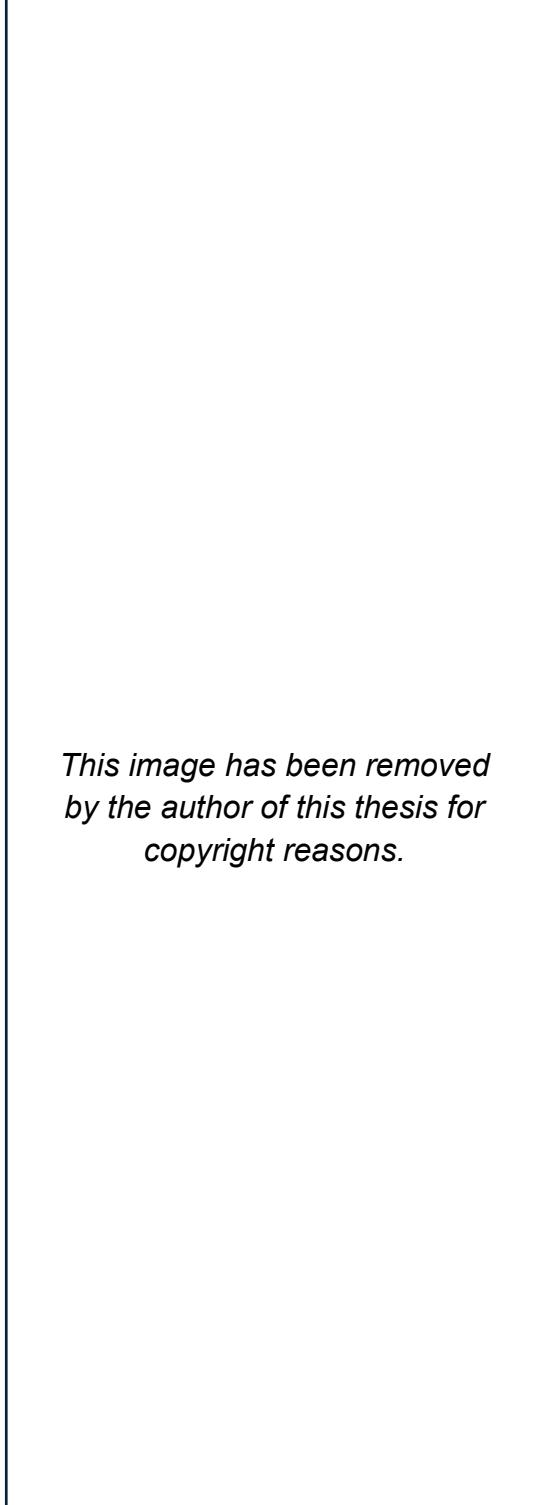
Different processes within the factory were, however, hierarchically defined. Demonstrated within the factory itself, hierarchies were presented within the gendered divide of different production. Sections and workrooms were devoted to different elements of the manufacturing process, which were commonly defined by gender. ‘Pressing’ was regarded as a role which “must be done skilfully and carefully, of course... here are expert men, the ‘Pressers’” (Burton, 1934, p.10). In addition, those described as “expert tailors... skill and experience, of knowledge and skill... “concentrated on sartorial artistry”.” were noted to be men (Burton, 1934, p.11). Photographs of Montague Burton factory workrooms emphasise the cultures of clothing manufacture in the interwar period [fig. 56 and fig. 57]. Pattern cutting as an area of specialisation, where different pieces which make up a garment are transferred onto fabric, which is then cut and stitched together (Almond, 2016, p.169). The status afforded to this role was reflected under the Utility Clothing Scheme, as it ensured the most was made of available fabrics. The importance placed pattern cutting and pattern cutters was reflected in the gendered divide – the cutting room being largely, if not wholly, populated by men. Analysis of the images from 1937 presented in figures 56 and 57 here reflect this.

Other areas of the Burton’s factory, however, show the vast number of women employed in the factory [fig. 56 and fig. 57]. Working as machinists as well as in finishing and checking roles, women were integral contributors to the output of

tailored garments. The number of women employed in the mass production of clothing in factories in the West Riding is clear [see page 212]. Through the example of Montague Burton's Hudson Mill site, the presumed setting for the photographs depicted in figures 56 and 57, women were already greatly involved in this area of industry prior to the Second World War. Because of the established workforce, in relation to the requirements of Concentration and Designation with regard to the employment of women workers, transfer of labour would, potentially, be less impactful in this section of industry. The mass manufactories of the region were therefore in a strong position to contribute to the Utility Clothing Scheme.



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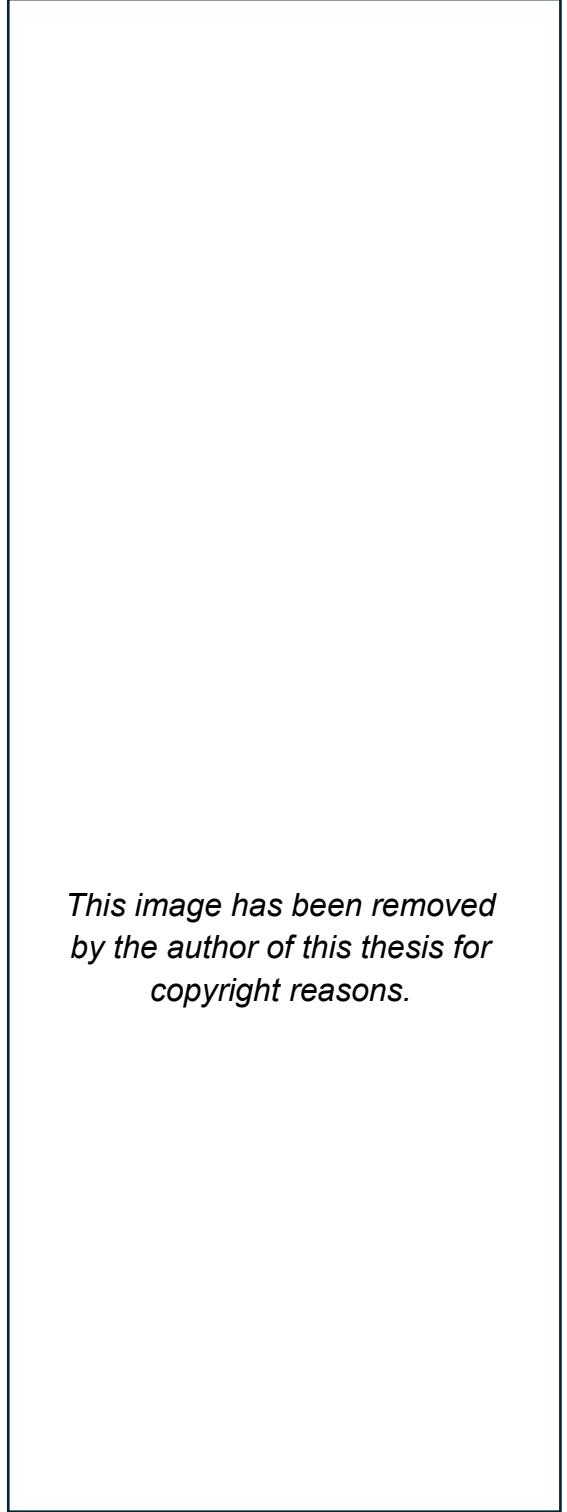


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Figure 56 - Montague Burton Pamphlet (1937). *True tailoring*. [Paper]. 6(13), p.10-11. At: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford: John Johnson Collection: Men's Clothes.



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Figure 57 - Montague Burton Pamphlet. 1937. *True tailoring*. [Paper]. 6(13), p.12-13. At: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford: John Johnson Collection: Men's Clothes.

Writing for *Men's Wear* (6 February 1932), Montague Burton commented that "the essence of successful multiple tailoring is that it should be automatic and consequently foolproof; the more the machine replaces the human factor, as in the case of mass production, the more it is assured of success" (WYL1951/4). The developed practices involving specialised machinery proved integral components of Burton's methods of manufacture. The engagement of Montague Burton Ltd. in the production of cc41 clothing can be attributed to the company's established methods of manufacture, their ability to produce on a large scale was attractive. Several Montague Burton production sites were identified on the Designated Clothing Factories List (1 June 1942). Alongside the Hudson Mills factory in Leeds, which was the business' central manufacturing site and base, three of the company's Clothing Works were identified in Lancashire, one tailor's shop in Glasgow, and a final site in London (Designated Clothing Factories, 1 June 1942, p.2.).

Speculation (Prown, 1982) shows that, characteristics for which Burton's became a trusted purveyor of wholesale-bespoke are represented within the fabric and construction of the suit. The fabric is dark blue wool featuring a pinstripe, pointing to the social and cultural significance of the suit's design during this period (Prown, 1980), in maintenance of pre-war norms (Burton, 1934) evoking respectability. In connecting cloth and clothing, the cc41 label, affixed to all three pieces of the suit, comprised of waistcoat, jacket, and trousers, reveals interesting insight into its manufacture, reflective of historical association (Pearce, 1999b). Each of the individual labels are stamped '209' [fig. 58 and fig. 59], which indicates that the suit is fabricated of tweed of either Yorkshire or Scottish manufacture, or worsted (The Drapers' Record, No.2820, 30 August 1941, p.16). The cloth types which came under number 209 were permitted for use in making-up "men's or youths' suits", and "women's or maids' overcoats or costumes." (The Drapers' Record, No.2820, 30 August 1941, p.16). The fine lightness of the fabric suggests a worsted. Montague Burton had strong trading links with Rowland, Mitchell & Co., the woollen manufacturers located in Huddersfield. The local networking relationships between cloth producers and clothing manufacturers is evident in this example as with many others in the region. Specification number 214 is noted on Utility fabric orders

made by Burton's with Rowland, Mitchell & Co. (Rowland, Mitchell & Co Sales Book, October 1941 – March 1947). This correlates with use of Solid Botany worsted flannel, permitted for use in "Men's or youths' trousers. Women's or maids' costumes or slacks." (The Drapers' Record, No.2820, August 30th, 1941, p.16). Similarly, Specification number 209 is also ever present in contracts between the two firms. Such cloth was "Scottish tweed" or "Yorkshire woollen tweed", or "all worsted" – certainly the types of fabrics used by a firm such as Burton's, especially as these fabric types were endorsed by the government for use in men's tailoring under the Utility Clothing Scheme.



Figure 58 - Montague Burton Ltd. ca.1941-1952. *Cc41 Utility label attached to men's suit trousers. [Wool].* At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0054.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 59 - Montague Burton Ltd. ca.1941-1952. Reverse of cc41 Utility label attached to men's suit jacket. [Wool]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0054. © Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).

Orders for Utility fabrics from Montague Burton's began to appear in Rowland, Mitchell & Co's Sales Day Book from October 1942, though earlier registers of purchases for non-Utility fabrics are present. This first note accounted for an order recorded 19<sup>th</sup> October 1942 of 1389½ yards of shrunken Utility cloth [table 12], (Rowland, Mitchell & Co, 1942, p.96). The Burton's Leeds site placed a further order on 27<sup>th</sup> October for £631 11s. 11d. of fabrics [table 13] (Rowland, Mitchell & Co, 1942, p.98). Quantities of cloth purchased for the making of Utility clothing in such short succession were representative of the rise in Utility clothing production in 1942, and regular orders for cloth types 214 and 209

continued throughout the War. Local networks connecting cloth manufacturers and clothing makers kept production close-knit through the war, maintaining networks and also reducing transportation of goods. Connections between fabric production and clothing making-up enabled collaboration in manufacture to continue between businesses under the Utility Clothing Scheme. This is further illustrated in the surviving finished garments. Key elements emphasise the interwoven nature of fabric production and garment making-up, and further, of retailing, within the parameters of the Utility Clothing Scheme. The attributed regulation number of 209, when considered in conjunction with archival findings detailed above, suggest it could be possible that the fabric used to make-up the suit was acquired from Rowland, Mitchell & Co. of Huddersfield. The suit therefore also serves as an exemplar of Utility cloth produced in the region.

Order Date	Amount	Cloth Type	Total (£)	Spec. No.	Amount	Cost
19 <sup>th</sup> October 1942	1389 $\frac{1}{4}$ yards	Shrunken Utility cloth (36" width)	£520 10s. 4d.	209	424 $\frac{3}{4}$	£171 13s. 5d.
				214	964 $\frac{1}{2}$	£377 15s. 3d.

Table 12 - Fabric order from Montague Burton Ltd. to Rowland, Mitchell and Co.  
Data taken from Rowland, Mitchell & Co. 1942. *Sales Book*. [Paper]. p.96.  
At: Kirklees: West Yorkshire Archive Service. B/RM/25.

Order Date	Cloth Type	Total (£)	Spec. No.	Amount
27 <sup>th</sup> October 1942	Shrunken Utility cloth (36" width)	£631 11s. 11d.	209	788 $\frac{3}{4}$
			214	888 $\frac{1}{4}$

Table 13 - Fabric order from Montague Burton Ltd. to Rowland, Mitchell and Co. Data taken from Rowland, Mitchell & Co. 1942. *Sales Book*. [Paper]. p.98.  
At: Kirklees: West Yorkshire Archive Service. B/RM/25.

It was deemed proper by many for a suit to comprise of two pairs of trousers, a waistcoat, and jacket. The Utility example under analysis consists of one surviving pair of trousers, a waistcoat, and a jacket. The waistcoat itself is fully

lined, has four pockets to the front, and fastens with five plastic buttons down the centre front [fig. 60]. The reverse [fig. 61] has no adjustable tape. While the main body of the waistcoat is fashioned from a wool-based cloth, it is lined in cotton, with the back made of a synthetic fabric. *The Times* (19 March 1942) reported that, for both Utility and non-Utility menswear, restrictions on several different elements would be enacted from 1 May 1942. This meant that a maximum of five buttons and two pockets would be permitted for application on waistcoats, with tightening tapes also eliminated from this date (The Times, 19 March 1942, p.2). The number of pockets on this waistcoat, then, could indicate manufacture before 1 May 1942, an exciting discovery.



Figure 60 - Montague Burton Ltd., ca.1941-1952. Men's Utility suit waistcoat [front]. [Wool].

At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0054.

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Figure 61 - Montague Burton Ltd. ca.1941-1952. *Men's Utility suit waistcoat [back]*. [Wool].  
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Further, other elements of the suit propose interesting insights. Some of these tacit details prove to also contest popular understandings of the making of clothing through the wartime period, into post-war rationing and the continuation of the Utility Clothing Scheme thereafter. For example, the trousers of the suit feature a turn-up to the hem [fig. 62], which may enable a more accurate date to be applied to their production and sale. It could be suggested that, rather than being created during the wartime period, the suit was made in the post-war period of Utility. However, it can be ascertained from the inclusion of the code

number '209' on the Utility label that this suit was made earlier in the Utility Clothing Scheme. Code number 209, coupled with key details such as cloth specification numbers (if present), buttons, pockets, waist-adjustment fastenings, and turn-ups [fig. 63 and fig. 64], for example, enable date attribution to be estimated. In keeping with the seemingly constant changes in garment manufacturing regulations, these elements appear to follow restrictions from early in the Scheme. The waistcoat and trousers of this suit therefore comply with the notion of manufacturing consensus, meaning the suit was likely manufactured between the introduction of the Scheme in 1941, and the implementation of regulations which removed turn-ups from trousers in 1942.

Cultures of clothing manufacture shifted in wartime due to the need for collaboration under the public-private business model. Following directives in manufacture, connected meaning (Pearce, 1999b) positions the suit within new the business cultures of wartime. With restrictions to the features allowed to be applied to garments gathering pace, the jacket of this Montague Burton suit further evidences changing rules. Again, from 1st May 1942, such decorative buttons attached to the cuffs were no longer allowed (The Times, 19th March 1942, p.2). This jacket bears two decorative buttons to each cuff [fig. 65].



Figure 62 - Montague Burton Ltd. ca.1941-1952. *Men's Utility suit trousers. [Wool]*.

At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0054.

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Figure 63 - Montague Burton Ltd. ca.1941-1952. *Detail of turn-up on Men's Utility suit trousers. [Wool].* At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0054.  
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Figure 64 - Montague Burton Ltd. ca.1941-1952.  
*Detail of internal hem measurement on Men's Utility suit trousers. [Wool].*  
At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0054.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 65 - Montague Burton Ltd. ca.1941-1952. *Men's Utility suit Jacket [front].* [Wool].

At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0054.

© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).

As one object emblematic of the clothing cultures of the Second World War, the Burton's cc41 suit offers insight into industry practice, and the actualities of working to the regulations and restrictions of the Utility Clothing Scheme. When coupled with investigations of documentary material, collated evidence shows the role of this mass manufacturer in the Scheme. Developed innovations and methods employed at Burton's positioned the multiple tailor centrally within the Scheme. Focus on fabric quality and available variety, and retailing through newfound retailing practices, centrally wholesale bespoke, enhanced the company's position through attracting custom (Honeyman, 1993, p.188). Engagement with emergent technologies had been patronised by Burton's, as well as other mass manufacturers in the region, with tools such as Barran's multi-layered fabric cutting band knife, pioneered in 1858, proving immensely useful to the nature of production and resultant levels of output (Honeyman, 1993). In addition, practices such as breaking down processes of production, utilised by Herman Friend, were endorsed across Leeds tailors (Honeyman, 1993).

Breward (2016) acknowledges the role of both bespoke and ready-to-wear tailoring in suit production, with cut and fabric indicative of the wearer's identity. The interconnectedness of identity and the suit was challenged by the mere notion of cc41. An early allusion to the Utility Clothing Scheme can be cited in the mention of "Standard Suits for Men" being manufactured (*Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear*, 25 July 1941, p.497). Associated meaning with the use of the term 'standard' and perceived implications had negative reactions amongst manufacturers, as proven in articles contained within trade papers. These publications questioned the validity of such a practice as the creation of a standard suit, alongside the stereotyping of consumers from the perspective of the bespoke tailor (*Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear*, 25 July 1941, p.497). Conversely, the mass media commented on standardised production under the Utility Clothing Scheme as presenting "men [with] a good opportunity of keeping up the old pretence that they do not care what they wear" (*The Times*, 4 March 1942, p.5).

Despite attempts at positive press dissemination, Mass Observation recordings illustrate how consumer interpretation of Utility clothing reflected the concerns of manufacturers. Contributors drew attention to perceived implications of regulation on cut and construction and the impact this would have on fit and style. In response to the prompt on “feeling about new utility clothing”, contributor M50 suggested “I believe we are going to have drain pipe trousers...”, while M35 stated “...I don’t like trousers without a turn-up at the bottom. That sort of economy is a stupid farce.” (Mass Observation FR 1264, May 1942, p.9). Having described their frugality, one participant from Sheffield added that “since the proposal of utility styles, however, I have decided to increase my stock and buy another suit as I dislike intensely trousers with no turn-up” (Mass Observation, FR 2539, p.1). Because of the changes to established norms of garment construction which were implemented through the Scheme, consumers felt compelled to purchase new clothing. Rather than achieving the proposed economies of manufacture, these changes would result in trousers wearing out quicker (Mass Observation FR 1264, May 1942). Conversely, Hugh Dalton proposed that “turn-ups are a very debatable subject... on the turn-ups regulations alone millions of square feet of cloth have already been saved.” (Hansard HC Deb., 16 March 1943, col.1024). Dalton’s understanding of consumer dissatisfaction with changes to garment construction was counteracted with evidence supporting the move to remove turn-ups from trousers, on account of economies in fabric use. Whether trousers without turn-ups wore out more quickly remained open to debate. However, testimony from Mass Observation highlights how changes to construction through the Utility Clothing Scheme prompted consumers to purchase non-Utility garments.

Questioning the need for changes such as turn-ups and interpretations presented through Mass Observation were also reflected within the House of Commons. In relation to working with industry and trade representatives, Mr Edmund Radford, Member for the Manchester Rusholme constituency posed to Dalton:

In view of the wide dissatisfaction with the austerity clothes regulations, whether he will consider the advisability of conferring with practical representatives of the bespoke "tailoring trade, as distinct from the manufacturing interests, with a view to amending the regulations, thereby making them more practical and thus removing the serious irritation they are causing to professional and business men in particular? (Hansard HC Deb., 16 March 1943, cols.1023-1024).

Dalton counteracted Radford's query citing "consultation with the trade" (Hansard HC Deb., 16 March 1943, col.1024), in relation to savings required in the number of employees, amounts of cloth used, and space required for storage and shipment of goods (Hansard HC Deb., 16 March 1943). Assurances of involvement of representatives from within and concession to posed future involvement considerate of the changing nature of the Utility Clothing Scheme and the requirements of those making cc41 garments reflective of government understanding of the need for collaboration.

Though it was affirmed that "there [would] be no such thing as a standard suit" (The Times, 16 October 1941, p.4), consumer interpretation of the cut and construction of trousers alone is reflective of social perceptions around the image of the suit, and the need for manufacturers to create Utility menswear which would meet with the aims of the Scheme and the discerning customer's requirements. This, combined with investigation of garment production itself, demonstrates the collaborative nature of the Utility Clothing Scheme. Mention of the standardisation of the manufacture of suits was no doubt impactful on the West Riding clothing making-up industry, established in production through mass manufacture. As a centre of British mass-tailoring, the region was integral to wartime output under the Utility Clothing Scheme. As a multiple tailor, Montague Burton Ltd. played a significant role.

In saying this, from the firm's *Report and Balance Sheets*, it can be ascertained that profits did reduce through the war [table 14]. There are several reasons behind this reduction in company profits. The Report and Balance Sheet for 1943 emphasises "the conditions of trading were of increasing difficulty.

Concentration of Industry, the Limitation of Supplies, the Consumer Rationing Order, and in addition the calling up of personnel militated against the company's activities" (Report and Balance Sheet of Montague Burton Limited, 31st March 1943). The report was eager to also provide note on the consumer make-up of the business, being young men "of military age" (Report and Balance Sheet of Montague Burton Limited, 31st March 1943). Further explanation is offered from the perspective of the company's Utility output:

Practically the whole of our production during the past year [1<sup>st</sup> April 1942-31<sup>st</sup> March 1943] was for Government and Utility requirements; comparatively little material being released for other purposes. But in spite of restrictions, we are still able to offer our customers satisfactory service and value. It is gratifying to find from repeat orders and recommendations that appreciation is widespread (Montague Burton Limited, 31st March 1943).

Accession Number	Year	Profits for the year to 31 <sup>st</sup> March
WYL1951/185/1/9	1938	£566,911 3s. 9d.
WYL1951/185/1/11	1940	£677,099 16s. 9d.
WYL1951/185/1/12	1941	£454,168 13s. 10d.
WYL1951/185/1/13	1942	£335,600
WYL1951/185/1/14	1943	£160, 487
WYL1951/185/1/15	1944	£487,090
WYL1951/185/1/16	1945	£222,195

Table 14 - Table showing the annual profits to 31<sup>st</sup> March of Montague Burton Limited.  
Data taken from Montague Burton Limited. 1938-1945. *Report and Balance Sheet*. At: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL1951/185/1/9-16.

Established business practices and garments made by the mass manufacturers of tailored garments in the region are testament to the involvement of West Riding-based clothing manufacturers involvement in the Utility Clothing Scheme. The influence these established ways of working had on the Utility Clothing Scheme, in the standard application of methods of production through multiple tailoring were significant. Recognised confidence in companies, like

Burtons, with regard to quality, were a further factor in attracting custom and securing the sale of cc41 garments. In this way, industry led the manufacture of Utility clothing; setting practicable standards and ensuring that garments remained desirable. The voice of industry was powerful to practicing under, and in shaping, the Utility Clothing Scheme.

## **Marlbeck Tailormades**

In addressing tailored menswear, the Montague Burton cc41 suit serves as a tangible connection to socially acceptable dress of the wartime period, as well as bridging understanding of Utility, visually and materially. The manufacture of tailored menswear has been documented by several authors, with focus on different areas of menswear tailoring. Honeyman (1993, 2011) serves as a prominent author of this area of industry within the West Riding. While the histories of menswear tailoring in the early twentieth century have been recognised within existing literature, the making of women's tailored garments, as well as in mass-dressmaking, is another area in which the West Riding was prominent. Due to the nature of womenswear, in changeability and its subject breadth of fashionability, wider literature which encompasses the Utility Clothing Scheme is largely focussed on womenswear consumption. Therefore, there is space for investigation into tailored womenswear as an area of regional prominence. This is where closer analysis of the Marlbeck jacket can build on understanding, in several ways. In this regard, the following presented case study seeks to address the imbalance in literature concerning tailored womenswear, highlighting the role which the West Riding played in making heavier and lighter cc41 garments for women.

Visual analysis of the surviving jacket shown in figure 66, demonstrates embodied language of context (Pearce, 1999b), representative of a range of meanings and interpretations shows correlation with identified features of wartime restrictions on manufacture with actual practice in production. Indicative of wartime regulations, the Marlbeck cc41 jacket includes a large, single-button

fastening. The prominent position of the button integrated in practicality of function as well as serving as an interesting design feature, both elements of this detail meeting with regulations [fig. 67]. Two patch-pockets with sewn detailing correspond with government stipulated design simplification (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 28 August 1942, p.561). While practically reinforcing the pockets, the detailing provided through two simple rows of machine stitching on each pocket serves to demonstrate not only practicality, but also ingenuity in creation, making the most of fabric available through incorporating a decorative element [fig. 68]. While serving the practical purpose of reinforcing the pockets, the two rows of 'v' type shape stitching correlate with "ornamental stitching" permitted in up to four rows, for inclusion on pockets and collars, for example (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 28 August 1942, p.561). Further, the jacket features shoulder pads, along with darts and seams giving a tailored silhouette to the recognised wartime masculine styling evident in this garment [fig. 69]. Production under the directives of Utility is demonstrated in the described features of the Marlbeck jacket, in that it conforms to regulations.



Figure 66 - Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. *Utility jacket [front]*. [Wool with synthetic lining].  
At: Author's own collection.



Figure 67 - Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. *Detail of button fastening, Utility jacket [centre front].*  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.



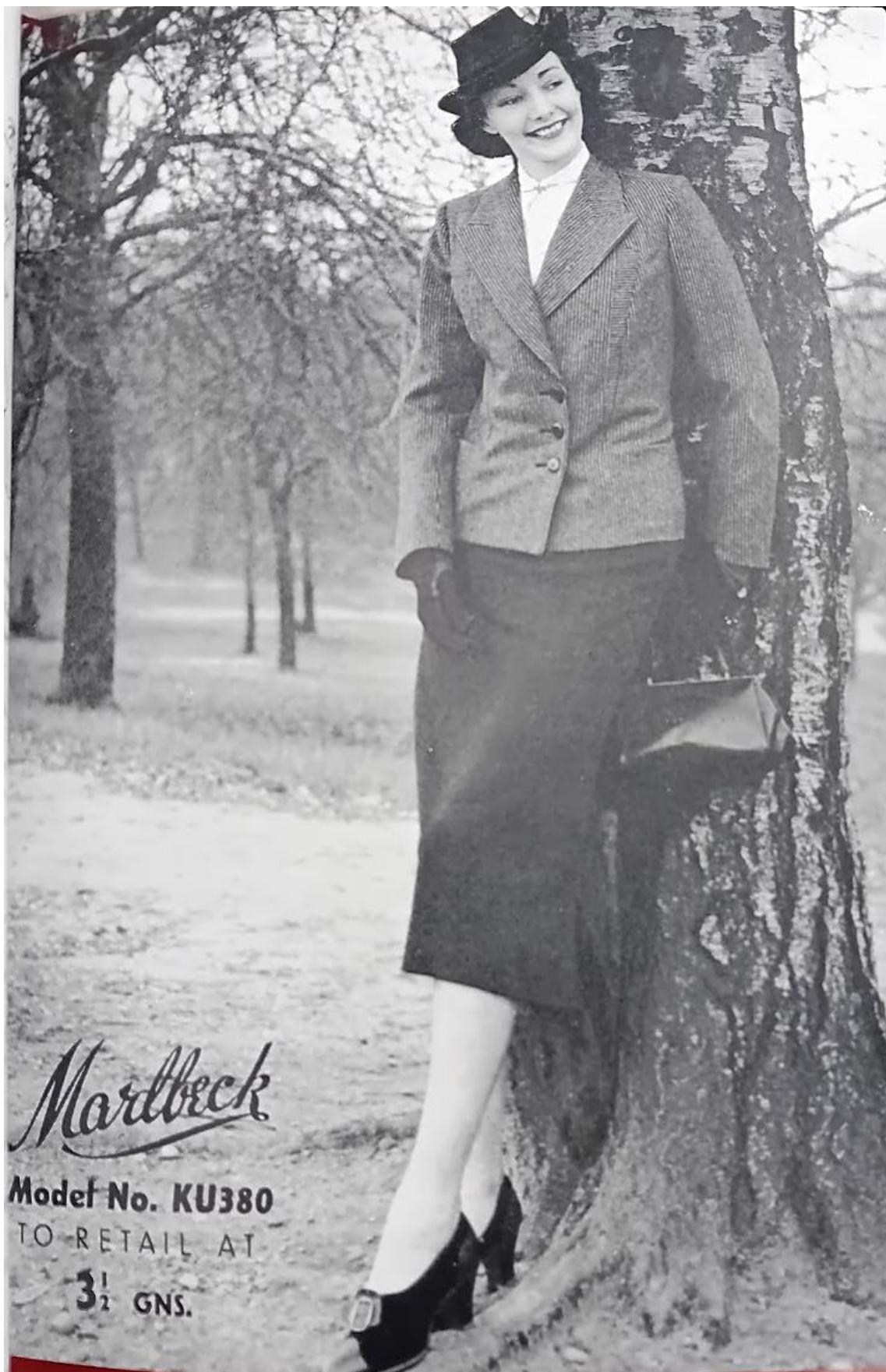
Figure 68 - Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. *Detail of pocket, Utility jacket [front right].*  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.



Figure 69 - Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. *Utility Jacket [back]*.  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.

The noted wartime standards of the cc41 jacket do not detract from the design of the piece, which bears resemblance to Marlbeck garments advertised even prior to the outbreak of the war in the late 1930s [fig. 70]. Though the inter-war period jacket depicted in the advertisement shown in figure 70 features a three-button fastening to the front as well as a wider lapel, the inclusion of two patch pockets, a simple sleeve, front darting, and shoulder pads are reflected in the Utility jacket under analysis [fig. 73]. The similarities identified demonstrate the continuation of production and practice for the Utility lines made bearing the Marlbeck label. Austerity regulations, then, were applied within the established aesthetic of the business, despite fears associated with standardisation.

Design features remained important despite simplification and standardisation, demonstrating the integral role of manufacturers and retailers in communicating the fashionable needs of consumers and ensuring that Utility pieces sold successfully. Elements of design, as suggested, were also found in fabrics used. The Marlbeck Annual produced in 1941 details a tweed two-piece skirt suit, a combination which used a distinctive wool weave cloth [fig. 71]. Though the fabric used for the jacket under examination appears to be a plainer weave, closer inspection shows use of blue and pink warp and weft to create an overall purple hue [fig. 72].



*Marlbeck*

**Model No. KU380**

TO RETAIL AT

**3½ GNS.**

Figure 70 - Advertisement for Marlbeck garments. Marlbeck Model No. KU380 TO RETAIL

AT 3½ GNS. 1938. *The Marlbeck Annual*. [Paper]. 7, p.27.

At: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/7.



Figure 71 - Advertisement for Marlbeck Tailormade skirt suit. Marlbeck Tailormade MODEL No. KU 3803. 1941. *The Marlbeck Annual*. [WYAS Leeds]. 10, p.21. [Accessed 2 August 2023]. Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/7.



Figure 72 - Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. *Detail of fabric weave, Utility Jacket.*  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.

Some examples of Utility garments do not have a manufacturer's label affixed to them. However, with Marlbeck included labels to assert the company's position as a name of repute. In addition, this also associate consumer interpretations of the Marlbeck brand with Utility clothing, evidence of the public-private business model of Utility. The jacket under examination therefore bears makers label to the inner lining, positioned centrally at the base of the collar [fig. 73]. All Utility garments had to include a cc41 label. Government stipulations highlighted that the Utility mark could be either printed or woven, and affixed to the garment at appropriate sizing of 1¼" x 1" (Directorate of Civilian Clothing 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1941, p.1). The cc41 label itself a woven example, a possible indicator of earlier date of manufacture. This is machine stitched in a pink cotton to the interior lining of the right-hand side of the jacket, at the waist below the sleeve [fig. 74]. Surviving garments approached for analysis in research for this thesis suggest that woven cc41 labels were largely outnumbered by printed, or came to also feature the makers name as the war progressed. The jacket under analysis, bearing both maker and Utility label, indicative of assertion by Thomas Marshall Ltd. that cc41 garments produced were quality pieces, manufactured to expected customer standards.



Figure 73 - Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. *Makers label, Utility jacket.* [Wool with synthetic lining].  
At: Author's own collection.



Figure 74 - Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. 'cc41' Utility label, Utility jacket.  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.

While the lining is inserted into the jacket using hand-finishing, externally visible elements of this garment are machine stitched (other than the affixed central button). To both sleeve openings at the wrist, there is a piece of fabric inserted in white, rather than corresponding with the pink synthetic, lining, likely rayon, but stiffer in structure than the rest of the jacket lining fabric which has a softer feel and flow [fig. 75]. Machine stitched in a green thread, rather than hand-sewn in a shade of pink or purple, as is observable throughout all other areas of the rayon jacket lining, imply these are later additions rather than original inclusions originating in manufacture. Alterations made by the consumer, a dressmaker, or tailor, the additional added length to the sleeves, utilised the available fabric of the sleeve cuff. The need for a consumer to modify this garment is indicative of standardisation of manufacture, the sleeves being too short for the wearer at some point in its use meaning that they had to engage with alteration.



Figure 75 - Marlbeck. ca.1942-1945. *Sleeve cuff [right], Utility jacket.*  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.

Specialisation in the manufacture of womenswear developed prior to the Second World War. These creators became even more widely recognised for their contributions to the Utility Clothing Scheme. Prominently situated in the centre of Leeds, the purpose-built Marlbeck House on Great George Street housed tailor and clothier 'Marlbeck'. Through the Marlbeck label, Thomas Marshall Ltd. had an established reputation for the manufacture of tailored garments which were also designed in-house. Marlbeck promoted their goods as tailormades whose "Trademark is a symbol of outstanding quality at moderate prices" (The Drapers' Record, 21 June 1941, p.15). In advertising, as with countless clothing manufacturers across Britain, many of the key features of Marlbeck garments were prominently featured in promotion of their products to retailers and civilian consumers alike. Marketing material offered assurances that key features of Marlbeck garments would be maintained in Utility garments (C. & J. Fox & Co., 27 August 1942); quality, price, sizing, and style remained key to the company (Marlbeck Tailormades, 21 June 1941, p.15). For the public, advertising and the discourse disseminated enabled knowledge around the restrictions of buying clothing in wartime to be relayed. The inclusion of information which communicated restrictions alongside assurances from the industry itself also served as an overt display of patriotism - by manufacturers, in adherence to practices in aid of the war effort, and by consumers, in purchasing Utility products.

Advertisements for the clothier could be found in fashion magazines, newspapers, and trade publications show how promotion, even in wartime, encouraged procurement of new garments. Key words were emphasised, and choice purchases encouraged. Features in British *Vogue* included the Marlbeck label, amongst others, which prompted readers to "Look for these Labels: They stand for Quality and Style" (British *Vogue*, January 1941, p.53). Such promotional sentiments proved indicative as to inclusion of the company on the Designated Clothing Factories List as a maker of apparel for the Utility Clothing Scheme. Overt marketing of business connection and expansion further evidences the prominent position of Marlbeck at this time. To be connected with Marlbeck was of notable importance. An advertisement for 'Marldena gowns', by Dean & Thomson Ltd., of Marldena House, Shipley, featured in The Drapers'

Record, importantly stated that the company is “associated with Thomas Marshall (Marlbeck) Limited” (The Drapers’ Record, 26 April 1941, p.11). Cited on the Designated Clothing Factories List (June 1942) Thomas Marshall Ltd.’s Marlbeck label was the branch of the company under which Utility manufacture was undertaken; as a subsidiary of Marlbeck, the Shipley site was not featured on the 1942 Designation list, suggesting that Utility garments were not manufactured at this site, under the *Marldena* label. However, evidence shows that the site was still producing garments in wartime, erection of an extension to Marldena House having been completed for opening 24<sup>th</sup> March 1939 (Marlbeck Annual, 1939, p.60). While making clothing for the Scheme through Marlbeck, Thomas Marshall Ltd. itself also continued to manufacture garments which were non-Utility through its various labels.

Established consumer confidence in Marlbeck, as well as industry recognition in the company as a producer of clothing, was further emphasised by the six defining principles which proved significant defining features in the promotion of Marlbeck garments. Detailed in marketing designed to appeal to retailers “Six Reasons why you should sell Marlbeck Tailor-mades” were identified as “quality, detail, different sizes, urgent repeats, stock service, guaranteed satisfaction” (*Marlbeck Annual*, Christmas 1932, p.6). Within the garment trade, and with reference to the making-up of Utility clothing, these attributes were significant points of note for manufacturers. For example, with reference to sizes produced, this excerpt from the *Marlbeck Tailormades Spring & Summer 1941* catalogue emphasised the manufacturing capabilities of the firm, through the wide range of different garment sizes which could be produced [fig. 76]. Promotional materials should be viewed with criticality; notably, it is suggested that stocking Marlbeck apparel would be beneficial to custom, as a result increasing the income through a resultant reduction in the need for adjustments to garments through the increased number of transactions (*Marlbeck Tailormades Spring & Summer*, 1941). This being said, the production of a range of sizes demanded different cutting and construction practice in their making-up. The ability of the Marlbeck line of Thomas Marshall Ltd. to create garments in a range of sizes as a result demonstrates a significant positive for the firm’s role in creating Utility garments as businesses moved into

manufacturing and retailing under the regulations of the Utility Clothing Scheme. As suggested in an advertisement of 1942, the size range produced by Marlbeck reduced to a "wartime range of 20 practical sizes" (The Drapers' Record, 5 September 1942, p.28), a reduction on the size range purported to be produced prior to the implementation of Utility.

NO MORE "EXTRA SMALL" OR "OUTSIZE" TROUBLES

*Marlbeck*  
TAILORMADES

INCREASE YOUR SALES AND REDUCE YOUR DIFFICULTIES

★

May we suggest that it will be to your advantage to maintain a stock of . . .

24 Carefully Selected Sizes

(As shown in Red)

WE are confident that it will reduce YOUR alteration costs by half, and undoubtedly increase your sales, thereby being a very sound investment.

Each size, if you wish, could be ordered in a different style, and whenever one was sold an Urgent Repeat order could be put through so as to maintain your selection of 24 Sizes in stock throughout the season.

★

The success of your Mantle Department depends on the careful study of sizes. If you cannot possibly stock the 24 different sizes which we think essential, do please consider stocking at least 12.

A RANGE OF 55 DIFFERENT SIZES

SIZE	Bust	Waist	Hips	Across Back	Neck to Waist	Inside Sleeve	Coat length	Skirt length
<b>SLIM FITTINGS</b>								
32"	32	25	36	13	13	16	42	27
33"	33	26	37	13½	13½	16½	43	28
34"	34	27	38	13½	14	17	44	28
35"	35	28	39	13½	14½	17	45	29
<b>AMERICAN FITTINGS</b>								
10	31½	26	34½	12½	14	16	42	26
12	33	27	36	13	15	16½	43	27
14	34½	28	37½	13½	15½	16½	44	28
16	36	29	39	14	15	17	45	29
18	37½	30	40	14½	15½	17½	46	30
20	39	31	42	15	16	17½	47	31
Lengths may vary according to fashion or style. All measurements are taken tight over the figure.								
<b>NORMAL FITTINGS</b>								
7	32	26	38	13½	14	16½	43	28
8	33	27	39	13½	14½	17	44	28
9	34	28	40	13½	15	17	45	29
S.S.	34	29	40	13½	14½	17	45	29
S.W.	36	30	42	14	15	17½	46	30
Short S.W.	36	30	42	14	14½	16½	44	28
W.	38	32	44	14½	15	17½	47	31
Short W.	38	32	44	14½	14½	16½	45	28
O.S.	41	34	47	15	15	17½	48	31
Short O.S.	41	34	47	15	14½	16½	46	28
X.O.S.	44	36	50	15½	15	17½	48	32
Short X.O.S.	44	36	50	15½	14	16½	46	29
X.X.O.S.	47	38	53	16½	15	17½	48	32
Short X.X.O.S.	47	38	53	16½	14	16½	46	29
X.X.X.O.S.	50	40	60	16½	15	17	48	32
Short X.X.X.O.S.	50	40	60	16½	14	16	46	29
<b>X. FITTINGS</b>								
7X.	32	26	40	13½	14	16½	43	28
8X.	33	27	41	13½	14½	17	44	28
9X.	34	28	42	13½	15	17	45	29
S.S.X.	34	29	42	13½	14½	17	45	29
Short S.S.X.	34	29	42	13½	13½	16	43	28
S.W.X.	36	30	44	14	15	17½	46	30
Short S.W.X.	36	30	44	14	14½	16½	44	28
Small M.	37	32	45	14½	14	16½	46	29
W.X.	38	32	47	14½	15	17½	47	31
Short W.X.	38	32	47	14½	14½	16½	45	28
O.S.X.	41	34	50	15	15	17½	48	31
Short O.S.X.	41	34	50	15	14½	16½	46	28
X.O.S.X.	44	36	53	15½	15	17½	48	32
Short X.O.S.X.	44	36	53	15½	14	16½	46	29
X.X.O.S.X.	47	38	56	16½	15	17½	48	32
Short X.X.O.S.X.	47	38	56	16½	14	16½	46	29
X.X.X.O.S.X.	50	40	63	16½	15	17	48	32
X. after a Size indicates Larger Hips. F.B. after a Size indicates Full Bust. "Short" before a Size indicates Short neck to waist and length. Length may vary according to fashion and style.								
<b>REGAL FITTINGS</b>								
S.W., F.B.	39	30	42	14	15	17½	46	30
W., F.B.	42	32	44	14½	15½	17½	47	31
O.S., F.B.	45	34	47	15	15	17½	48	31
X.O.S., F.B.	48	36	50	15½	15	17½	48	32
X.X.O.S., F.B.	51	38	53	16½	15	17½	48	32
X.X.X.O.S., F.B.	54	40	60	16½	15	17	48	32
<b>NOT-SO-DELICATE FITTINGS</b>								
W.M.	40	34	48	15	15	17	47	30
Short W.M.	40	34	48	15	14	16	43	28
O.S.M.	45	36	52	15½	15	17	47	32
Short O.S.M.	45	36	52	15½	14	16	45	29
X.O.S.M.	50	39	56	16½	15	17	48	32
Short X.O.S.M.	50	39	56	16½	14	16	46	29

Figure 76 - Excerpt from catalogue, Thomas Marshall (Marlbeck) Ltd. 1941. *Marlbeck Tailormades Spring & Summer 1941*. [Paper].  
At: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/2.

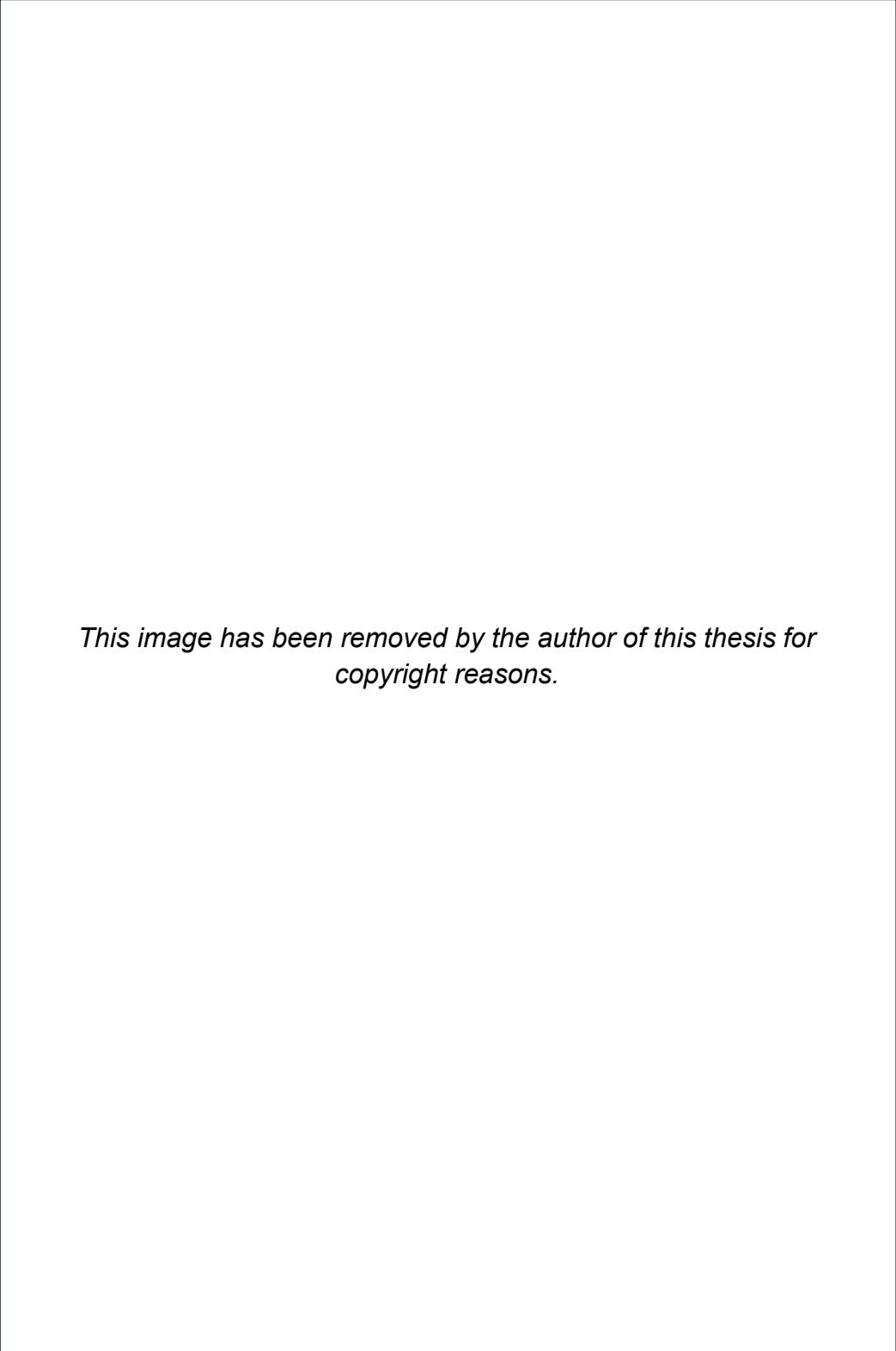
## Sound Investments

The ability of clothing producers to create on mass scale for the Utility Clothing Scheme connected to the established reality of garment manufacture which had developed through the interwar period. Different fabrics, such as rayon, were represented widely, making up a large proportion of womenswear. This, coupled with the fact that clothing was worn for long periods of time, prompted some sections of the industry to advise on garment care and promote investment in clothing which would withstand wear (Walker, 1938). In the article *Artificial Realities*, Walker (1938) promoted methods of care and wear which were integral to ensuring the longevity of garments through sizing, washing, and ironing, information which aided consumer awareness and therefore informed purchases of clothing.

While Mass Observation noted the dismissal by some designers to incorporate military influence in their garments, others, like Marlbeck, used this as a stimulus to promotion of their products (Mass Observation TC 18 - PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND CLOTHES, 21 January 1940). One quoted advert stated "you can depend on Marlbeck to give you lasting service. As an instance, here is a thoroughly serviceable coat of military aspect, with all the newest fashion features" (Mass Observation TC 18 - PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND CLOTHES, 21 January 1940, p.3). Promotion of Marlbeck tailored garments also considered the role of government regulation through the various restrictions on garment manufacture in continuation of production. Soon after the implementation of clothes Rationing, figure 77, a Marlbeck advertisement featured in The Drapers' Record (21 June 1941), suggests interest by retailers in the acquisition of Marlbeck garments direct from the factory in regular intervals, through frequent delivery, in order to maintain levels of stock. Further, in advertising Utility garments, connection between the Marlbeck label, as an indicator of "entire satisfaction to your customer" (The Drapers' Record, 18 April 1942, p.25), and Utility was indicative of "the most perfect combination of quality and practicability" (The Drapers' Record, 18 April 1942, p.25) [fig. 78]. The wording of these advertisements points to certain aims of the Scheme, namely in quality. The importance of garment manufacture in relation to longevity was

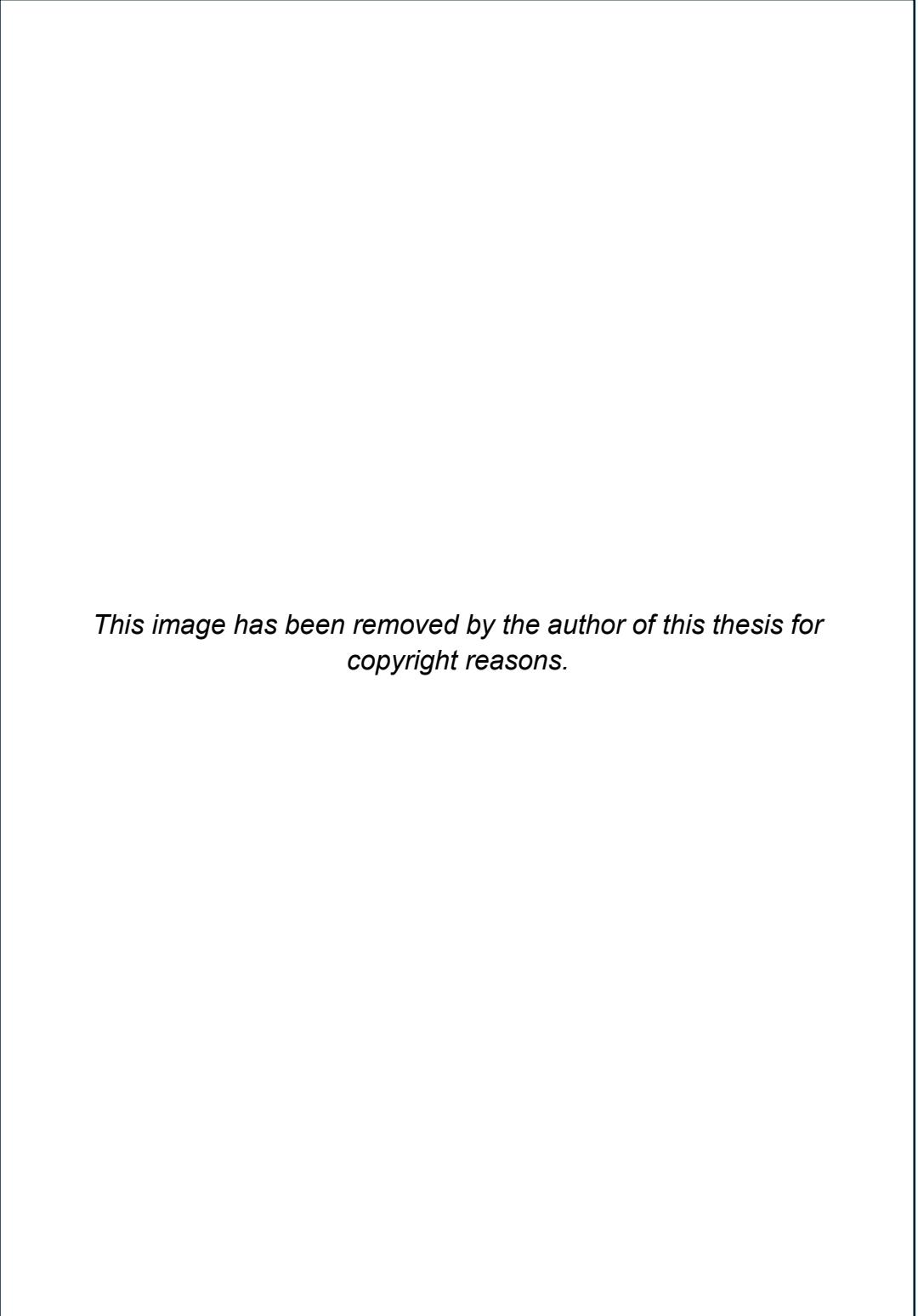
increasingly significant, given considerations of wartime economies; the reduction in ability to acquire clothing in wartime because of the restrictions of Rationing and regulations which shaped the nature of manufacture under the Utility Clothing Scheme. What must be considered here is the desire for private business to maintain sales and promote their goods. Positive associations are therefore made.

In addition to descriptions of pricing, advertising from the wartime period showcases the design details of garments produced under the Marlbeck Tailormades label. Messages were communicated through incorporation of photographs and garment descriptions, as well as more simple design-style illustrations [fig. 79 and fig. 80], correlating with public knowledge of notions associated with the Marlbeck label. These advertisements challenged implications of terminology associated with Utility, including 'standardisation'. Within industry as well as amongst consumers, terminology which became associated with the Scheme, such as the use of standardisation, underwent continued argument. Therefore, the active involvement of makers was also one of reassurance. This reassurance for the civilian consumer of the merits of cc41 garments was provided through advertisements for Marlbeck garments featured in magazines and both regional and national newspapers for example [fig. 81 and fig. 82]. Guarantees were also given to retailers and agents, as demonstrated in promotion published within the trade press for industry and trade readership. The contribution of manufacturers to this promotion was of particular importance, when government interpretation suggested that consumers, retailers, and manufacturers understanding that the definition of Utility and standardisation as not being "uniform, rigid standardisation" (Hansard HC Deb., 23 July 1942, col. 213).



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Figure 77 - Advertisement for Marlbeck Tailormades. 21 June 1941. Clothes Rationing:  
Coupons Please! *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2810, p.15.  
[Accessed 13 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

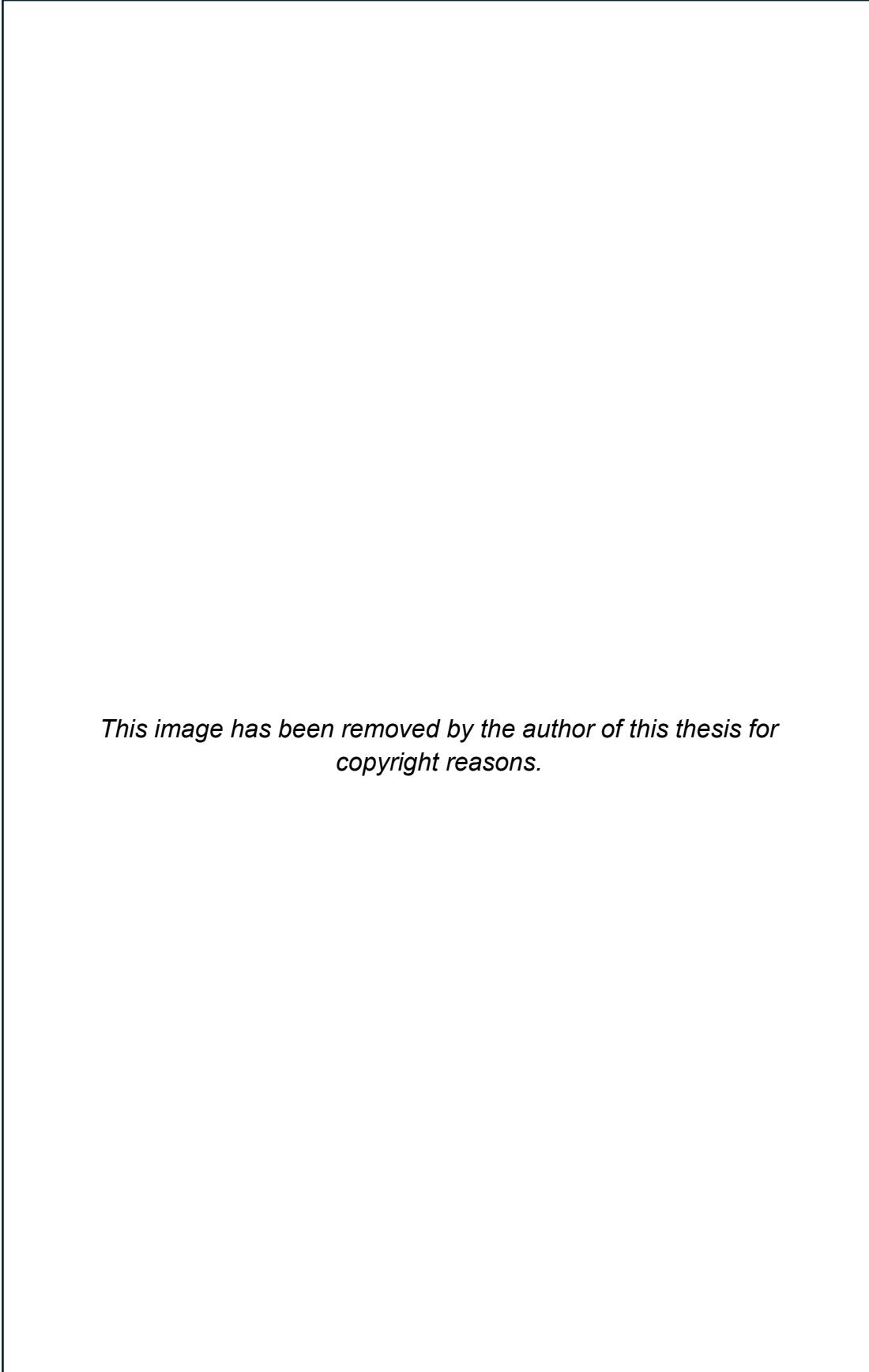


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Figure 78 - Advertisement for Marlbeck Tailormades. 18 April 1942. *The Drapers' Record*.

[British Library].2853, p.25. [Accessed 21 June 2023].

Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

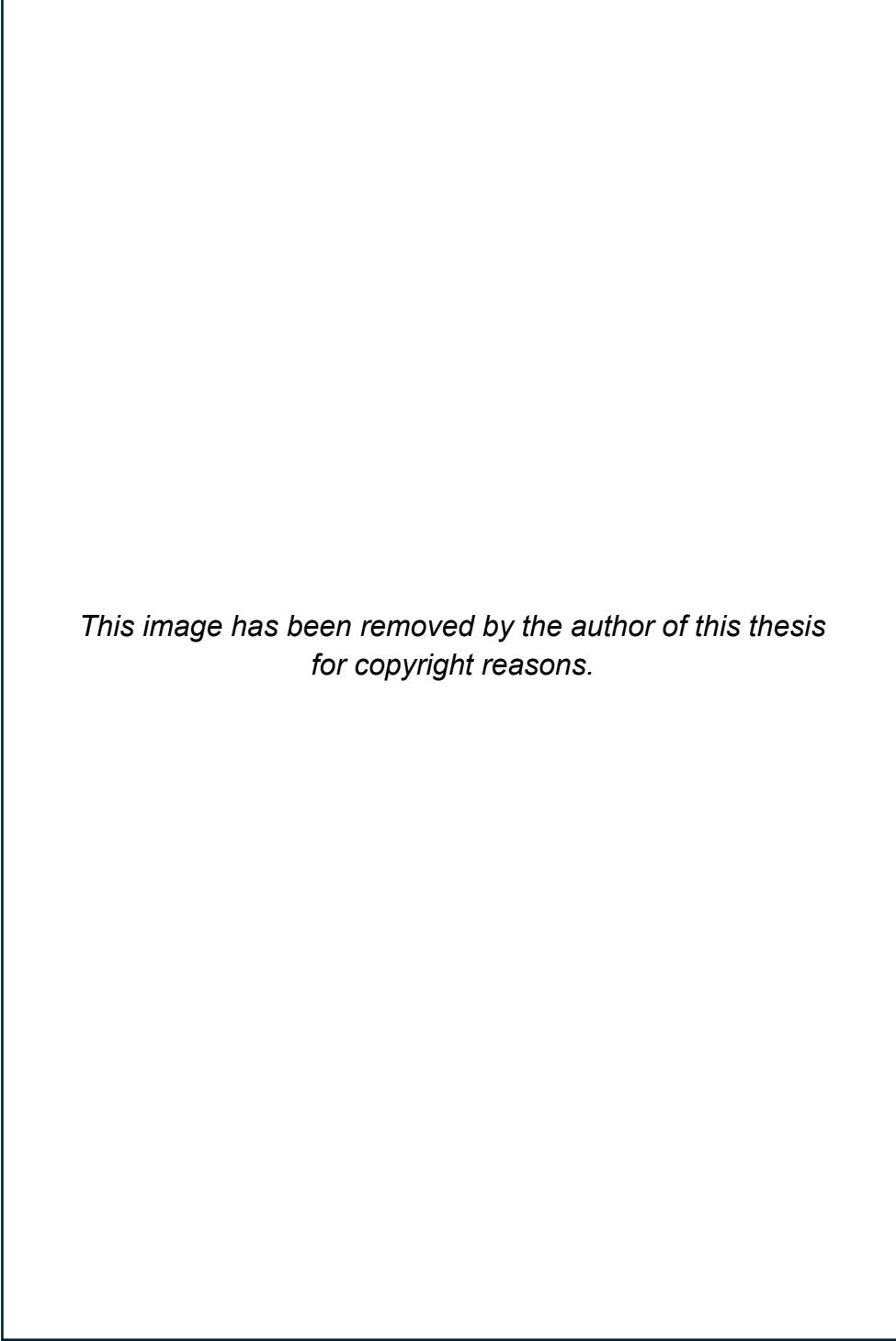


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Figure 79 - Advertisement for Marlbeck Tailormades Utility garments. 25 October 1941.  
Marlbeck utility coats and suits. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2828, p.viii  
[supplement]. [Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.



Figure 80 - Advertisement for a Marlbeck Tailormade coat. 1945. Marlbeck Tailormade. *The Marlbeck Annual*. [WYAS Leeds]. 14, p.15. [Accessed 2 August 2023]. Available from: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/7.

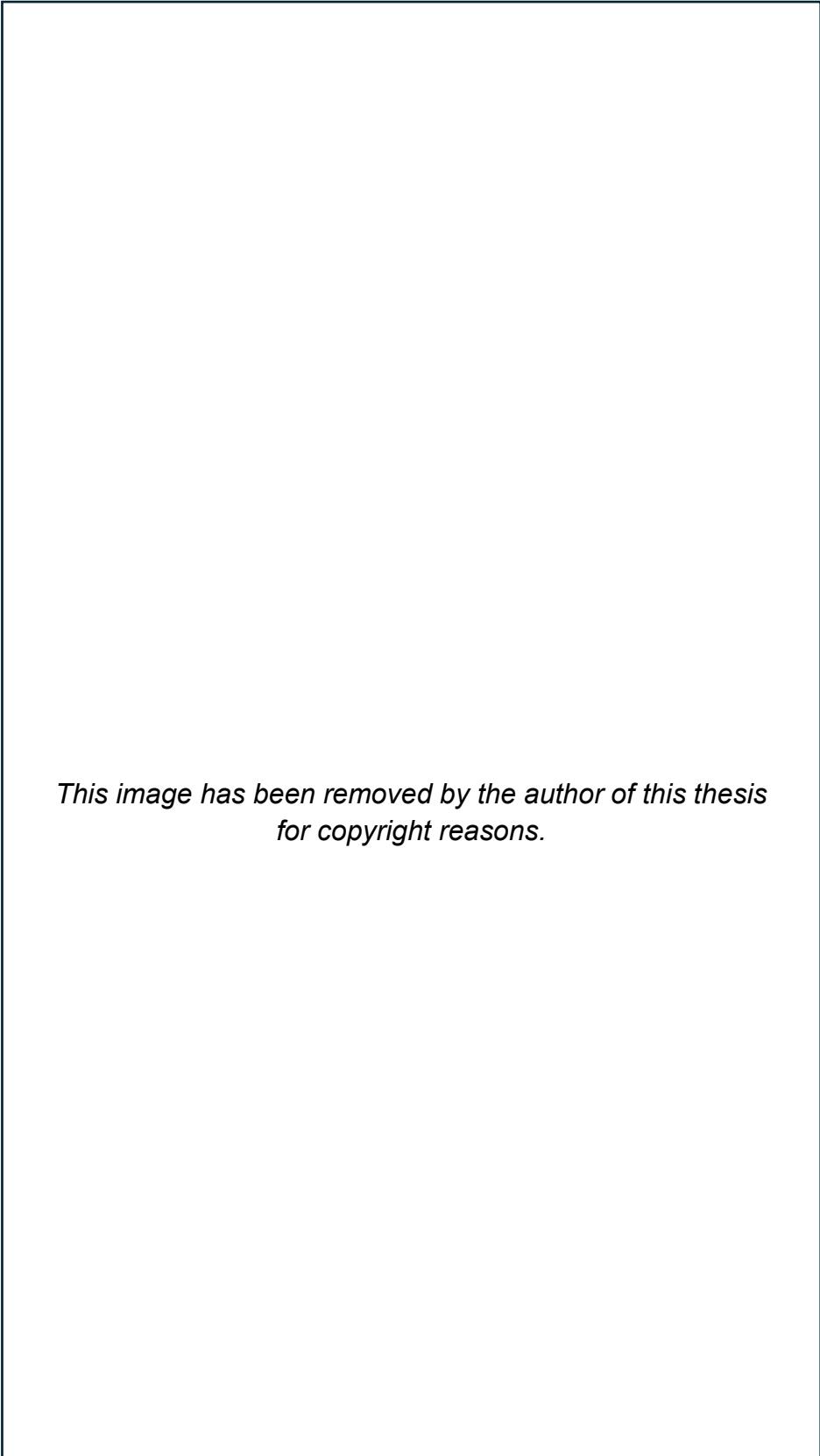


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Figure 81 - Advertisement for Marlbeck Tailormades. 21 March 1942. *Dumfries and Galloway Standard*. [Online]. 21 March. [Accessed 3 February 2025].

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Figure 82 - Advertisement for Marlbeck Tailormades. 27 August 1942. *Lincolnshire Echo*. [online]. 27 August. [Accessed 3 February 2025]. Available from: The British Newspaper Archive. Image © Reach PLC.  
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## The cc41 Cutting and Construction Rooms

It was noted that “the Utility specifications leave a wide scope to manufacturers for variety, style and ingenuity.” (Hansard HC Deb., 23 July 1942, col. 213). The breadth of Utility garments produced also reflected the practices of those employed in creating them. Within women’s tailoring, the factory setting appeared very similar to that of menswear in employee make-up. As can be gleaned from images featured in *The Marlbeck Annual* published 1938, the sewing room is made up of predominantly, if not all, women [fig. 83]. Conversely, the cutting room was chiefly the workplace of men [fig. 84 and fig. 85]. This correlates with the ingrained assertion technology and science being associated with men under patriarchal standards of society, which filtered into the clothing manufacturing setting, and reflects the labour distribution of the Montague Burton Ltd. workrooms [see pages 225-229]. Where women were constructing garments on a mass scale using both machine and hand sewing, pattern piece cutting, undertaken by hand, as well as using a machine-layered cutting tool was practiced by men, as shown in figure circulated in *The House of Marlbeck* dated January 1939.



*Part of a Machine Room in a Ladies' Clothing Factory.*

Figure 83 - Our City: Leeds and its Industries. 1938. *The Marlbeck Annual*. [WYAS Leeds].  
7, p.12. [Accessed 7 February 2022].

Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/7.



*Corner of a Cutting Room in a Ladies' Clothing Factory.*

Figure 84 - Our City: Leeds and its Industries. 1938. *The Marlbeck Annual*. [WYAS Leeds].

7, p.12. [Accessed 7 February 2022].

Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/7.



*Two of the Beecroft Type "C" Band Knife Machines used at Marlbeck factory*

Figure 85 - The House of Marlbeck: A Famous Leeds Landmark. January 1939. *The House of Marlbeck*. [WYAS Leeds]. p.6. [Accessed 7 February 2022].

Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/8.

Comparatively, during the Second World War the workforce make-up of the cutting room appeared markedly different. Women working in the *Marlonna* ladieswear section were photographed operating the cutting room [fig. 86]. The completed garments hanging to the side of the image indicate the manufacture of coats, meaning that women were within the heavier section of the industry. Changes to social structures necessitated by wartime challenged gender norms due to the requirements of industries on the Homefront. Previously defined boundaries became less rigid and opened up new opportunities to those hitherto excluded (Gurney, 2020, p.189), such as in the clothing factory workrooms.

The drive for employees reached for young women and girls. In promotion of roles at the Marlbeck factory, the company advertised “opportunities in ladies tailoring” in advocacy of a career pathway; it was proposed that “the clothing industry compares very favourably with other trades; and for girls with an eye to the future rather than to immediate rewards, a career at Marlbeck opens the gate to the fascinating realm of the making of ladies’ tailored garments” (Marlbeck A Tailormade Career, c.1932-1951, p.4). While the necessities of war challenged traditional societal norms, the sentiment that women’s work within the trade was longstanding and integral to the company held strength under the Marlbeck label and its derivatives, as well as the wider West Riding mass-garment manufacturing industry (Buckman, 1983; Honeyman, 2011). Within tailoring, as seen in production at Thomas Marshall Ltd., garment production carried out by the business reflected wartime shifts in areas of employ. The West Riding based clothing factories operated by this company alone are indicative of wider inclusion within the garment making-up industry during the Second World War.



Figure 86 - Photograph of Thomas Marshall (Marbleck) "Marlonna" cutting room during the Second World War. 1941. Memories of Marlbeck. *Marlbeck Annual*. [WYAS Leeds]. p.26. [Accessed 7 February 2022].

Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/7.

## Objects of Desire

*The Marlbeck Annual* published Christmas in 1939 suggested:

Another point to remember is that as in 1914 the vogue for intensely practical and serviceable clothes will be a passing phase. They will, of course, occupy a niche, but only a minor one. Uniforms, black-outs, etc., will need an antidote, and mere man will demand relief in the clothes of his women folk from his own hardness and uniformity. Thus, fashions main theme will be strongly feminine (Jackson, 1939, p.32).

Penned early in the war, this prediction did not account for the restrictions of Rationing which would come to follow, with advice on pleats, padding, draping, and adornment adding to construction and silhouette (Jackson, 1939, p.32/33). Though many of the garments produced as wartime womenswear reflected masculine styling achieved through tailored construction and fabric use, others

used lighter textiles, printed and patterned, and were form fitting or flowing. As a womenswear manufacturer, Thomas Marshall Ltd. produced a range of such clothing items under their labels “Marlbeck”, “Marldena”, and “Marlonna” which reflected a broad range of styles. Such garments included suits [fig. 87] and coats [fig. 88], as well as dresses [fig. 89]. The garments made and sold under the Marshall name served the notion of a wartime “antidote”, following “feminine” presentation (Jackson, 1939, p.32). The range of both Utility and non-Utility garments produced under the company’s various labels catered for consumer agency which continued to hold an important role, even under the restrictions of wartime (Gurney, 2020, p.189).



Figure 87 - Advertising photograph with illustrative sketch. ca.1940-1941. Marlbeck Model No.KU2526 skirt suit. *Marlbeck Tailormades Spring & Summer 1941.* [WYAS Leeds]. p.37. [Accessed 2 August 2023]. Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/2.



Figure 88 - Advertising photograph with illustrative sketch. ca.1940-1941. Marlbeck Model

No.VF2958 coat. *Marlbeck Tailormades Spring & Summer 1941.*

[WYAS Leeds]. p.30. [Accessed 2 August 2023].

Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/2.



Figure 89 - Advertisement for Marldena Model, Model No.2936 dress 1945. *The Marbeck Annual*. [WYAS Leeds]. 14, p.21. [Accessed 2 August 2023]. Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/7.

At the end of the Second World War, Marlbeck Director J. A. Dean stated that:

We believe that our products are in such great demand not merely because of the shortage, but because of their intrinsic worth and high fashion attainment. We have never lowered out standard of production for "Utility," and we are taking important steps to enlarge our premises and increase our output, as soon as circumstances and cloth deliveries will permit (Dean, 1945, p.17).

Dean's sentiments reflect much of the garment industry's strategy of consumer assurance. Referencing established practices, as well as work conducted within the parameters of available fabric and wider wartime conditions, confidence in the company was further highlighted through Thomas Marshall Ltd.'s acknowledgement of the "consideration and understanding accorded to us [by customers and colleagues] during the war" (Dean, 1945, p.17).

The Marlbeck label served as an identifier of established confidence, a marker of quality. This was in considerable part due to methods of manufacture already established. Though trust for the cc41 label required development from initial perceptions, it was hoped that this symbol would correlate similarly with that already established by trusted manufacturers such as Marlbeck, and Montague Burton, to name the two addressed in case study here. With so many recognisable garment manufacturers identified on the Designation List of 1942 [see chapter three, pages 117-125], the West Riding can certainly be considered as integral in its provision of Utility clothing. Additionally, as proven through examples shown within this study, the fabrics made in the region for production of such garments must also be acknowledged in this positioning, with wool an essential element in Utility clothing.

## **Local Independents**

Where large-scale mass manufacturers mostly sold wholesale to shops, smaller independent manufacturers oftentimes also served as retailers direct to the public. Independent tailors and clothiers therefore contributed to the Utility Clothing Scheme. Smaller, more local independents were also common feature

of the West Riding's industry and trade environment. The garment manufacturers represented the manufactures of the area, and the variety with which consumers were able to purchase such goods at different levels of the market. As suggested by Montague Burton (6 February 1932), alongside the multiple clothing industry in the region, smaller chains along with independent tailors and clothiers held an integral position in made-to-measure and bespoke for the locality (WYL1951/4). However, as noted, chain stores were more adept to be larger contributors to the retailing of Utility garments (Sladen, 1995, p.45). Such interpretations of ability to sell Utility must be expanded to also include the capacity for smaller and larger scale producers in manufacturing Utility clothing.

Designation policy points to the narrowing of industry. In supplementary memorandum to the Designation List, compiled in typeface with additional handwritten amendment notes, are four points suggested by Sir Thomas Barlow on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1942. Indicative of knowledge of industry contention surrounding the reduction in number of smaller manufacturers to contribute to the production of Utility Clothing, in point four Sir Barlow considered potential problems of Designating smaller manufacturers. As a result, of the hundreds of businesses who applied for Designation only "74 employing under 20 out of 1,000" were Designated for "special reasons" due to the manufacture of such businesses centring on "speciality" clothing or production output being "high cost" (Barlow, 12 March 1942, BT 64/861). It was emphasised that:

There may be objections on the ground that we have favoured the large firms at the expense of the small ones; if so we may have to reply that the policy has been to concentrate clothing manufacture in the hands of a relatively small number of the larger firms experienced in the production of utility clothing, and that there is no room for a horde of small firms not so experienced... The "little man" is not without supporters however and we shall not escape criticism (Barlow, 12 March 1942, BT 64/861).

Along with the practical changes made to garment manufacture noted in earlier analysis, it was reported that bespoke creation of clothing using Utility fabrics purchased by the practitioner would essentially be phased out due to practical and financial implications. The removal of the ability to buy Utility cloths affected both independent dressmakers and tailors (The Drapers' Record, 10 January

1942, p.11). In addition, Concentration of industry and Designation of clothing factories had definite impact. The Drapers' Record reported on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1942 that "after June 1 at least 75 per cent of Utility non-wool cloth manufactured must go to the designated; also a "high proportion" of the wool material" (p.15).

The article continues to interpret the involvement of different practitioners, citing the continuation of demand placed on manufacturers without the capabilities to produce at the levels which would be required under Designation, therefore it was presumed that the assistance of outworkers would continue despite Designation accounting for clothing factories (The Drapers' Record, 9 May 1942, p.15). Though important to the study of manufacturing, evidence of outworker involvement in the production of Utility clothing within the West Riding has not been encountered within research in the present study. This could suggest that the informal economies of the garment industry endured under the Scheme, challenging ideals of consensus and control. In relation to the availability of cloth and the implementation of Designation, it was suggested that smaller garment producers which were not Designated may become "outworkers for designated houses" (The Drapers' Record, 9 May 1942, p.17). However, interview with the "General Manager of a well-known fashion house" conceded that this was unlikely due to labour requirements and access to cloth (The Drapers' Record, 9 May 1942).

Though businesses at all levels may have been able to continue in their making of garments through the Utility Clothing Scheme under Designation, dependent on their outputs, the Scheme's trading price and profit controls meant that smaller textile makers and clothing producers were therefore more likely to feel the effects of such restrictions more impactfully on their practice. Nevertheless, smaller local makers did remain a feature of the garment industry within the region, as well as throughout Britain, through wartime, as founded in further reporting in industry press. Specialisation was noted to be an integral means for smaller tailoring shops to continue their trade through wartime, something which mass clothing producers were noted to have become less adept at contributing to the garment industry due to the methods of manufacture employed at larger sites (The Outfitter, 16 September 1944, p.16). Such speciality of product would

ensure longevity of mass manufacturers, multiple tailors, independent tailors, clothiers, and chain stores alike into the postwar fashion economy (*The Outfitter*, 16 September 1944, p.16).

The work of smaller independents is also exemplified within surviving objects of the period. While able to be purchased and used by home sewers, this contemporaneous paper pattern, like others of the time bore instruction for use by professionals in garment making-up [fig. 90]. On the reverse, this example reads “Professional dressmakers are reminded that they must comply with the Making of Civilian Clothing Orders” (Weldon’s So-Easy Pattern No. 106 Simple Set, c.1940s). Though home sewing was promoted through wartime, with campaigns including Make-do and Mend along with sewing classes offered through government programme, dressmakers remained a stalwart of fashion.



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Figure 90 - Weldon's So-Easy Pattern No. 106 Simple Set. ca.1940s.

*Printed paper sewing pattern. [Paper].*

At: Kirklees: West Yorkshire Archive Service. KC588/3/9.a.

## Chapter Section Conclusions

While government-implemented regulations and restrictions were necessary to ensure access to clothing by the public during the Second World War, what was also required was a collaborative approach to garment manufacture. While Utility brought with it formalisation – through standardised processes – the independence of the fabric and fashion industries ran in conjunction. The involvement of manufacturers, in articulating ideas, concerns and argument, altered regulations and questioned the realities of practicability in application.

Existing accounts of the Utility Clothing Scheme for the most part suggest that measures were adopted with argument only over descriptive interpretation. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that arguments went further, not only for consumers, but also on the part of manufacturers and retailers. Concern over requisitioning of production sites and workforce labour were hugely influential in the early months of the Scheme's enactment. Further, so was interest in methods and measures in manufacturing, areas in which industry was hugely influential. Government directives altered because of feedback by industry, evidencing the active involvement of garment manufacturers in shaping the practices involved in making of Utility clothing.

Collaboration with designers and big names in manufacturing established alternative perspectives of the Scheme. To improve relations and interpretation of cc41 clothing, involvement of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers was a tactic which drew much attention, mostly to a positive reception within the media. Public relations such as this were central to encouraging engagement with the Scheme, with recognition given to the importance of industry opinion and declaration in acceptance to meet government aims for Utility.

The creation and consumption of cloth in the Second World War was shaped by governmental regulation. Fabrics for the civilian consumer continued to be

produced in a range of different types aimed at a range of different markets (McNeil, 1993), albeit altered by the influence of Austerity Regulations (Bide, 2021). However, the material make-up and price of cc41 clothing was directly shaped by government legislation, particularly Utility fabrics. The resultant impact on industry was to alter practice and spark contestation over controls. Industry had long-standing knowledge of consumer market forces, and therefore proved central to ensuring that the Utility fabrics produced were appropriate to garment makers as well as the purchasing public.

Established prominence in mass-manufacturing within the West Riding offered a strong position for the requirements of Utility cloth production. In its independent working, industry itself was positioned strongly to argue the position of fabric makers. The reputation of fabric manufacturers of the West Riding alongside the burgeoning industries of mass clothing manufacture further strengthened the position of the region to meet the requirements of the Utility Clothing Scheme. Both Utility and non-Utility fabrics produced during this period exemplify the types of woven textiles which the West Riding specialised in and were recognised for their quality. This is where maintaining textile output, which embodied expected attributes, was crucial to the Scheme.

Surviving textile samples of the period represent the range available and show how different techniques in dye and weave could achieve styling which regulation of fabric use may have counteracted. Where previously the system was relatively uncontrolled, restrictions altered practice. As the role of Utility clothing gained pace in the wartime fashion economy, the role of industry within the public-private partnership between government and industry evolved. This was particularly evident within the garment making-up section, as much as it can be recognised in the manufacture of fabric.

By considering the different roles of clothing manufacturers, in practice and politics, the nature of working under government regulations and restrictions has highlighted how established practices were incorporated into the production of Utility clothing. Examination of surviving cc41 garments within this section, a material culture-based approach to investigation of a Montague Burton three-

piece suit and a Marlbeck labelled jacket, revealed the involvement of West Riding clothing manufacturers in the Scheme alongside the actualities of practice. From analysis through phenomenological and PESTELE frameworks, a mixture of methodologies has proven the value of the imbued language within garments. As artefacts, these pieces of history embed the place of extant Utility clothing as encapsulating the experience of manufacturing cc41 reflective of the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Legal (PESTL). While following government directive, the garments analysed also display ingenuity of practice, design independence and related maker-based cues.

While established mass manufacturers, such as the multiple tailors of the West Riding were well placed to work to the demands of the Utility Clothing Scheme, particularly after achieving Designated status, smaller, local producers were impactfully subjected to the Concentration of manufacture. The government therefore faced critique, and industry sought to account for those small local producers impacted, advocating in industry periodicals for their misplacement. As a result, the public-private business model provided opportunity for businesses to communicate and reach working consensuses.

## Chapter Four

### Section Two - Products

*“Now that the purpose of clothing is officially proclaimed to be utility, there can be no harm in sparing a moderate amount of consideration to its other function, including adornment and comfort.”* (The Times, 4 March 1942, p.5).

Considering Utility garments as products, section two of chapter four poses observation, addressing uniformity of regulation, modernisation, democratisation, and wartime concerns. It will be argued that the tacit mechanisms which embodied the clothing trades of the West Riding surrounded wartime controls of the industry, which in turn affected the extent to which rules were actually followed, or were able to be followed, in Utility clothing manufacture. What was sought to be implemented far outweighed the experience of manufacturing under Utility regulations. Therefore, the extent to which control could and would actually be adhered to is investigated here.

To further bridge gaps in existing understanding about the Scheme, the following section focuses on a combination of West Riding products and purchases in order to further address the research question and interrogate ideas around consensus and control in production and consumption of Utility clothing in the West Riding. Through approaching a range of different primary source materials to build understanding of the manufacture of Utility Clothing, the true nature of regulation in cc41 manufacture is investigated.

## Utility Products

It was imperative that involvement in the Scheme, while proving to evidence contribution to the war effort, also resulted in assured custom:

Take the manufacturer who has been making a branded article. He has spent money popularising the brand-name; distinctive advertising has associated his label with a certain characterised styling.

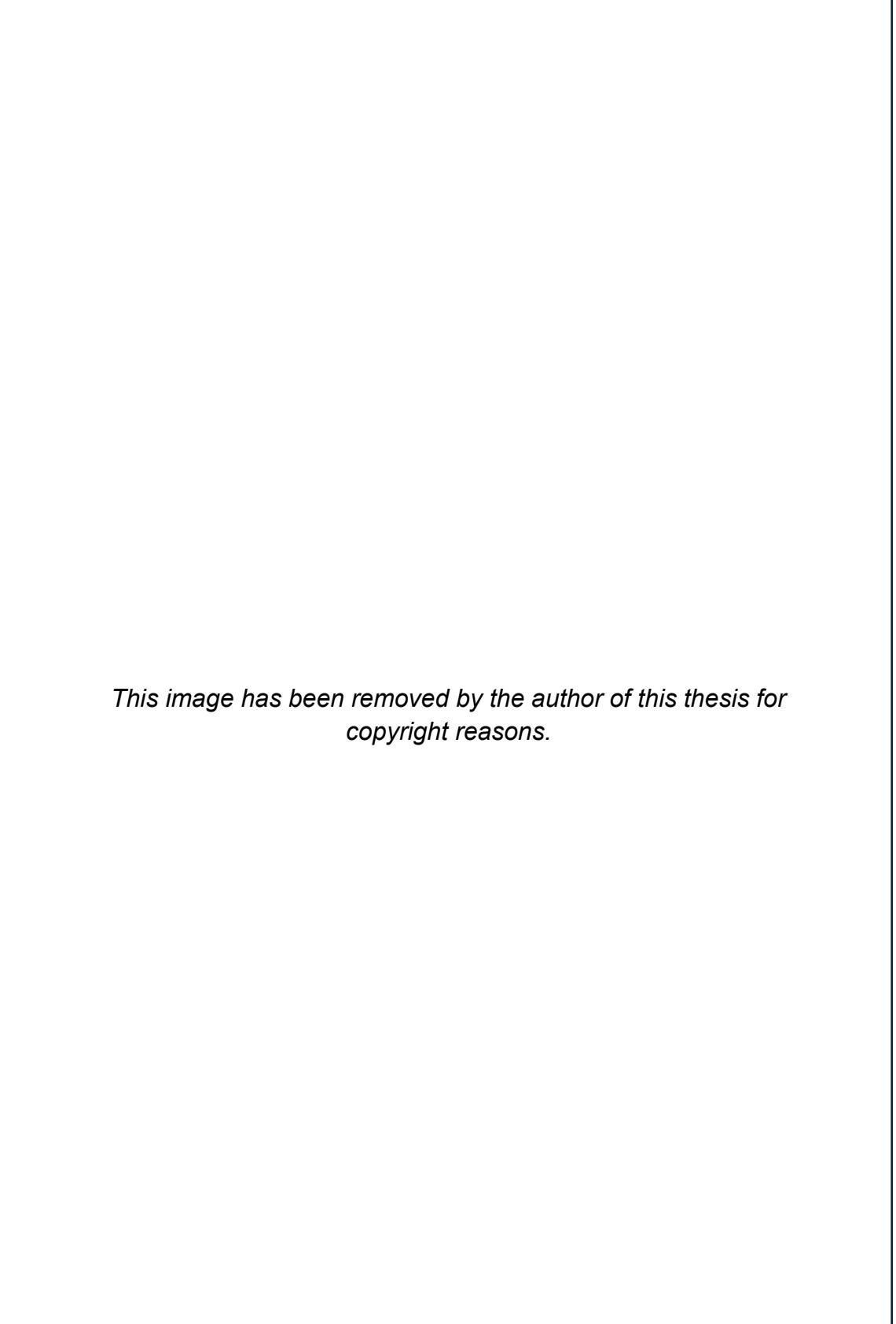
If he exhibits his trade-mark over the Government label on a coat or suit, the garment must come up to the standard which he has created for his merchandise.

Make no mistake, Utility means super styling. Manufacturers have taken more care – if possible – in the production of CC41 spring ranges, and even hardened buyers express surprise at the quality offered. Fashion “trends” will be as decisive as ever, though they must move more slowly (Guest, 27 December 1941, p.26).

The efforts which manufacturers contributed to the construction of Utility garments ensured that desirability was at the forefront of trade recognition. The involvement of established, trusted manufacturers was highly important in all manners of ‘selling’ the Scheme. Guest’s (1941) sentiment coincidentally pays due consideration to the reasons why industry debated with government. By contesting, rather than passively accepting many of the restrictions placed on practice, manufacturers, and retailers alike, were able to ensure that their established reputation was maintained. Application of a branded manufacturer label was one way such assertions were communicated to customers. As a result, this connected recognised elements associated with producer with interpretations of Utility. Though not all Utility garments bore a manufacturer’s label, several under examination within this thesis show the continued importance of attribution through labelling, as illustrated through this chapter.

Alongside Montague Burton Ltd. and Thomas Marshall Ltd., Heatons of Leeds was another maker noted for its specialisation in tailoring. Cited on the Designation List of 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942 as being located at Heaton House, New York Road, Leeds 2, Heatons held a position as a maker of cc41 garments. The impacts and actualities of Utility in practice in garment construction through saving materials and following regulations was demonstrated within the

company's advertising. Politicisation within production was visible; from the Heatona and Heatonex lines, outerwear for women and children respectively are depicted [fig. 91], with accompanying text highlighting the established recognition for the manufacturer in the period before the Second World War. While the tone of the text addresses collective misgivings over connections between Utility and conceptualisations of standardisation; the advertisement suggests the quality which was associated with cc41 garments – “designed for the utmost Utility” (The Drapers’ Record, 14 February 1942, p.21) without compromising style or quality of manufacture which consumers had come to expect prior to the War (The Drapers’ Record, 14 February 1942). Both manufacturers and retailers alike were eager to point to availability of goods as well as the change in appearance and material-make up of their garments, suggesting possible issue taken with restrictions on making and selling, a theme which will continued to be explored within this thesis. The themes reflected in industry discussion and advertising are testament to the region’s speciality, and serve as demarcation of the West Riding as a centre. The public-private business model therefore served to not only enable communication between state and private business, but also demonstrates the role of makers in collaboration, both with government and as the voice of consumer requirements.



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Figure 91 - Advertisement for Heatona Ladies' Coats and Heatonex Children's Coat and Hat Sets. 14 February 1942. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2844, p.21. [Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

Comparative analysis between Utility and non-Utility garments demonstrates similarity in design and construction. Kirkham points out that, “The best evidence that Utility clothes were regarded as fashionable is that clothing manufactured outside the scheme – from day dresses and tailored suits to overcoats, slacks, and separates – closely resembled the clothing produced within it, and similar styles were fashionable in the United States” (2005, p.211). Further, it is suggested that, though the number of different lines which could be produced was regulated, “no design specifications were issued. The primary restrictions on clothing related to prices and the economic use of materials and labour. If manufacturers adhered to the economy-driven guidelines, they enjoyed freedom in terms of design” (Kirkham, 2005, p.211). The range in which Utility is represented in surviving garments in museum and private collections is testament to the design freedoms experienced by manufacturers. This, however, did not relate to restrictions on certain elements of garment construction which had been limited due to Rationing and garment manufacturing regulations. For example, the removal of double-breasted fastenings and application of decorative embroidery (Tailor & Cutter and Women’s Wear, 28 August 1942) did alter the ability to utilise some design elements, as necessitated by wartime economies. Nevertheless, the economy applied to making the most of fabrics available left room for Utility garments to maintain decorative elements through use of offcuts as patch pockets and manufacture of garments using plain or, conversely, heavily patterned fabrics to avoid the need to pattern match.

## **A Model Manufacture?**

Prior to the implementation of the Scheme, Jean Guest reported on the need to have good supply of suits in shops, considered as “safety sellers” (Guest, 25th January 1941, p.13). Market demand for suits for women could be met through mass-manufacture on such a scale represented in the West Riding garment industry. Many clothing makers-up turned their manufacture to suits,

highlighting the position of tailored garments in wartime style (Guest, 25 January 1941). Guest's early prediction that suits would be a prominent feature of the 1941 fashion year continued through the war years, and such pieces became staples of the Utility Clothing Scheme (The Drapers' Record, 25 October 1941). In place of lost decorative elements were weave and construction. Tweeds and checks injected colour and pattern to simply fashioned articles, and interesting placement of pockets or alternating hues added further design elements. "Emphasis on good tailoring" with a "tendency to smaller ranges" (The Drapers' Record, 25 October 1941, p.7) was essential for these cc41 suits. Larger manufacturing concerns played a central role in this due to the mass nature of production required (The Drapers' Record, 25 October 1941).

Established in Leeds in 1895, *Alexandre* began to sell goods through market stall trading, the Lyons family growing their business to gain a Royal Warrant in 1990. Despite a lack of extant material within the archive, Archivists at the West Yorkshire Archive Service were able to identify from records pertaining to the immediate pre-war period, c.1937-1939, that Alexandre was acknowledged as a potential employer which German Jewish refugees in the tailoring trade should approach (Brass, 2024). According to the Designated Clothing Factories List of 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942, Alexandre Ltd. had manufacturing sites located at Lyons Works, Lady Lane, Leeds 2, and Lincoln Road, Leeds 2 (*Board of Trade Apparel and Textiles Order, 1942, Designated Clothing Factories*). The business, while manufacturing garments, also had a retail outlet in Leeds (Brass, 2024).

An example of Alexandre's Utility production, this jacket [fig. 92] follows the fashion of the period; a darted waist to front and back, shoulder pads, the number of buttons, and colour, achieved through herringbone weave of a grey tone [fig. 92 and fig. 93]. In relation to adherence to regulations exemplified by the cc41 label, this jacket poses several questions. The inclusion of imitation buttonholes and decorative buttons to both cuffs [fig. 94] counteracts directives for garment manufacture, which strictly forbade such details to be applied to jackets (*Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear*, 28 August 1942, p.561). This could be indicative of the commensurate production date of this garment, which may

have been manufactured early in 1942, before the introduction of regulations which removed decorative elements which feature on the garment.

The inclusion of fabric specification number “209F/2” on this garment’s cc41 label indicates several different details [fig. 95]. Following the changing restrictions of the Utility Clothing Scheme, amendments were therefore made to associated code referencing numbers attributed to different fabrics used on garments. This is reflected in the Alexandre jacket labelling. The code “209F” refers to the use of either “Scottish tweed, Yorkshire woollen, tweed, or \*all worsted, 13½ oz.” (The Drapers’ Record, 30 August 1941, p.16) to make this garment, which from the feel – being light and fine, with a tight weave, is a worsted blend, likely indicative of the “F” featured on the fabric code. The attribution of “/2” as part of this garment’s code suggests this was a two-part set, probably including a skirt, to make up a suit. Insertion of the cc41 label is commensurate with manufacture, being sewn by machine and bearing no indication of later application, correlating with the afore mentioned details – imitation buttonholes and decorative buttons to the sleeves - indicative of early Utility manufacture. In addition, the inclusion of manufacturer name label serves as a marker of established trust and recognition of quality, similar to the features of branded garments discussed in the previous section of this chapter [fig. 96].



Figure 92 – Alexandre. ca. 1942-1947. *Utility jacket [front]*. [Wool with synthetic lining].  
At: Author's own collection.



Figure 93 – Alexandre. ca. 1942-1947. *Utility jacket [back]*. [Wool with synthetic lining].  
At: Author's own collection.



Figure 94 – Alexandre. ca. 1942-1947. *Detail, right hand sleeve button detail and pocket, Utility jacket.* [Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.



Figure 95 – Alexandre. ca. 1942-1947. 'cc41' Utility label, Utility jacket.  
[Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.



Figure 96 – Alexandre. ca. 1942-1947. *Detail [internal, right front], back of button placket and manufacturer label.* [Wool with synthetic lining]. At: Author's own collection.

Here, the ability to create garments as part of the Utility Clothing Scheme which also reflected individuality was essential. The Alexandre Utility jacket serves to define the visual characterisation of wartime dress and fashion in a number of ways which bridge elements of PESTELE exploration. Its shape, cut, and construction indicative of the popular silhouette of the period, reflecting masculine tailoring in womenswear, connected with Social expectations around dress and fashion. This piece also serves as an important survivor of manufacturers of the West Riding under Utility regulations. Specialisation in tailoring, and in the use of a fine woollen fabric, show construction which exemplifies the type of garments which were created through mass manufacture in the region, alluding to the Technological aspect of PESTELE.

### **Mistaken Manufacture?**

Two children's dresses held by Leeds Museums and Galleries bear several similarities to one another. However, on closer examination, there are distinct differences. As suggested by the makers label affixed to both garments [fig. 97 and fig. 98], these dresses were "A Shibden Valley Garment", made by Shibden Valley Textiles Ltd., cited on the Designated Clothing Factories List as being a Subsidiary of Robert Glew & Co. LTD., whose manufacturing concerns were located at 113 Thornton Road, Bradford (Board of Trade, *Board of Trade Apparel and Textiles Order, 1942: Designated Clothing Factories* (June 1st, 1942), p.9). Both dresses are made from identical fabric, woven of white, blue, and brown, to create a black and white houndstooth effect to the cloth [fig. 99]. They have the same binding and piping details to the front chest, collar, and sleeves, and a waist-tie, as well as visible machine stitching to the hems [fig. 100 and 101].

However, despite these initial similarities, there are several differences between the two garments. Most notable to the present research is the presence of a cc41 label affixed to only one of the dresses [fig. 102]. The identification of such variation led to further examination of the pieces, and documentation of other disparities. The hem on the dress with cc41 label measures approximate 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  of

an inch, with stitching on the dress a combination of a lighter, mid, and dark-blue cottons. The dress without a cc41 label, however, has a hem measuring 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch, with all stitching in a light blue thread. Further labelling on the cc41 marked dress details the following numbers: 64152, however, due to wear, any other identifying numbering was no longer visible. To the dress without cc41 label: 503/20 3436 452 D/P 6 4165 is stamped [fig. 103].



Figure 97 - A Shibden Valley Garment. ca.1941-1952. *Manufacturer's label from child's dress.* [Cotton]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0040.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 98 - A Shibden Valley Garment. ca.1941-1952. *Manufacturer's label from child's Utility dress.* [Cotton]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0040.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 99 - A Shibden Valley Garment. ca.1941-1952. *Detail of fabric, child's Utility dress.*  
[Cotton]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0040.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 100 - A Shibden Valley Garment. ca.1941-1952. *Child's Utility dress.* [Cotton].  
At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0040.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 101 - A Shibden Valley Garment. ca.1941-1952. *Child's dress*. [Cotton].

At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0040.

© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 102 - A Shibden Valley Garment. ca.1941-1952. 'cc41' Utility label, child's Utility dress. [Cotton]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0040.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).

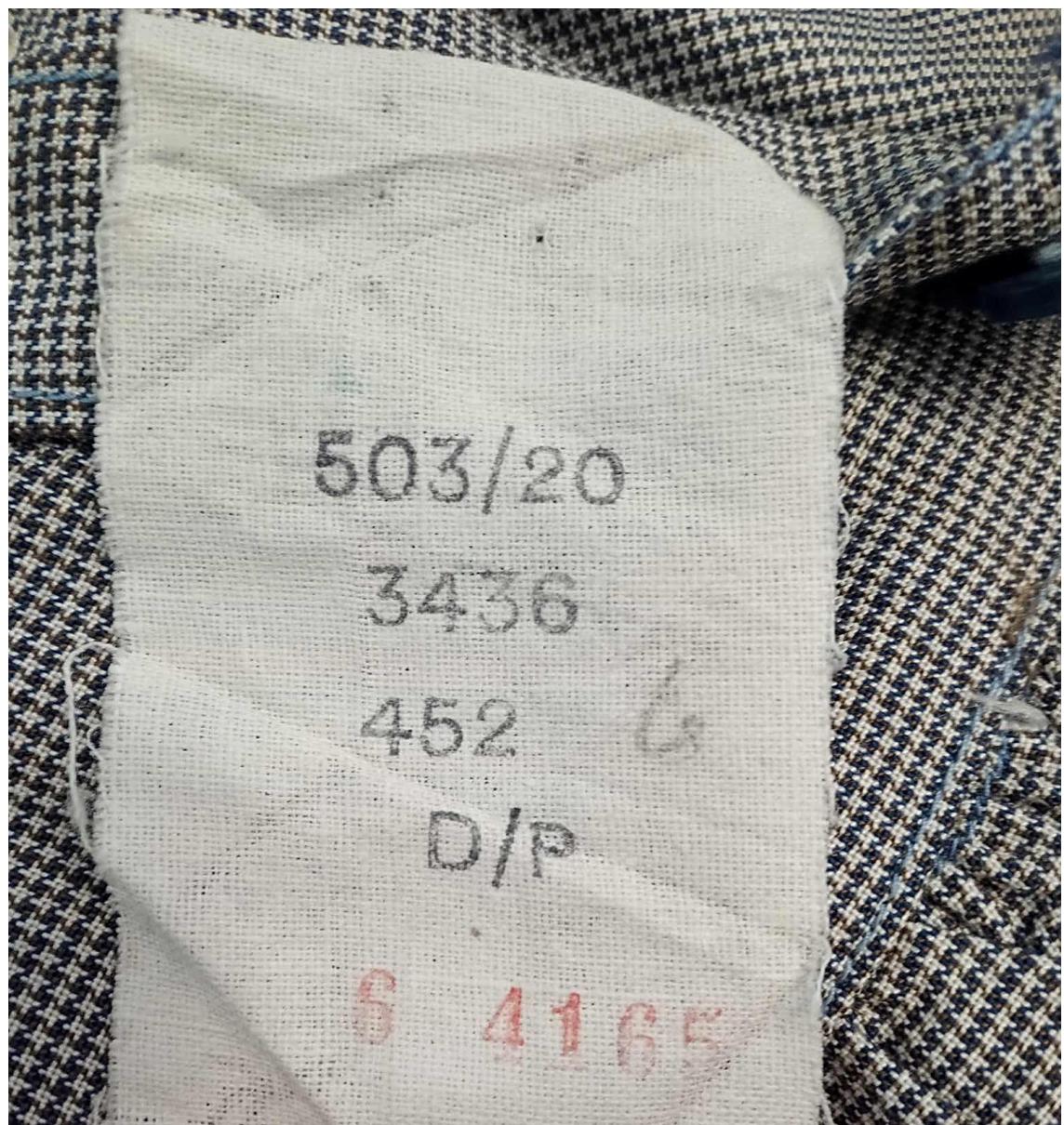


Figure 103 - A Shibden Valley Garment. ca.1941-1952. *Code label from child's dress.*  
[Cotton]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0040.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).

Once noted, these differences are quite distinct, and as such, pose several questions. Upon consideration, one of the dresses could be Utility, and the other, a non-Utility piece. Several suggestions are posed here. Firstly, that possibly one of the dresses were made shortly before the introduction of the Scheme, and the other shortly after. However, the attribution of the number '1010' on the present cc41 label indicates a probable later date of manufacture, as the initial listed fabrics which could be used in the making-up of Utility garments only numbered to '403' (The Drapers' Record, 30 August 1941, p.16). Further, the supplementary numbering system visible on additional labels affixed to both pieces suggest that, indeed, one garment could be Utility, and the other, non-Utility. Conversely, it could be that a mistake was made during the manufacturing process, and a cc41 label was accidentally not added to the garment. While this calls into question to strictness of application and checking of regulations, it also demonstrates the human side of history, if it were that, simply, a Utility label was forgotten. This, then, would add further evidence to the argument of strictness of regulations over manufacturing standardisation – the difference in hem depth an overt display of the actuality of Utility clothing production. The rigidity of standardisation and strict compliance by manufacturers of garments made under the regulations of the Scheme. Furthermore, it could be that the cc41 was later removed from the garment by the consumer, the reasons for which now unknown, and lost to time. A subjective questioning remains – could the label simply have been detached for comfort of the wearer? As several other labels remain present in the dress, this may not likely be the case. Could it possibly have been snipped out so others were not aware that the dress was a Utility piece? Evidence of such removal is not present in the stitching; however, this does not indicate that this was not the case.

An important consideration, however, is that of correlation and causation – further understanding of the manufacturing and retailing of these two pieces could potentially reveal the actuality of their making and sale, answering the above questions. This proved difficult to ascertain, due to locating such corresponding written material within the archive following object analysis sessions at Leeds Museums and Galleries. However, when collectively

addressing visual analysis of each dress along with undertaking comparative analysis of the two pieces, alongside available documentary evidence, the slight differences between the two garments could indicate, as suggested earlier by Kirkham (2005), the similarities between Utility and non-Utility garments due to public perceptions of fashionability.

In addition, the use of such garments following their acquisition into the museum collection must also be considered. These two pieces were transferred to the collection in 2018, following their use by Artemis (Education Leeds), as part of their object-based teaching lending scheme. The influence of such may have had bearing on their condition prior to incorporation into the collection at present due to their use as teaching and learning materials loaned through this programme (Jones, 2023). As pieces manufactured locally, these two dresses are imbued with histories of local making, through mass manufacture, connection to original wear, and in which, through their life as part of the object handling collection, have shared accounts of time and place with students (Woodall, 2020). Further, the use of these two pieces as educational tools has added not only to their material culture (Dannehl, 2018), in addition to also having possibly physically shaped them in condition. As noted by Watson (2020) “collecting is also understood as a means of understanding the object, and those who control the ways in which collections are ordered and classified are those with power and authority” (p.156). These pieces began life as garments to be worn, rather than objects to be collected, therefore the transformative nature of the use of these two pieces of Utility clothing intrinsic to understanding their past, as pieces to be used – to be worn, to be made the most of.

### **Accounting for Colour and Pattern**

Before the advent of wartime restrictions in cloth use, pattern was popular in clothing. Bold, distinctive forms were applied to fabrics used in garments produced in the West Riding in 1930s, such as those made for Marlbeck’s

*Marldena* label [fig. 104]. However, such fabrics required precise cutting of cloth as well as exacting construction in order to match up shapes printed or woven into the cloth. To combat this, the use of busier patterns such as florals in bright and striking hues and designs gained pace in wartime. Variety which could be achieved in production through use of different fabrics was an integral in selling Utility garments. Oftentimes, as photography was captured on black and white film the true nature of the dyes and shades used may be overlooked.

Prior to restriction and regulation through Rationing and Utility, it was noted that “women appear to have had enough black with the black-out, and the ousting of black as fashion’s first choice seems certain” (Jackson, 1939, p.33). This approach to colour continued as Orders enacted control on clothing production and sale. Where Staff Management News, a company magazine produced in-house at Marks and Spencer, outlined the reason for changes in colours available as “not due to an attempt to brighten the blackout, but rather to difficulties in printing and dyeing, that colours may tend to become lighter, and the floral patterns which hitherto rioted over brightly coloured backgrounds will now stand out on a white ground” (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, June 1940, HO/3/2/2/3/10, p.5), examples of Utility garments reflect the longevity of brightly coloured florals with lighter backgrounds within womenswear [fig. 105]. The Times (1942) noted that, despite restrictions “to discourage fuss and frippery in women’s and children’s clothes”, there was, in conjunction, “encouraging [of] a tasteful variety in good colour” (The Times, 4 March 1942, p.5). Clothing in wartime was far from dull and plain; garments were often made from bright, colourful fabrics with interesting and distinctive patterns in fabric design, weave, or print.



Figure 104 - Advertisement for a *Marldena* dress. 1938. Marldena Model No. 1006 TO RETAIL AT 25' 11. *Marlbeck Annual*. [WYAS Leeds]. 7, p.73. [Accessed 2 August 2023]. Available from: Leeds: West Yorkshire Archive Service. WYL283/7.



Figure 105 – St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. *White and Green Cotton Utility Wear Dress with Foliage Pattern and Belt. [Cotton with plastic buttons].*  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive. T1941/48.

As seen in surviving examples and rare colourised contemporary photography, the colour of cc41 clothing was often bright and bold. The use of colour in fabric design also had further benefits, such as the earlier mentioned reduction of wastage through removal of the need to pattern match in busy florals and less distinctive geometric forms - the decoration adorning fabrics through weave and print followed popular fashionable patterns, shaped to the wartime silhouette. In addition, pattern and colour also served as promotional tools, as these elements appealed to consumers' fashionable sensibilities and therefore also proved positive points of marketing Utility clothing (Imperial War Museum, ca.1941-1952, UNI 14405). Within the manufacture of lighter garments such as cotton dresses, pinnies, and aprons, pattern matching was less of a concern, such as in the cc41 smock-style top depicted in figure 106, which was likely produced for maternity wear. This had resultant impact on the amount of fabric which could be used in garments, as can be seen in both practical and decorative elements.



Figure 106 - *Utility top [front]*. ca.1941-1952. [Linen with plastic buttons].  
At: Author's own collection.

A Utility labelled dress from the Leeds Museums and Galleries collections shows several elements of how inventive use of cloth could make the most of available materials. Through colour in fabric and elements of construction reflecting the fashionable silhouette of the period, LEEAG.2018.0038.0036 met requirements of the Utility Clothing Scheme in several ways [fig. 107]. Short sleeves attached with pleat detail give a puff effect, which, along with the collar, reflect design of the period. Eight matching plastic buttons as closure to the front alongside the blue and white floral repeat pattern are paired with a patch pocket [fig. 108] and waist belt which fastens with a button [fig. 109]. Two bust darts are present to the front of the dress, which are also reflected with two darts from the waist seam on the skirt to create two pleats [fig. 110].

Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear reported on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1942 that, from 20<sup>th</sup> June that year, dresses for women and girls would form part of the range of Utility garments available. Civilian Clothing (Restrictions) Order No. 6 regulated features such as pleating and buttons, as well as the fabrics which could be used for such garments (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 29 May 1942b, p. 354). It was also asserted that "a maximum of 50 basic style patterns per manufacturer per year is imposed for women's dresses." (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 29 May 1942b, p. 354). From the information contained within Tailor & Cutter, and industry paper, LEEAG.2018.0038.0036, then, can be more accurately dated to being manufactured after 1942.



Figure 107 – 'cc41' label affixed to a Utility dress. ca.1941-1952.  
[Cotton with plastic buttons]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries.  
LEEAG.2018.0038.0036. © Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 108 - *Detail of collar, pocket, and button placket of a Utility dress. ca.1941-1952.*

[Cotton with plastic buttons]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries:

LEEAG.2018.0038.0036. © Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 109 - *Detail of waist belt of a Utility dress. ca.1941-1952. [Cotton with plastic button].*  
At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries. LEEAG.2018.0038.0036.  
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).



Figure 110 - *Detail of waist band, bust dart and skirt front pleat of a Utility dress.*  
ca.1941-1952. [Cotton with plastic buttons]. At: Leeds: Leeds Museums and Galleries.  
LEEAG.2018.0038.0036. © Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Discovery Centre).

While this garment is seemingly simple, on closer examination the identified elements highlight how manufacturers were able to make the most of the scarce fabrics available despite restrictions of Utility directives. A common trope of wartime fashion is that even the smallest of design details were strictly prohibited due to regulations. However, it can be seen from the waist belt and patch pocket that simply constructed elements, most likely fabricated from offcuts of cloth, add interesting and practical design features to this dress. These components exemplify design ingenuity in manufacture; fabric use created both functional and design features. In addition, darts added to give shape and the colour and pattern to the fabric further added interest.

Similar elements can be seen in other surviving Utility garments, most commonly aprons, pinnies, and overalls. The inventive use of leftover fabrics challenges initial public misconceptions around wartime garment construction and the inclusion of such additional, possible decorative styling elements through interpretations of standardisation. Questions are raised from such practical application – did manufacturers counter government regulation to add such detail? Were such components perceived as needed?

Through reportage in industry papers, the BoT were said to have recognised the important role of fabric and finished garment manufacturers in styling (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 29 May 1942a). Changes in fashionable desires were interconnected with wartime regulations, such as the simplification of decoration (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 29 May 1942b). Manufacture of the limited range of different styles altered production in many ways, however, consensus to meet restrictions of wartime also resulted in inventive means of material use and construction.

## Chapter Section Conclusions

Object-based research has revealed integral understanding the histories of the Utility Clothing Scheme. Where concerns over the impact of standardisation on

design and construction were aired by consumers as well as manufacturers and retailers, examples of garments made as part of the Utility Clothing Scheme in the reveal insight into the practicable application of restrictions of the Scheme. As a result, many questions arise from investigation of objects. Comparative analysis is an important tool, as it demonstrates the variation between pieces which would have occurred during production, which offers insight into the realities of working to the regulations of the Utility Clothing Scheme. How strict were the regulations? Was rigorous standardisation completely practicable? In accounting for individual variation between machinists, slight differences seem only natural. What would occur if there were differences, or mistakes made during the manufacturing process? How strict were the systems of checking for deviation? These are but a few of the additional queries which presented themselves in object-based research of extant Utility garments – focus upon these elements in future research could direct understanding.

However, when West Riding clothing manufacture during wartime is broken down using the PESTELE model, it becomes apparent that, while Legal and Political forces encouraged conformity, Sociocultural issues exemplified by consumer desires, and Technological issues (including the skill of individual machinists and the desirability of utilising offcuts) often led to variation. It is clear from evidence presented to this juncture of analysis that agreement was not always met, and controls were often counteracted by contention, and required amendment. It must be acknowledged, then, that under the public-private business model of Utility, industry the adaptability of large-scale clothing manufacturers demonstrates contributions to the Utility Clothing Scheme, while also accounting for their role in shaping practice. As such the active argument of industry is demonstrated. These contributions emphasise how established businesses in the garment industry were essential to the Scheme, not only in their contributions to practice, but also as trusted names amongst the consumer public. Though challenged by industry on multiple occasions, the government stuck fast to many implemented directives. This would shape the future of the making and procurement of Utility cloth and clothing.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Promotion and Purchase**

Promotion of the Utility Clothing Scheme was inherently political. Indicative of established working connection through the necessary collaboration with government, the work of manufacturers with the state was also reflected within retailing, across various means of endorsement. Different tools, which utilised notions of reality and aspiration, were incorporated into the range of means and methods of disseminating messages around the Utility Clothing Scheme. Promotion and sale were intertwined with the public-private business model.

From popular press to window dressing and clear communication within shops, a range of approaches were used. Each of these elements will be explored throughout this chapter. Through the perspective of the politics of promotion, this section considers a range of different mediums of communicating the Utility Clothing Scheme with retailers and the public. The government deemed it essential that the Scheme was 'sold' to the public in order for it to achieve its aims. Approach to evidence following the PESTELE and phenomenological frameworks tests the means and methods by which the styles of promotion were implemented, and how these impacted the 'success' of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

## **Magazines, Messages, and Meaning: Wartime Fashions, the Politics of Promotion, and the Utility Clothing Scheme**

Periodicals serve an integral role in the understanding of historical and cultural representations of identity. Articles and imagery published in newspapers and magazines span the diverse and oftentimes unique nature of individual and collective experience, the lived reality alongside representations of aspiration. Through the interwar period, a plethora of different forms of information were presented within a wide range of publications. Howell (2021) accounts for the role of “editorial policy” alongside “attitude and approach” (p. 5) as essential to shaping the content of such print media. For example, presented perspectives could confirm or challenge debates, which were representative of “the startling complexity of periodicals aimed at women readers and the various notions of the modern woman they suggested” (Clay, DiCenzo, Green, and Hackney, 2018, p.1). Ritchie et. al. (2016) further emphasise the juxtaposing characteristics of the content contained within magazines, describing “the tensions and paradoxes that both characterise the relationship between women and magazines and are inherent within the publications themselves” (Ritchie et. al., 2026, p.2). Such considerations demonstrate that intersecting, and sometimes complex, relationships between the social expectations and experiences of women’s lives, the challenging and developing conceptualisations of women’s roles, and presentation of inspirational notions were comprised within mass-mediums, traversed magazines in increasing distribution during the interwar period (Hackney and Bigham, 2022, p.105).

Appealing to a broad ranging readership, focus established by women’s commercial magazines in the 1920s and 1930s centred on empowerment. Magazines published during this period were reflective of experience of living. Beaumont (2018) highlights how traditional views of domesticity during the interwar period were in actuality varied. The integral importance of women’s identity “...as wives and mothers, but also as single women, widows, workers, consumers, activists, and citizens” were features of women’s magazines, in which “active citizenship” was promoted to the readership (Beaumont, 2018, p.408). Publishing expanded; a wider range of magazines were produced

reflective of the expansion of all aspects of life of the ‘modern woman’ (Hackney, 2018). Individual and collective experiences were voiced through the medium of the magazine, which continued to serve as an integral communicative tool in wartime. Such connected understanding of content of these print mediums laid the foundations for participation in all aspects of wartime life, from shaping public policy to engaging in material-saving practices through the Second World War.

As Hackney (2020) considers, the effects of wartime were not lost on these printed publications. As “women’s magazines underwent a profound transformation in wartime. Print rationing (1940) and controls restricting the space devoted to advertising (1942) contributed to the cessation or amalgamation of many titles” (Hackney, 2020, p.367), both advertising space and the inclusion of articles was impacted, meaning that content became more focussed. Publications which appealed to a readership of women were perceived as essential mediums of government communication (Hackney, 2020), therefore positioning periodicals centrally in promotion of government Austerity schemes.

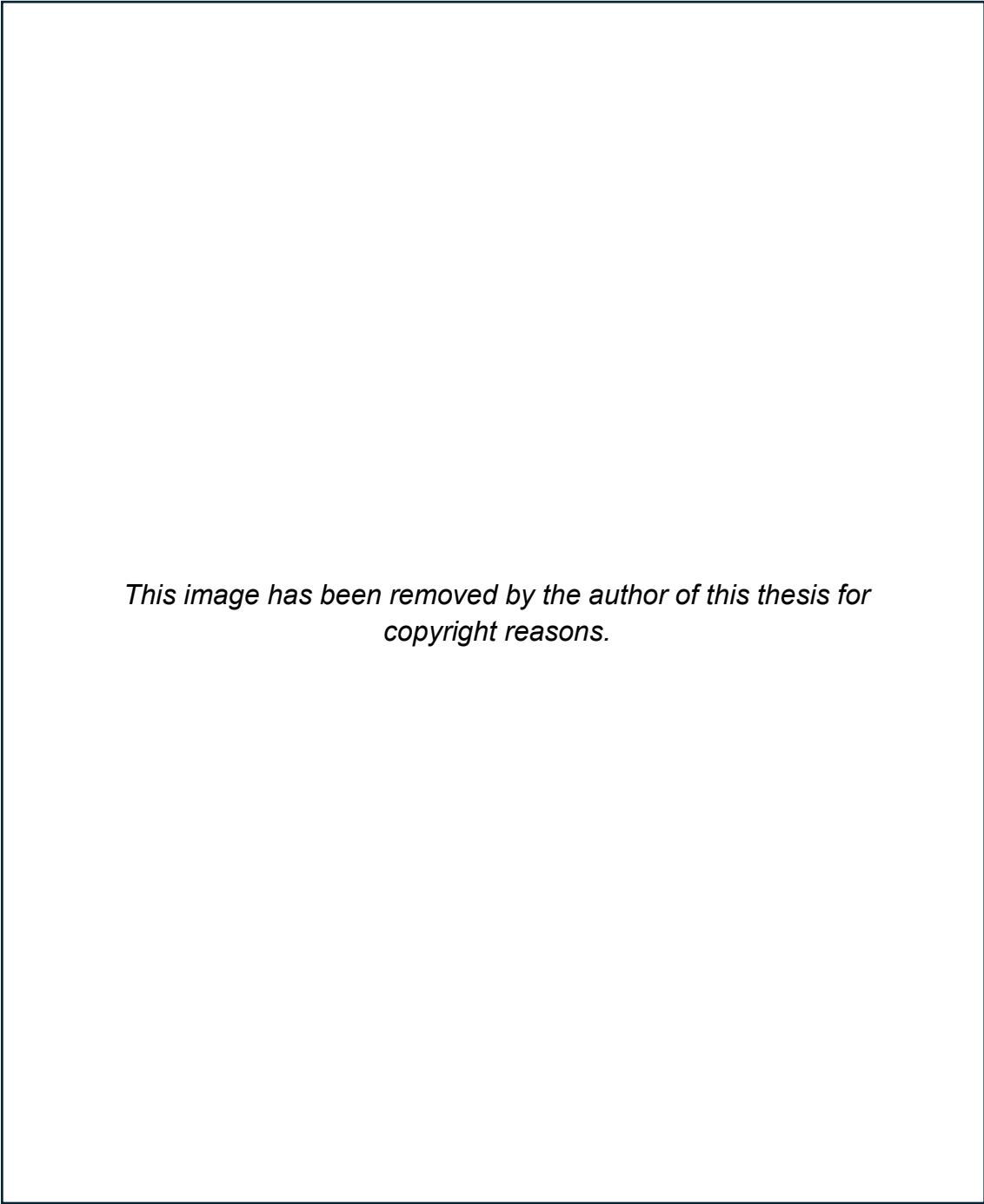
Though by the Second World War cultures of repairing garments, recycling, and repurposing had been long-established, during the early twentieth century promotion of engagement with making was an evident feature of magazines (Hackney, 2006). Through the provision of written and illustrated instructions, advice, and patterns, readers were encouraged to participate in various modes of making. Through print mediums communication of crafting of garments, toys, and pieces for the home which followed different art styles they also disseminated values in active participation connected to emancipation to their readership. In the literal, the depiction of the “autonomous modern female home-maker [was], significantly, very different to the stereotypically passive, decorative women featured in DIY ads in later decades” (Hackney, 2006, p.23). Autonomy, namely in choice, closely connected to the government’s method of promotion of Utility clothing.

As a communication channel used by the government, magazines were an accessible print medium, engaged with across the socioeconomic spectrum. Fashion magazines, such as *Vogue*, were essential to connecting Utility with consumer ideals of 'fashion'. As stated by Barthes (1990) "without discourse there is no total Fashion, no essential fashion" (Barthes, 1990, p.xi), exemplifying how the fashion magazine was integral to articulating understanding of the space in which clothing was made and worn (Jobling, 2020). The relationship between the government and the press lay in means of communication with the public. As a promotional tool, collaboration to sell Utility utilised established methods as well as newly devised approaches, including the role of magazine editors. Alongside the BoT, these editors encouraged the government to promote the introduction of Utility Clothing Scheme through press presentation, something which the state were originally averse to (Summers, 2020, p.185). British *Vogue* editor Audrey Withers, Summers (2020) outlines, was so complimentary of Utility garments that her suggestion of a move which would encourage the *Vogue* readership to engage with cc41 garments, specifically, the employment of high-end designers to create a Utility range, resulted in the government's collaboration with the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers (Summers, 2020, p.186). Desire was a central selling feature of fashion magazines, and by collaborating with publications the government were able to promote integral messages of wartime.

Discussion was presented within these publications in a range of different ways, meaning that engagement and identity was represented through considered reflective articles and formats (Clay, DiCenzo, Green, and Hackney, 2018, p.1). Hackney and Bigham (2022) suggest that, "magazines, as hybrid and "composite texts"—consisting of copy, titling, drawn illustrations, photographs, editorial, features, advertising, fiction, advice columns, competitions, and more—were a quintessential medium for the expression of the paradoxes, tensions, and contradictions that were shaping women's lives and identities in the period..." (p.105). Such juxtaposed messaging continued into the Second World War, where representation of the changing identities and environments was necessary to relate to readership. Increased representation of different interests, increased participation, and conceptualisations of gender through the

interwar period (Clay, DiCenzo, Green, and Hackney, 2018, p.1) bridged and expanded during the Second World War and beyond (Forster, 2020, p.2), accounting for social transformations in gendered expectations such as in work. As such “within a wartime context, magazines used such media-specific modes of address to negotiate contradictory discourses on national and international wartime female stardom and, by extension, models of wartime femininity” (Stead, 2020, p.119). In this way, different modes of information dissemination continued to be used. Presentation of concepts of national identity, ‘doing one’s bit’, and Make-Do and Mend, for example, were positioned alongside photographic articles which included work with famous actors proved to add endorsement to government messages deemed necessary.

In addition, advertising materials contained within newspapers and magazines presented rich opportunity for the politics of promotion under the Utility Clothing Scheme. In the context of wartime, the embedded politics of promotion must be viewed through the lens of campaigns aimed at consumer engagement with, and use of, different products. From food to clothing, the advertising of different consumables was strongly integrated with concepts of frugality, of ‘doing one’s bit’. Ingenious photography was used alongside articles to highlight *Fashion is Indestructible*, as referenced by *Vogue* (September 1941) in an image captured by Cecil Beaton [fig. 111], demonstrated the continuation of the fashion economy through wartime. The new wartime-style emerged, shaped by restriction, fuelled by public morale.



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copyright reasons.*

Figure 111 - Cecil Beaton photograph capturing a Digby Morton suit against the backdrop of a bombsite. September 1941. *British Vogue*. [University of Huddersfield]. September. [Accessed 5 May 2022]. Available from: University of Huddersfield Library.

However, while following these regulations and despite the need to participate in the resulting new cultures of consumption - shaped by restriction, control, standardisation, and reduction - it was essential that, concurrently, the Utility Clothing Scheme was sold to the public as a marker of opposing concepts. As reflected in discourse and in advertising, Utility garments were shown to be desirable, in a fashionable wartime propaganda which situated the aims of the Scheme at the fore. Imagery was therefore also reflective of written word in articles and advertisements, with the connection of the “fantasy window” and “mirror” of realism presented in combination (Hackney and Bigham, 2022, p.108). Though seemingly juxtaposing, these elements of presentation were central to promotion of Utility garments, both to the public and to trade and industry practitioners.

As a result of the established cultures of promotion, Utility clothing needed to be seen as both obtainable and fashionable, rather than mere fantasy for the majority of the population. Prior to the showing of the IncSoc Utility collection, The Drapers’ Record published an article which highlighted a showcase of Utility garments contributed to by 17 manufacturers, which sought to communicate the Utility Clothing Scheme in action – through engagement with the garments themselves (The Drapers’ Record, 4 April 1942) [fig. 112]. Of the 54 garments displayed, colour and fabric use received approval, with “tweeds, herringbones and checks” forming the basis of many of the garment types featured themselves (The Drapers’ Record, 4 April 1942, p.14). Fabrics of this description were manufactured in the West Riding; so too were garments of this type. However, it is not known where the cloth used in these garments was made, nor where the 54 pieces were made-up.

Language used in the promotion of Utility garments reflected on qualities of the garments – fabric, construction, and design - alongside themes of national identity and wartime consumption. Assurances were also made to continued dedication to established pre-war practice of trusted manufacturers and retailers, set within the context of conflict. Public engagement with the Scheme, as demonstrated, necessitated the development of means of promotion, in order to counteract lingering misgivings over quality, access, and meaning.

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Figure 112 - Article. 4 April 1942. Publicising Utility for Spring: Seen at the Utility Dress Show. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2851, p.14-15.  
[Accessed 21 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

## **‘Selling’ the Scheme: Official Government Promotion of the Utility Clothing Scheme**

State intervention was central in shifting social acceptability around what was understood as essential, juxtaposed against the backdrop of wartime extravagance (Kirkham, 2005). This was namely aimed at consumption. In understanding the notion of democratisation, it is important to recognise that “class divisions were played down in an attempt to unite the population more effectively behind the war effort” (Kirkham, 2005, p.144). In this way, early discourse around the Utility Clothing Scheme highlights initial dissatisfaction with notions of standardisation, for consumers as well as the private sector. Promotional tactics demonstrate the need for a united front, for everyone to be seen as doing their bit, as well as the understanding from government that those within the trade knew what was required for the Utility Clothing Scheme to work.

The government worked to market garments for all ages. This resulted in a variety of promotional campaigns, including film, photography, and fashion shows which were commissioned by official Ministries and the BoT, for example. In addition to these collaborations, as already discussed, was the integral involvement of and collaboration with IncSoc in creating a Utility collection in 1942 [see chapter three section one]. Such governmental promotional tactics did not begin and end with this designer collaboration. As much of the population attended the cinema to keep abreast of news, cinematic media campaigns and coverage of Utility were created. *Modes for Million* is one such informational film. Made in 1942, the short film follows the production of a Utility garment from design through manufacture, to mannequin parade and consumer discernment. This form of propaganda produced to promote Utility clothing to the public highlighted processes of production which demonstrated to the audience how “to avoid dullness and any tendency to look alike, some of the Utility frocks can be made in ten different materials and twelve different colours; 120 variations in all” (*Modes for Million*, 1942, 00:00:23-00:00:32). Filming in the factory, showing production of garments, along with carefully considered oration, used to allay any consumer misgivings around the potential

for Utility to restrict individuality in fashion. Presumed to have been filmed in London, the scale of production in the clothing factory depicted comparably a much smaller scale than the mass manufacturing of garments which took place in the West Riding. This could have served, intentionally, as a possible further means of 'selling' the notion of Utility standardisation not taking away from individuality in style. Such strategies were employed throughout the war.

The Ministry of Information published a collection of photographs showing Utility garments in various scenarios, with a range of models wearing the pieces. In figure 113, two young women wear a skirt suit made of a herringbone tweed and a dress with matching cape. While showcasing cc41 pieces in 1943, rather than in glamorous locations or studios, these photographs placed the garments in real-life wartime settings, such as here, on top of a building surrounded with barbed wire, a barrage balloon behind the two figures photographing the cityscape (Ministry of Information Photo Division Photographer, 1943). The Imperial War Museum (IWM) states of this image: "Two models pose for the camera on a Bloomsbury rooftop. The model on the left is holding a camera as if taking a photograph and is wearing a blue flecked tweed Utility suit from Deréta, whilst her colleague sports an emerald green woollen frock with a matching jacket, designed by Norman Hartnell, costing 22 coupons" (Imperial War Museum, 2021).



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Figure 113 - Photograph showing two models wearing Utility suits. Ministry of Information Photo Division Photographer. 1943. *AUSTERITY CLOTHES: FASHION RESTRICTIONS IN WARTIME BRITAIN, 1943*. [Photograph]. At: London: Imperial War Museum. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION SECOND WORLD WAR OFFICIAL COLLECTION. D 14818.

## Party Politics and Propaganda Production

The Independent Labour Party aimed to counteract some of the popular messaging surrounding the war effort. In a pamphlet of June 1941, which had been reportedly reproduced several times due to demand, the question “war for freedom or finance?” was posed (Brown, June 1941, p. 3). Further, it was stated, in “warning to the reader” that “this pamphlet is intended as an antidote to the propaganda of the Ministry of Information, of the B.B.C., of the State-subsidised churches, and of the millionaire-owned Press” (Brown, June 1941, p. 3). Such initial sentiments, and the information further published within this pamphlet, highlight the juxtaposition of much imagery surrounding wartime and notions of widespread consensus, control, and even collaboration, within public and private. This correlates with investigatory enquiry and primary findings from dialogue between business and government, concerning production and retailing practice according to restrictions and regulatory Orders enacted by the state through the Utility Clothing Scheme.

The government was eager to allay misgivings and explain its reasoning for the restrictions imposed by the Scheme on countless occasions. This applied to the public as much as industry and trade. While alterations were deemed necessary to design the BoT assured “the restrictions which have been imposed on the styling of men’s, women’s, children’s clothing are solely for the purpose of economising the use of labour and materials. They still leave it possible for a variety of styles to be produced but their general effect is to encourage simplification and practical adaptation to wartime needs” (Board of Trade, 11 May 1942, p1). Mass Observation File Report Number 1143 (March 1942) drew attention to the fact that, while the government had gone to lengths define the standardisation of cloth and clothing to businesses and consumers, the meaning associated with the terminology used to define the Scheme (both “Utility clothes” and “standard” somewhat counteracted their efforts (p.1). It was reported that this wording had “given an entirely different impression as to the real nature of these clothes” (Mass Observation FR 1143, March 1942, p.1). However, on inspection of the garments themselves, the misleading information provided was counteracted through personal interpretation. One contributor

stated, "I expected them all to be the same, but there's quite a wide range of styles, and the materials are good" (Mass Observation FR 1143, March 1942, p.1). The media and members of the public having positive perceptions of the garments themselves, as founded in this report, it was retailers who required convincing. It was cited that retailers' greatest apprehension towards Utility garments was economically founded. Retailers had concerns over being forced to stock cc41 clothing, whether the stock would sell, and the potential repercussions of regulated profits, considerations which flowed into their 'selling' of the Scheme to customers (FR 1143, March 1942, p.2). Application of restrictions proved to assure the success of the Scheme through combination of mass manufacturing methods and resultant quality, accessibility, and desirability of Utility garments. Collaboration with those in the retailing trade was paramount to successfully proving such guarantees.

Cloth and clothing made under the regulations of the Utility Clothing Scheme served to prove the continued prominence of established production centres, including the West Riding of Yorkshire, in creating desirable fabrics and finished garments, promotion of which through advertising, imagery, showcases, and other related publicity cemented the integral role of producers and retailers alike in the necessary public-private partnership. Certainly, politics was prominent within discourse and application. This resulted in challenge by industry, trade, and public, with active argument serving to improve the practicability of regulations.

## **Press Presentation**

The mass manufacture of ready-to-wear clothing established access through innovative methods of making, founded in developments of technologies and design, which expanded market reach. In addition, retailing practice also served to bridge the gap between advertising and acquisition. Early advertising created by manufacturers across Britain gave detailed description of collaboration with government. Oftentimes advertising material cited having to wait for government

regulations to be passed on to garment producers, delay which proved to impact availability of cc41 garments for wholesale as well as retail. Many such advertisements also discussed the *Essential Clothing Scheme*, something which appears to have bridged the garment industry between the introduction of clothes Rationing and the implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme. Garments deemed 'essential' by the BoT were price regulated, and included a range of outer and undergarments and faces "almost weekly variations and additions" (The Drapers' Record, 23 August 1941, p.5). Similarly to Essential Clothing, resultant timelines of collaboration impacted on ability to make and sell Utility garments, surely reason for businesses to point out the reasons for delay in delivery in their own marketing - the government outline of instruction on pricing and resultant implications for actual manufacture of pieces being cited [fig. 114].



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Figure 114 - Advertisement. 4 October 1941. Davis & Frost Ltd. The Dressy Frock Co. Ltd. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2825, p.vii [supplement]. [Accessed 13 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD163.

The Government worked closely with the press to alter perceptions about Utility amongst consumers and businesses alike. Newspaper coverage remarked on the quality and style of Utility clothing, while other articles defined what the term 'Utility' actually meant for the garments themselves and for the consumer public. While a correspondent for the Manchester Guardian clearly stated that "In the third year of the war, when one's wardrobe is getting low, the height of civilian patriotism is to wear "Utility" clothing, while the height of commercial patriotism

is to understand and obey the orders governing it" (29 December 1941, p.4), in the *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, P. Ady commented "The official application of the term "Utility" was given in April this year to 'articles produced in a limited range, clearly definable and of simple design...' " (Ady, 31 October, 1942, p. 281). Here the motives employed in aims of allaying both public and trade misgivings of Utility clothing are evident; to "do one's bit" in patriotic support of the war effort.

Representatives from the Civilian Clothing Directorate would regularly provide interviews to promote Utility clothing. Sir Thomas Barlow, Director General of Civilian Clothing at the Board of Trade, commented on the design of Utility in the *Times*: "deprecate[d] the use of the term "standard clothes" as [he did] not wish to standardise them" (The *Times*, 4 March 1942, p.5). Notwithstanding the collaborative work with the press, efforts to alter trepidation around Utility clothing held by industry and trade as well as the consumer public did not go far enough.

Reports on meetings and events important within the textile and clothing trades were also disseminated to the public through newspapers to make the public aware of change and further challenge preconceptions or misgivings over Utility clothing. However, as had occurred before, this on occasion had the opposite effect. For example, an article in *The Times*, which detailed a speech delivered by Sir Thomas Barlow to the Draper's Chamber of Trade, described how Sir Barlow stated "the exigencies of the situation demanded the elimination of all decoration or ornament which played no part in garments' durability" (The *Times*, 26 March 1942, p.2). Following the public relations catastrophe over 'standardisation', and the effect that removing any design ornamentation applied to Utility garments would have on consumption, a new and exciting means of promotion of Utility was produced. Incidences of consumer concern over the meaning of government cc41 directives offers insight into how collaborative publicity was used. Material was distributed in the form of advertising through imagery, written articles, and illustrated interviews, which was created directly in response to consumer concerns. Early in 1942, celebrity endorsement was used as a tactic to promote Utility garments in print media. An

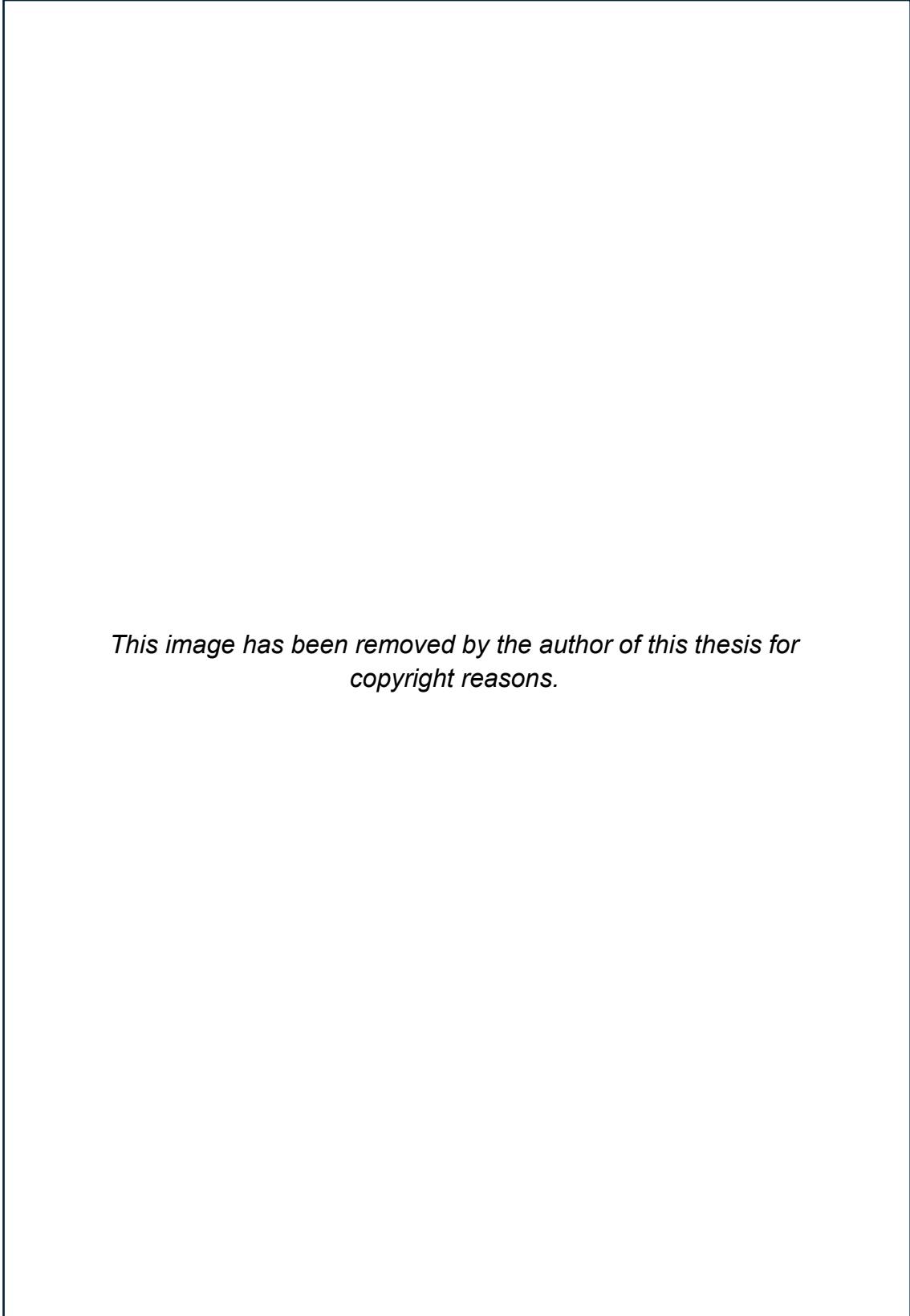
article which featured photographs of emerging actor Deborah Kerr wearing Utility outfits appeared in *Picture Post* in March 1942. Anne Scott-James, who became the photojournalist magazine's first Women's Editor in 1941, declared Utility a "...fashion revolution" (Scott-James, 28 March 1942, p.18), informing readers:

Don't be misled by the term "Utility Clothes". They have nothing to do with boiler suits and gumboots. They are clothes made from cloth which fulfils certain Government requirements, and they are sold at fixed maximum prices. These are the only restrictions on the Utility dress designer. He can turn out as many different models as he likes, provided he sticks to the specified fabrics and the controlled prices (Scott-James, 28 March 1942, p.18).

Scott-James' description of Utility garments and the Scheme itself was reinforced by the inclusion of a number of photographs of Deborah Kerr modelling such items as "...a typical Utility dress. Of pale blue light woollen, it has a double-breasted bodice and pleats in the skirt. A Spectacular Model, 62s. 10d. Everything about it is top-flight, except the price", and "another Utility dress is of honey yellow. Sleeves are three-quarter, the skirt is full. Spectacular Model, 62s. 10d" (Scott-James, 28 March, 1942, p.18). These captions, which accompanied the photographs featured, illustrate how two dresses sold in accordance with the Utility Clothing Scheme were quite distinctly different in their design, the material used, cut, and colour. The approach to photographic reporting employed in *Picture Post* reflected a long history of social documentary in its investigation of current events. It served to visually portray the cultural impacts which wartime had on clothing and dress in numerous ways, not least in its innovative commentary on the Utility Clothing Scheme. Howell writes "Editorial policy prioritized truthful and genuine visual and written narratives..." (Howell, 2021, p.23). In this sense, the commentary provided by Scott-James on Utility can be understood to be a true reflection of the quality and style of Utility garments featured in the March 1942 issue of *Picture Post*.

Over time, advertisements for Utility garments began to appear in publications which were popular amongst those in pursuit of fashion, as well as industrial press. As a publicity tool for Utility, fashion magazines ran articles which informed the reader on such qualities of clothing produced under the Scheme,

alongside pieces which encouraged recycling, alteration, and money-saving fashions. Early promotional pieces on Utility garments were especially descriptive in their showcasing of such clothing, in order to inform prospective buyers on the qualities of cc41 labelled clothing, including how similar such apparel was to non-Utility. Figure 115, an advertisement for *deréta*, illustrates the collaborative working of government with industry; the depiction of a Utility coat, the “New Era” of manufacture (British Vogue, January 1942, p. 17), and description of the new Utility Clothing Scheme is extremely positive, detailing quality in textiles and styling. The advertisement clearly states price and coupon allocation requirement, ensuring the consumer is fully informed on the possible cost implications of purchasing such a garment as the coat illustrated [fig. 115]. As with a great deal of advertising material of the time, the place of manufacture and/or acquisition is included within the description, alongside price and other explanatory information. A photograph of the specific garment itself illustrated what the consumer should expect of its quality, though such imagery was not always included in advertising material of the period.



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copyright reasons.*

Figure 115 - Advertisement. January 1942. Deréta "New Era" coats. *British Vogue*.  
[University of Huddersfield]. January, p.17. [Accessed 5 May 2022].  
Available from: University of Huddersfield Library.

Connections of government and trade are illustrated by affirmatory-leaning publications produced by the press. The immediacy with which magazines catering to women as their target audience discussed, if not actively promoted, the Utility Clothing Scheme must have held connection with the influence of government (McDowell, 1997). Further, this supposed collaboration may be evidence of indicative insistence or force. In this way, reflection on contemporaneous print media exhibits promotion of the Scheme as well as contestation. This juxtaposition of positive and negative discussion of the Scheme, for example, between the likes of *Vogue* and both local and national newspapers, demonstrates the relationships between public and private, as further exemplified in primary source material directly from industry and trade.

## **Retail of Utility Clothing in the West Riding**

Retailing, in a similar vein to manufacturing, embodied approaches which were distinctive to the West Riding. Innovative and inclusive proprietors expanded the reach of clothing markets through establishing a target clientele which promoted inclusivity through widening access. The cultures and cloth and clothing, crucial to the success of these businesses were networks. Essential to this expansion were family firms (Cookson, G., 1997). Observable across most, if not all, commercial sectors throughout Britain, familial connections and networks formed through relational and extended-family affiliation connected manufacturing and retail (Rose, 1994). From the late eighteenth century, family and religious links, as well as dealings with trusted business associates ensured that trust was already established and potential risks lowered (Rose in Kirby and Rose). The idiosyncratic nature of community connections in British business remained the norm through the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, enduring in several textile-related firms across the West Riding during this period.

Involvement of established retailers in the Scheme was integral to combatting misconceptions around Utility. Impressions of Utility clothing were, also however, posed by retailers themselves, challenging notions of consensus.

**That Objectionable Symbol.** Criticism is general of the official mark “CC41” for “utility” cloth and clothes, especially the date, because the symbol will be applied to articles which cannot be in free supply until next year. So long as the war and the scheme last, presumably, the public will have garments “dated” ’41 offered to them, inclusion of those figures is a mistake and unhelpful to retailers (Editors Comments, 20 September 1941, p.10).

With “All Eyes on Merchandise” (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, June 1940, p.4), wartime change within the retail sector brought wide-ranging impacts. The implications of regulation on wartime trading practice were contested by those in business throughout the region. Those selling Utility clothing also played an important part in communicating with consumers; this served the purpose of not only to ensuring that the Scheme was successfully engaged with by consumers. Furthermore, retailers also helped shape Scheme itself, in order to make it practicable for those trading in clothing in wartime and in relaying consumer needs to the Board of Trade. The business make-up and traditions of the West Riding garment retailing environment served to question, influence, and augment the Utility Clothing Scheme, exemplifying the integral role of private businesses in this government implemented regulation.

As shown earlier in this chapter, the necessity of encouraging public acceptance of the Scheme was reflective of achieving the aims of cc41. This was also true of the retail sector. Selling and consumption will be addressed in this section through varied lenses of interpretation. ‘Selling’ of the Scheme and of Utility clothing, will be framed within the parameters of government, media, and retailers, to the consumer public. Such analysis will be based in the public-private business model of Utility, extending examination to assess the practice of retailers of Utility clothing. Government records and trade papers will be presented within this chapter to provide insight into political debate and trade body contention surrounding requirements of selling Utility clothing in Britain. At

the fore of investigation of the position of the West Riding in this analysis, interpretation is founded in official meetings, letters, and in publications. In exploration of practices employed in retailing Utility clothing, due attention is given to both larger and smaller concerns, in example of local outfitters and big business, reflected in analysis of Marks & Spencer (M&S). To explore contention against controls, questions are posed over passive acceptance of consensus by government and from the garment trade. This section builds further understanding of the relationship between those selling Utility clothing to the public as inextricably linked to government. Through the voice of the traders established, based in, or of, the West Riding, case study undertaken within this section offers insight into the active role of industry.

Retailers were the main way which consumers were able to access and assess Utility clothing, visiting shops to see the garments themselves. In this way, retailers played a vital role in the successful adoption of the Scheme by the consumer public. However, this did not come with instantaneous, nor continual, support from those in the selling trade. Some of the many points of contention will, therefore, be considered.

### **The Changing Landscape of Consumption: Shopping in Wartime**

To consume is undertaken in a wide range of different ways. Consumption can be through the acquisition of goods, as well as through engagement with media or political affairs (Yurchisin, and Johnson, 2010, p. 13). Consumption, then, is behavioural as well as thoughtful. Therefore, connecting the active consumer with the demands of the wartime economy meant that consumption could be regulated. Characterised by government-imposed restrictions, as methods of retailing altered, so too did shopping practices. As such, both sellers and consumers of clothing reacted to one another in consequence.

A report compiled by Marks and Spencer ca.1939-1945 reflected on the initial response at the beginning of the war “to invest spare cash in useful

commodities" by a large proportion of the public (Fragment of a Report, Marks and Spencer Company Archive, HO/15/1/2/5, p.38). Following initial urgency in clothing acquisition, upon the introduction of Rationing budgeting of coupon expenditure became a central feature of wartime consumption (Drapers' Record, 5 July 1941, p. 12). Mass media reported on the necessity to further cut consumption, with civilians at the beginning of 1942 already having reduced their acquisition of goods by 18 per cent comparatively with 1938, immediately before the outbreak of the War (From Our Financial Editor, 3 January 1942, p.9). Spending money – and limited clothing coupons – meant that shoppers were ever more discerning with their purchases.

Mass Observation Priority A questioning conducted April 1943 raised two questions concerning clothing acquisition to the panel of contributors. These were:

- a. What are the main changes, if any, in your habits since clothes rationing was introduced? Do you dress differently? In different colours? Do you change your clothes more or less often? Are there any clothes which you have given up wearing? Do you spend more or less than you did on clothes? Has the stock in your wardrobe increased or decreased?
- b. Do you think clothes rationing and wartime trends have had any permanent effects on your clothing habits? What are your present ideas about how you will dress after the war? (Mass Observation FR 1669R, April 1943, p.ii).

Questions of a similar nature having been posed in April 1941 illustrate the impact which the Utility Clothing Scheme had on dress, in styling and shopping. Analysis of the answers provided by 100 women participants approached in 1943 showed that mending had become an integral part of the wartime wardrobe (Mass Observation FR 1669R.2, April 1943, p.1). Of the 100 questioned, 14 suggested they wore more wool garments in 1943 than in 1941 (Mass Observation FR 1669R.3, April 1943, p.2). The acquisition of different types of clothing and fabrics in wartime offers insight into the types of garments made available for sale at this time. Focus was placed on longer-wearing pieces made from fabrics such as wool, an indicator of why the types of goods

manufactured in the West Riding proved central to stocking shops with Utility. As the central communicator of customer requirements, retailers played an integral role in the exchange of information between government and consumers. With Rationing in place, the Utility Clothing Scheme's introduction was met with further consumer discourse.

### **Catering to the Consumer Public**

It was acknowledged that Utility garments took time to filter into shop stock. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1942, Hugh Dalton suggested "there are already some utility clothes in the shops, and there will soon be more, but you must not be disappointed if you cannot get them at once, for it takes some months for raw material to be converted into clothes on sale" (The Manchester Guardian, p.5). It can be seen from this quote that Dalton framed availability in a positive light, that consumers were eager to find Utility garments in the shops, promising that "I shall do my best to see that supplies of what is really needed are available in the shops, are fairly distributed, and can be bought at reasonable prices" as clothes "which will wear well" (The Manchester Guardian, 2 March 1942, p.5).

Dalton's positive affirmation of Utility was initially met in practice by mixed impressions by consumers. While in London, responses to the garments and the Scheme itself were positive, outside of the capital, men in particular were disparaging of Utility clothing. Negativity was based in the most part in not having seen any cc41 clothing, and placed focus on the removal of turn-ups on trousers as well as pockets amongst men (Mass Observation, FR 1264, May 1942, p.9), and for women, concerns largely focussed on class divides as well as "uniformity of clothes, and fear of looking like everyone else" (Mass Observation, FR 1264, May 1942, p.8). It was therefore essential that the government and retailers collaborate to allay concerns of consumers regarding quality, longevity, and the true implication of standardisation in relation to Utility clothing.

Aligning with government debate, which emphasised how "Utility clothes have on the whole been very well received, especially by women" (Hansard HC Deb.,

23 July 1942, col. 213), accounts and sales figures reveal that, as the breadth of Utility clothing manufacture expanded, promotion increased, and greater levels of stock was being sold, the amount of Utility garments bought and sold corresponded with government hopes for the Scheme. This was represented in the West Riding itself. For example, the *Report and Balance Sheet of Montague Burton Limited* dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 1943, in discussion of *Government Contracts and Utility*, suggested the majority of manufacture was given over to government orders and Utility clothing production (Burton, 1943, WYL 1951/185/1/14). Sales were achieved through recurring wholesale custom by retailers (Burton, 1943, WYL 1951/185/1/14). Statistical analysis conducted into Montague Burton's sales [see chapter four, section one, pages 236-237] demonstrates changes in sales under the Utility Clothing Scheme. Several reasons must be acknowledged for the reductions in sales and as a result, profits – consumer make-up, which for Burton's "men of military age [had] always formed the bulk of [their] customers" Rationing (Burton, 1943, WYL 1951/185/1/14), and Utility, through profit and pricing caps. Changes in sales were felt throughout the retail environment. Marketing was therefore central to ensuring repeat custom, as well as promoting the Scheme itself.

The utilisation of popular press mediums alongside work with retailers was of huge importance to public adoption of Utility clothing. This collaboration "generated new expertise in knowing and managing consumption that would continue to shape policy-making and marketing into the postwar era of affluence" (Trentmann 2017, p.331). New methods of marketing, alongside other forms of retail practice proved practicable, and had lasting implications for the trading environment.

The active involvement of retailers in raising awareness of the Scheme and its benefits was integral to encouraging public adoption. This is exemplified through promotional techniques. As many of the images which were captured to advertise, promote, and 'sell' the Utility Clothing Scheme were black-and-white, as was common of the period due to technology and cost implications, it may be misconstrued that wartime clothing, both Utility and non-Utility, was plain or dull in its fashioning. However, this most certainly was not the case, as exemplified

in the garments themselves. A unique selling point for Utility clothing was that, despite the standardisation of production and retailing methods, clothing produced under the Scheme was vibrant and exciting, in both colour and cut. Collaboration with retailers, as well as with designers of fabrics and clothing, as well as dyers and weavers, meant that a wide variety of different textiles were used to make Utility pieces and could be attractively displayed to attract interest and custom. While restrictions of wartime encouraged a make-do and mend mentality, encouraging consumption continued to be at the forefront of advertising efforts. Promotion of new Utility lines came in a variety of forms, some encouraging investment in trusted names [fig. 116], and appropriate repairs to ensure garment longevity [fig. 117].

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Figure 116 - Advertisement. November 1942. Utility deréta NEW ERA Coats. *British Vogue*.  
[University of Huddersfield]. November, p.15. [Accessed 5 May 2022].  
Available from: University of Huddersfield Library.



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Figure 117 - Advertisement. 24 February 1943. Celenese Utility underwear. *The Sketch*.  
[Online]. 198 (2568), p.111. [Accessed 22 June 2023].  
Available from: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

The government instituted maximum prices charged for garments sold under the Utility Clothing Scheme, as well as cc41 household textiles (The Manchester Guardian, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1942, p.5). As the Scheme came to include a wider range of goods, maximum prices were also applied to non-utility cloth and clothing (The Manchester Guardian, 25 July 1942, p.5). While accounting for improvements in price controls which would benefit customers, as a result these changes also impacted retailers and manufacturers.

Government collaboration with trusted retailers was an important factor in the successful promotion of the Scheme to the public. Such affirmation was reflected in early promotion of Utility clothing. With many different concerns, retailers and representative bodies would voice their apprehensions in a range of ways, contesting the notion of instantaneous consensus without question. The active involvement of traders in clothing was apparent through participation in debates. Earlier reports on changing shopping habits due to the restrictions of clothes Rationing on garment acquisition pointed to consumers “trading-up”, shopping for garments which were being promoted using “the quality angle” which “has a much wider appeal” (The Drapers’ Record, 14 June 1941, p.7). Quality being a fundamental angle of promotion of Utility clothing proving to be held in high regard, both in manufacture and retail. It was essential that those making and selling these garments publicise cc41 pieces positively, as worthy investment of scarce coupon allocation in order to ensure sale of garments. In this way, it was in the interest of industry and trade to shape the culture of wartime shopping, to herald a new age of retailing, under the control of government restrictions.

Inconsistencies felt by traders and makers were a matter for contention, though clarity for consumers was undoubtedly an important feature of wartime shopping culture. Speaking to the Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Sir George Martin remarked that “in a short time there will be very little else on sale in the United Kingdom but Utility Clothes” (Sir George Martin quoted in The Manchester Guardian, 25 February 1942, p.5). The amount of clothing which needed to be produced and sold as part of the Utility Clothing Scheme in order to meet with the economies of wartime Austerity required promotion by retailers

in order to be successfully accepted by consumers. Though the amount of Utility goods produced and sold rose, nevertheless, consensus between government and trade remained tenuous.

It must be noted here that such misgivings that proved averse to consensus, were quantified by retailers challenging regulations through practices in the sale of Utility cloth and clothing. President of the Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Mr Laycock, was reported in *The Manchester Guardian* (25 February 1942) as commending on “unscrupulous traders” who “removed the stamp from utility cloth to sell at a price higher than that intended by the Board of Trade” resolving that “cloth should be marked in such a way that the marking could not be removed” (p.5). Such affirmation calls into question the ability for the government to maintain control over retailing, in that seemingly strict regulations were overcome simply through the removal of the cc41 mark. In addition, it was also asserted that a number of retailers were not charging the correct price for Utility garments. This was reported in *Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear* to have been found to be due to the potential “failure to obtain copies of orders” (*Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear*, 1 May 1942, p.291), however, the possibility of intentional fraudulent practice was not commented upon.

Though at the outbreak of the Second World War, it was reported within the Leeds clothing trade that “buyers of men's suits and overcoats are reluctant to commit themselves now that the country is at war, and in one or two instances orders have been cancelled” (*Textile Mercury and Argus*, 15 September 1939, p.323). Chain stores were reported to feel more confident in their position (*Textile Mercury and Argus*, 15 September 1939). By the time the Utility Clothing Scheme had been implemented, concerns over the acquisition of new stock had been somewhat allayed. In saying this, despite the earlier assurance of the situation of larger shops, disdainful comment within trade press called into question the quality of Utility clothing soon became apparent. Those self-identified as “traders in better-class merchandise” aired concerns around forcible receipt of supposed “unwanted” cc41 garments posed soon after implementation of the Scheme (*The Drapers' Record*, 6 September 1941, p.11).

By January 1942, modest amounts of cc41 garments were present in shops of all sizes (The Drapers' Record, 31 January 1942, p.20). However, due to the remaining level of product which was non-Utility, it was reported that retailers were not promoting Utility clothing (The Drapers' Record, 31 January 1942, p.20). Executives, clothiers, drapers, and outfitters suggested that this was a reflection on both limited supply of Utility stock alongside contestation over product range and sizing; it was suggested that "quality, finish and serviceability of Utility garments so far received" was "excellent", and as a result, "would definitely keep down the prices of free lines provided sufficient quantities become available" (The Drapers' Record, 31 January 1942, p.20). Through early issues with output and acquisition of Utility clothing are accounted for, retailers approached for comment suggest positive initial perceptions of the garments being produced as part of the Scheme.

The Times (14 May 1942) reported that some shops continued to retail infants' and girls' Utility garments covered by the updated *Utility Apparel (Maximum Prices and Charges) (No.2) Order (S. R. and O., 1942, No. 604)* at their previously ascribed retail price (The Times, 14 May 1942, p.9). This demonstrates that some traders did not instantly, and possibly not in their entirety, follow government directives. Potentially unscrupulous practices, coupled with the changeable nature of regulations across manufacture and retail in wartime, led the government established the Board of Trade Information Service. Up to date information would be communicated to those who signed up to receive revisions to regulations in relation to clothes Rationing, supplies, and the Utility Clothing Scheme (The Bradford Chamber of Commerce Journal, August 1942, p.30). The BoT Information service was undoubtedly established to counteract possible overlooked changes and ensure industry and trade were informed. Communication and collaboration exemplify the active role of retailers in achieving consensus in ways of working, as will be explored through analysis of retail archives.

As already discussed, within industry and trade, as amongst the consumer public, the true nature of Utility was contested. Such initial dissatisfaction with the presentation of the Utility Clothing Scheme and its regulations by the government suggests governmental input was required to achieve consensus

amongst retailers. This, in turn, would prove positive for promotion of the Scheme, and its overall success in achieving the laid out aims. By September 1942, the *Leeds Co-operative Record* reported:

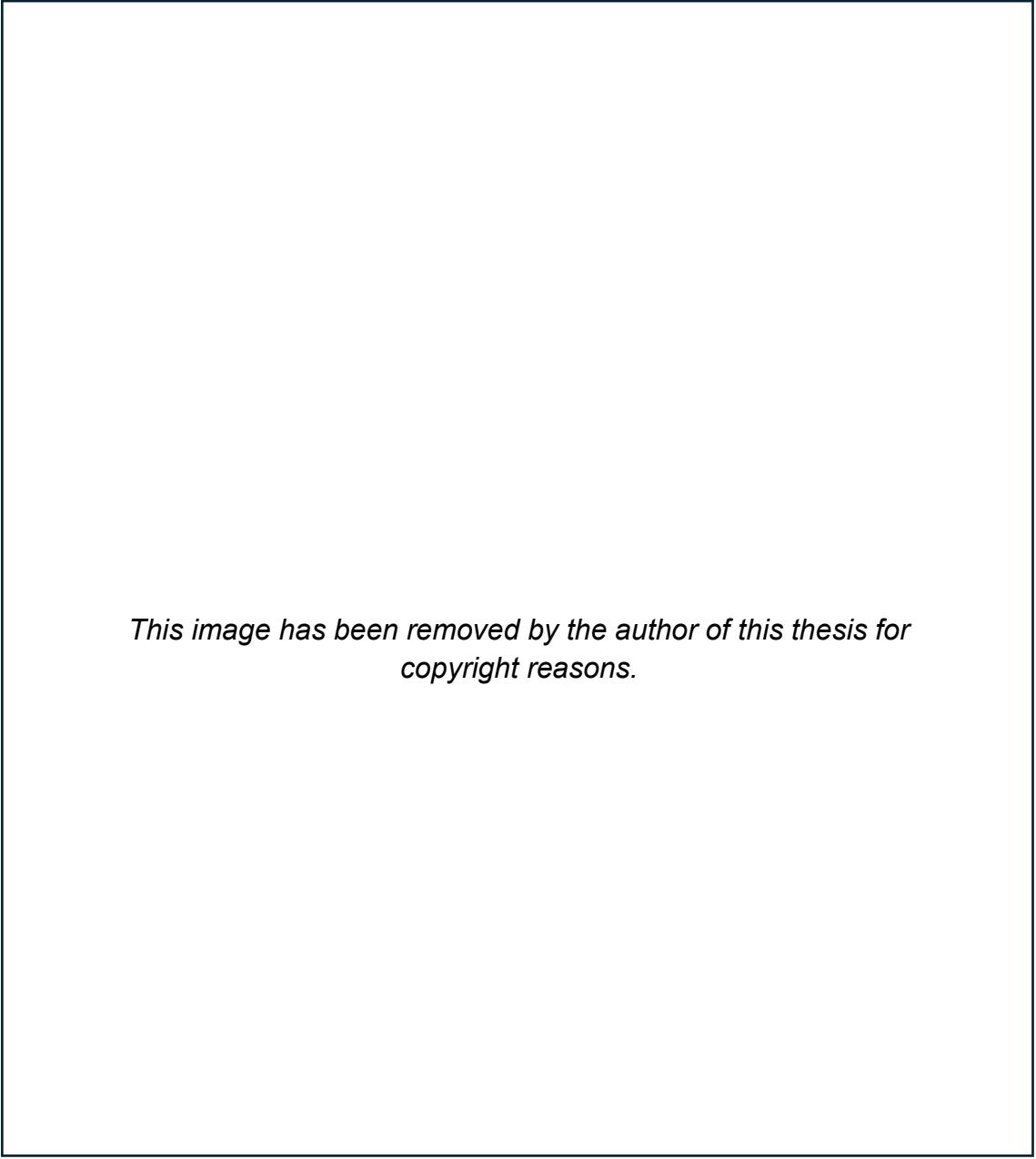
...that our total sales were effectively higher, markedly in our Grocery departments. A factor which will very greatly affect our Society is the very wide extension of "Utility" goods. More and more of the old branded commodities bearing much advertised names are being replaced by single lines bearing no names at all. Already the great variety of similar goods has largely gone... It will be illuminating to watch the effect of this in our shops. Most co-operatively produced commodities are still available, and "Co-op goods" may well become an outstanding mark of reliable commodities (From the Editors Desk, *Leeds Co-operative Record*, September 1942, p.159).

As Utility goods were increasingly available in shops, the distinctive cc41 label was something which shoppers were looking for in garments. Trust in established makers and sellers spread to trust in Utility. Reductions in the range of different products available, and the shift in identifying markers applied to all manner of goods including clothing, food, and furniture, as pointed out in the *Leeds Co-operative Record*, was closely monitored by retailers, keen to assess the influence that this would have on trade.

### **Dressing to Attract Custom in Wartime**

The window display remained a key attractor of custom despite restrictions. Articles concerning precautions action to take to avoid damage to glass were published for the attention of retailers in trader papers including *The Drapers' Record*. Additionally, many issues also included photographs of window displays from different shops across the country, alongside a short description. Inclusion of such images illustrated the potential of wartime change to attract customers to spend their coupons; for example, the inclusion of patriotic scenes with mannequins wearing uniform of different services against a backdrop of flags [fig. 118]. Notions of national pride are evident in examples of window

dressing, ideals noted in earlier discussion of concepts of contribution to the war effort.



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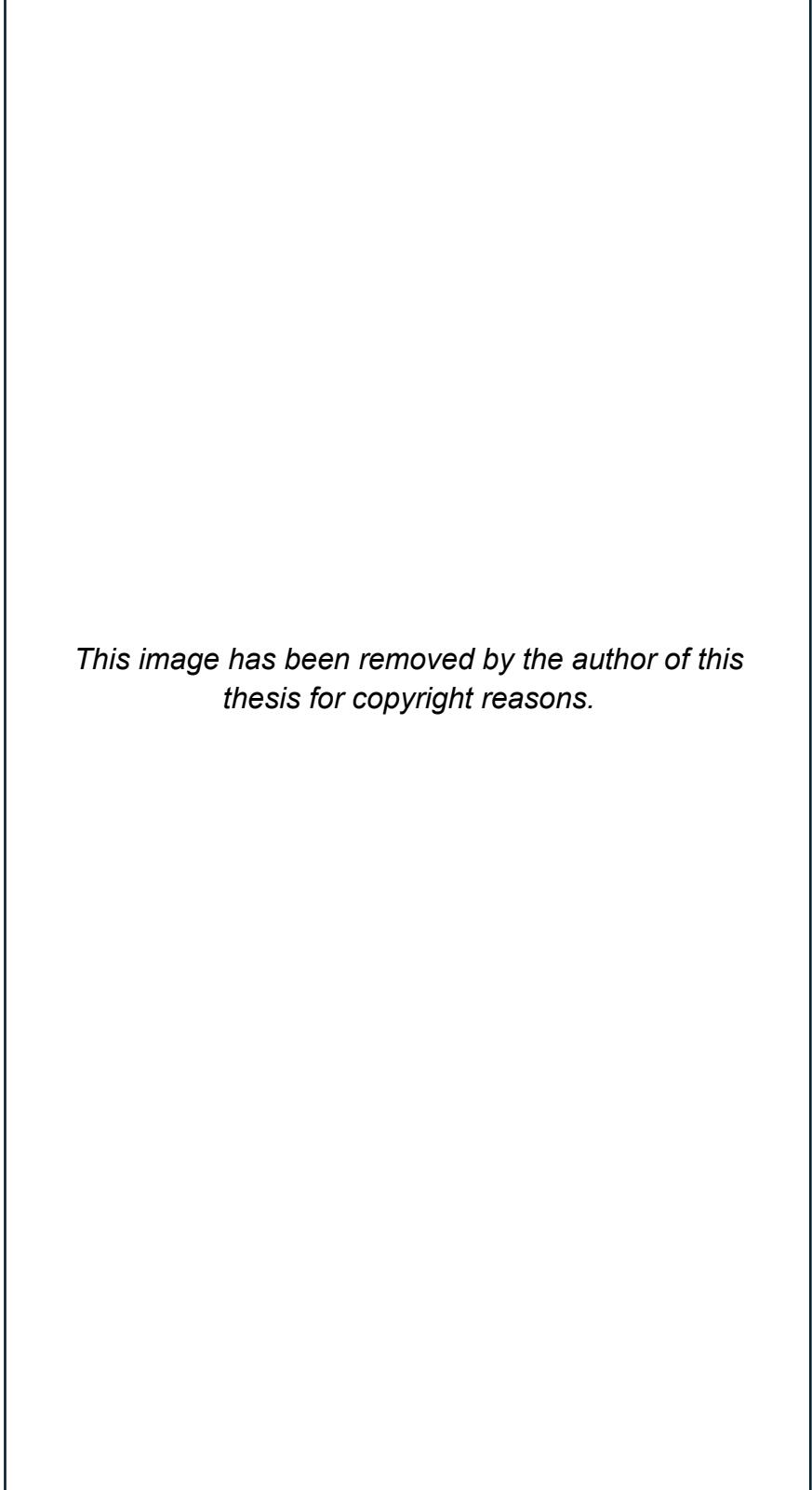
Figure 118 - Illustrative photograph with accompanying text showing a window display exhibiting Women's Auxiliary Air Force uniforms. 6 September 1941. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2821, p.12. [Accessed 13 June 2023].  
Available from: British Library. LOU. LD167.

While innovative techniques of clothing display had developed over decades, the advent of the Second World War proved to alter practice. Changes in approach were necessitated by the wartime economy, of the wartime consumer, the feeling of the nation, and the required considerations of the context of war.

The Drapers' Record reported:

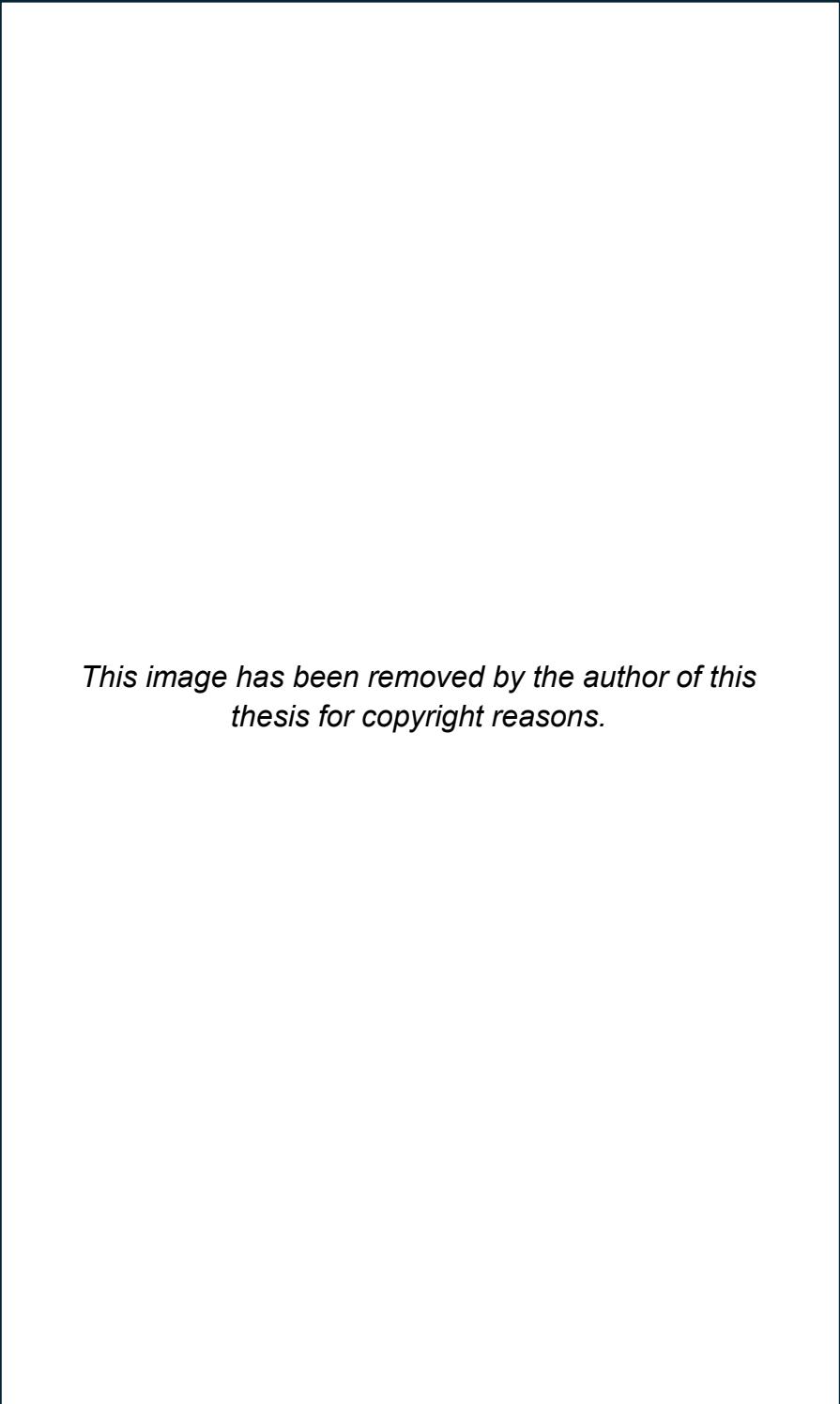
In some shops and stores display was one of the first casualties of war. Their windows became forlorn. They seemed to announce, "There's a war on, so we aren't taking any trouble. All the Heart has gone out of us." Yet behind those windows were proprietors and staff cheerfully fighting against increasing odds (26 April 1941, p. 9)

Features that defined the wartime silhouette were emphasised in shop floor dressing. The jacket depicted in figure 119, accompanied by informational illustration, proves to connect the placement of manufacture and retail within the public consciousness. Simple yet informative, the jacket takes centre stage, with focus placed on the importance of masculine tailoring within womenswear, a feature seen in many Utility garments produced in the West Riding. Displays in shop windows could showcase the breadth of exciting shapes, styles, colours, and, though limited by wartime restrictions, decorative application which could still be achieved in garment detailing. This sought to emphasise how attractive, and fashionable, Utility clothing was [fig. 120].



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Figure 119 - Photograph of a window display. 11 January 1941. Every Woman's Dream.  
*The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2787, p.12. [Accessed 13 June 2023].  
Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.



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Figure 120 - Image of a window display for Utility coats. 31 January 1942. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2842, p.18. [Accessed 21 June 2023].

Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

Pricing was an important factor for the discerning Utility consumer, as much as it was a matter of contention amongst manufacturers and retailers. Stipulated pricing was decided by government, and connected to material make-up as much as profit margins for industry and trade. The removed Purchase Tax filtered through to consumer goods able to be acquired from 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1942, though retailers could still sell Utility items already in their stock with Purchase Tax ascribed until 31<sup>st</sup> January 1943 (Tailor & Cutter and Women's wear, 31 July 1942, p.497). It was noted that the cost of cc41 cloth and clothing retailed after Purchase Tax was removed would be reduced by up to 12 per cent (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 31 July 1942). Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear offered the trade insight into the new system of pricing, detailing the following examples in their issue published 31<sup>st</sup> July 1942 [table 15].

In a war diary, Winifred M. Gill of Headingley, Leeds, noted manufacturers and retailers were "expressing grave fears that the margin of profit allowed on Utility clothing will be insufficient to meet overhead charges" (Gill, Mass Observation, 25 February 1942, p.4), an insightful note from a civilian consumer. The contributor continued, "I should not be surprised at this, judging from the experience I have had myself with certain Government departments and their idea of what constitutes a reasonable profit! No one abhors the thought of profiteering more than I do, but all the same, a business has to pay its way" (Gill, Mass Observation, 25 February 1942, p.4-5). Consumer insight into the collective experience of wartime regulations and their impact on the makers and sellers of Utility clothing demonstrates the importance of communication between government, manufacturers, retailers, and civilians.

		Old ceiling price. £. s. d.	New ceiling Price. £. s. d.
Man's suit	... ...	4 17 0	4 9 0
Man's overcoat	... ...	2 14 6	2 10 3
Woman's coat	... ...	4 4 0	4 0 0
Woman's costume	... ...	3 14 0	3 10 9
Woman's rayon dress	... ...	1 11 5	1 10 0
Cotton print	... ...	*2 7	*1 11½
Woman's vest	... ...	4 0	3 6½
Woman's artificial silk stockings	... ...	2 4	2 1

\*Per yard.

Table 15 - Facsimile figures presented as *Some Examples of the New Utility Prices*.  
Anon. 31 July 1942. Price Control of Textiles and Clothing. *Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear*. [British Library]. Lxxvii (3954), p.497. [Accessed 21 June 2023].  
Available from: British Library. LOU.LD163.

While the retailer worked closely with manufacturers to acquire and distribute Utility clothing, following industry and trade questioning, it was quickly instituted “that it was permissible for Utility Cloth to be sold through the Merchant to the Retailer and subsequently the Consumer” (Woollen and Worsted Trades’ Federation, 16 December 1941, p.6). Expansion of the sale of Utility fabrics to consumers following private business instigation demonstrates the effective engagement of retailers with the consumer public. In acknowledgement of their wants and needs in relation to clothing, customers would be able to purchase off-the-peg Utility garments as well as Utility cloth from which to make their own clothing, as discussed in chapter four. The ability to acquire a range of textile goods evidences the significant and influential role which retailers played in the Utility Clothing Scheme. Knowing what consumers wanted and needed was of vital importance to ensuring the Scheme’s success.

Advertising of Utility cloth and clothing by individual retailers further demonstrated the commitment of businesses to communicating understanding of what would appeal to shoppers. Again, the use of pattern was a useful tool. Where in manufacturing heavily patterned fabric meant savings on pattern-

matching, in retail, it served as a promotional tool. In pieces for practical use, such as aprons and coveralls [fig. 121], the use of patterned fabrics added decorative interest to essential garments for wear at home as well as in the workplace. Similar marketing tactics were replicated across Utility furniture. However, here specific catalogues were produced which detailed in illustration and description the different pieces which could be acquired. Published in 1943 and 1947, the wartime catalogue of furniture shown in figure 122 in particular highlights the limited nature of furniture production during the war years, with a modest approach to construction stipulated by materials available. With clothing, however, there was much more scope for selling.



Figure 121 - John Hawkins & Sons Ltd. ca.1942-1952. *Utility apron.* [Cotton].  
At: Author's own collection.

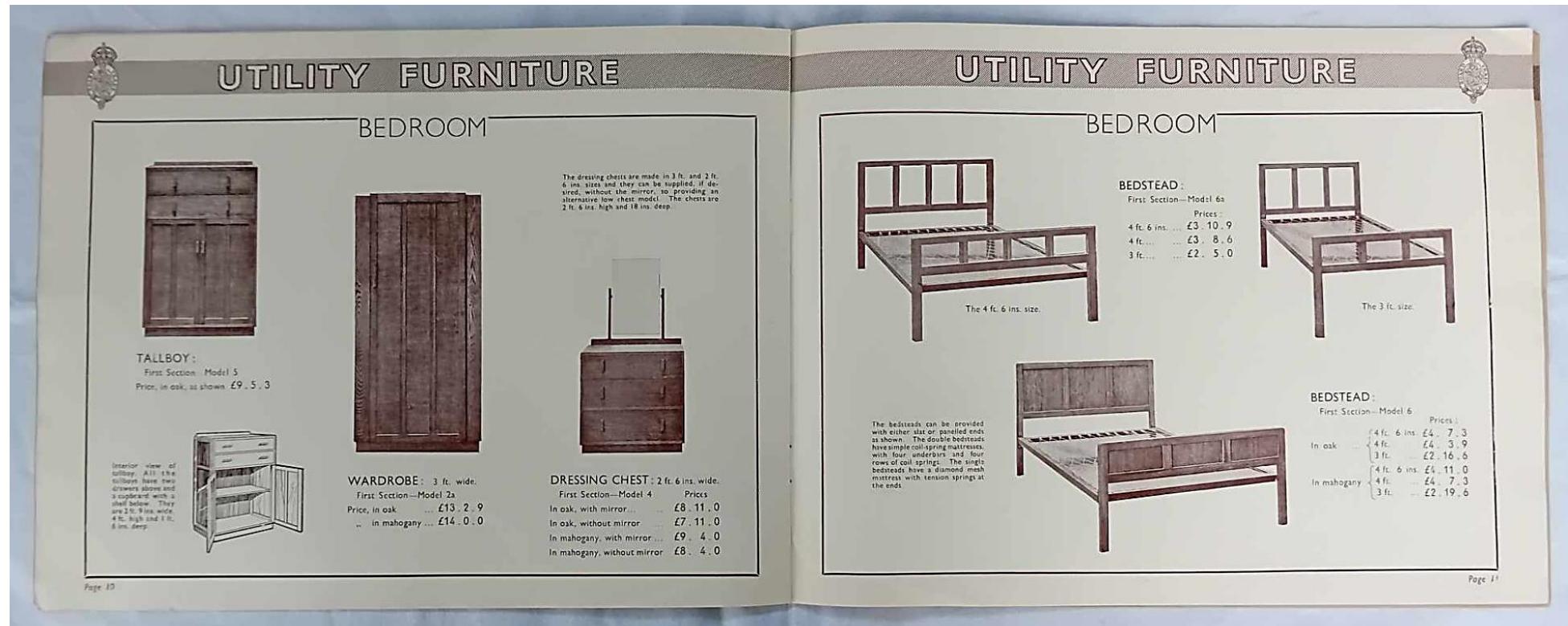


Figure 122 – Board of Trade. 1943. *Excerpt from Utility furniture catalogue.* [Paper]. p.10-11.

At: Author's own collection.

Convincing consumers that equality of access, navigated in theory through Rationing and the Scheme, was in practice down to promotion by retailers; selling the types of clothing which the population required followed different methods. And though trade press suggested “no startling innovations, but practical, wearable clothes...” (The Drapers’ Record, 3 January 1942, p.13), when commenting on some garments, it could be said that adaptation to wartime requirements was indeed innovative in itself. Retailing practices were essential to ensuring the successful implementation and uptake of Utility clothing, and it was retailers themselves who held a hugely important role within this action. It was therefore essential that retailers could contribute their knowledge to shape the practicability of regulations.

### **Shopping Spaces, Staff, and the Wartime Consumer**

Reduction of staff and retailing premises was of similar nature to that of manufacturing. If spaces were bombed out, they were quickly replaced by temporary premises, trading from make-shift pop-up type shops. However, labour force presented different issues, reflected across the breadth of different sized outlets. Recording for larger stores reported on by Hugh Dalton, the then President of the BoT, in the House of Commons on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1942 cited that, for department stores staff had reduced to 70 per cent of their pre-war levels and retail spaces to 75 per cent, with chain stores measuring staffing levels at 74 per cent of pre-war measures and 96 per cent of their retail space across Britain (Hansard HC Deb., 23 July 1942, column 222). Reductions in the workforce and overall number of retail outlets were reflective of the impacts of the wartime economy, as well as exemplifying the position of larger shops in the trading environment through the period of conflict. A reduction in the number of staff employed was reflected across different sized outlets, however, the high rate which chain store maintained their number of physical shop spaces reflective of their place in the retail environment.

A Report on Marks and Spencer's *Staff Position in the War Years* are testament to the changes in shop staffing in the Second World War (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca. 1944-1945, HO/6/8/3/3). The report details that, prior to the implementation of the National Service Act (No. 2) at the end of 1940, and the initial Registration for Employment Order in 1941, new staff aged 18 and above were favoured, and employees working at M&S were mainly aged between 20 and 25 (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca. 1944-1945, HO/6/8/3/3). However, following the implementation of these wartime employment regulations, and the "labour position" of the location, employment centred on "14 to 16 year olds and married women with children" (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca. 1944-1945, HO/6/8/3/3, p.1). The new age range of staff reflected ability to engage with different elements of the retail environment, including use of technology and customer interaction respectively (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca. 1944-1945, HO/6/8/3/3).

Public perception was indicative of engagement with clothing, as suggested in Mass Observation:

The period between this war and the last was the era of cheap clothes. The exercise of good taste, once the prerogative of the wealthy, lay in the power of people of all classes. Fashion knowledge and discernment increased and the standard of taste was raised enormously. Before the war, this country was democratically well-dressed. Now, equally democratic restrictions have made it impossible for anyone to have more than a limited number of new clothes in a year. The sudden check in buying has made people take stock of their clothes and what they feel about them (Mass Observation FR 1669R.15, 27 September 1943, p.1).

Understanding of material quality in relation to the longevity of garments, through knowledge shared in periodicals and through retailers, coupled with purchasing power, enabled consumers to judge standards and invest in clothing which suited their needs. During wartime, expenditure on clothing was altered for a significant proportion of the population due to restrictions on acquisition.

Changes in consumption were charted in a range of different periodicals, including those published for trade. The effect of alterations in patterns of consumption had on trade must be juxtaposed with the changes which were

implemented in retailing in wartime. Following the introduction of clothes Rationing, trade and industry debate around the implementation of this system of wartime restriction arose in countless instances, in publications created for those working in manufacturing and retailing, as well as in committee meetings, and correspondence. The Drapers' Record even published a facsimile of the *Rationing of Cloth, Clothing Footwear and Hand Knitting Wool* trade pamphlet created by the BoT in the first issue published following the implementation of clothes Rationing (The Drapers' Record, 7 June 1941, No.2808, p.9-12). The inclusion of this informational guide in the trade magazine, published alongside editor comments, magazine contributor notes, and early industry discussion of the Rationing system, communicated regulations, restrictions, and interpretation to industry and trade practitioners.

Planning and associated spending differed for each individual was dependent on different factors, such as employment type and family make-up, for example (The Drapers' Record, 5 July 1941, p.12). It was important for consumers to attribute their Clothing Coupons to an appropriate wardrobe for their yearly allowance. With clothing acquisition shaping industry and trade, stock therefore needed to reflect consumer needs. In the "Your Opinion" section of the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1941 edition of The Drapers' Record, J. F. Crouch contributed consideration of a "*Moderate Means*" *Outfit*, which listed the range of items required to provide an adequate wardrobe of newly acquired garments [table 16].

				Coupons
Unlined Mackintosh		..	..	9
Coat	..	..	..	14
Woollen Frock	..	..	..	11
Frock, Cotton or Rayon	..	..	..	7
Blouse	..	..	..	5
Cardigan	..	..	..	5
Skirt	..	..	..	7
Fur Tie	..	..	..	5
Dressing Gown	..	..	..	8
Pyjamas (2 sets)	..	..	..	16
2 slips	..	..	..	8
Bathing Costume	..	..	..	4
3 Pairs of Knickers or Slip-ons		..	..	9
4 Pairs of Stockings		..	..	8
1 Dozen Handkerchiefs		..	..	6
2 Pairs of Shoes	..	..	..	10
2 Pairs of Gloves	..	..	..	4
				136

Table 16 - Facsimile of J. F. Crouch. 14 June 1941. Your Opinion: "Moderate Means" Outfit. *The Drapers' Record*. [British Library]. 2809, p.15. [Accessed 13 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. LOU.LD167.

Changeable consumer requirements of wartime would therefore impact on retailing practice. *The Drapers' Record* provided insight into the questions which retailers may have had and may have encountered from consumers in relation to Rationing. Continued publication of articles about clothes within *The Drapers' Record* further showcases industry insight into the experience of living and working to wartime Rationing restrictions, the changing nature of Rationing, and the increasing amount of questioning over the practicalities of Rationing. Shortly after the introduction of clothes Rationing on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1941, the *Drapers' Record* reported in changes made to the system of points applied to certain garments and materials, those made from wool being mostly affected from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1941 by an increase in 'pointings' affixed (*Drapers' Record*, 5 July, 1941, p.7). For example, 8 points required for "a long-sleeved, woollen cardigan", which had for the previous month had only required five to purchase (*Drapers' Record*, 5 July, 1941, p.7). Further, it is important to note, that from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1941, specified types of fabrics and clothing for sale as second-hand also necessitated coupons in their procurement (*Drapers' Record*, 5 July, 1941, p.7). In the first month of

implementation, the changeable nature of the Rationing system is exposed, here detailed by an increase in the imposed coupon value ascribed to different garments and fabrics, which was also reflected in a reduction of such ascription to different materials and clothing types.

Following the introduction of the Utility Clothing Scheme, with Rationing having been in place for some three months, and the above discussion in the trade being considered, it would be understandable to think that consumption patterns would affect sales, not least in clothing. However, in praise of the “utility”<sup>25</sup> which changes to commodities in wartime presented, a more streamlined approach to advertising, labelling (in branding attribution to goods), and reduction to the range of different product types available (Leeds Co-Operative Record, September 1942, p.159). The Co-operative suggested:

It will be illuminating to watch the effect of this in our shops. Most co-operatively produced commodities are still available, and “Co-op goods” may well become an outstanding mark of reliable commodities (Leeds Co-Operative Record, September 1942, p.159).

Such changes in retailing sought to counteract the impacts of wartime, on both trading practices and consumer wariness. Advertisements quickly began to appear within industry publications as well as popular press. While highlighting the need for Rationing and its impacts on garments, also proved to affirm confidence in the system amongst retailers, an assurance to the civilian consumer public [fig. 123]. The use of the term “utility”, in promotion of products by the Co-op, can be understood to reflect both the Scheme itself and the definition of practicability. It is therefore used to represent these range of meanings, as in figure 123. In this way, Utility lines were advertised alongside non-Utility products, which attributed confidence in the range of goods manufactured and sold as part of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

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<sup>25</sup> The use of the word “utility” here reflects conceptualisation of the term in relation to a rationalised system of trade and consumption.

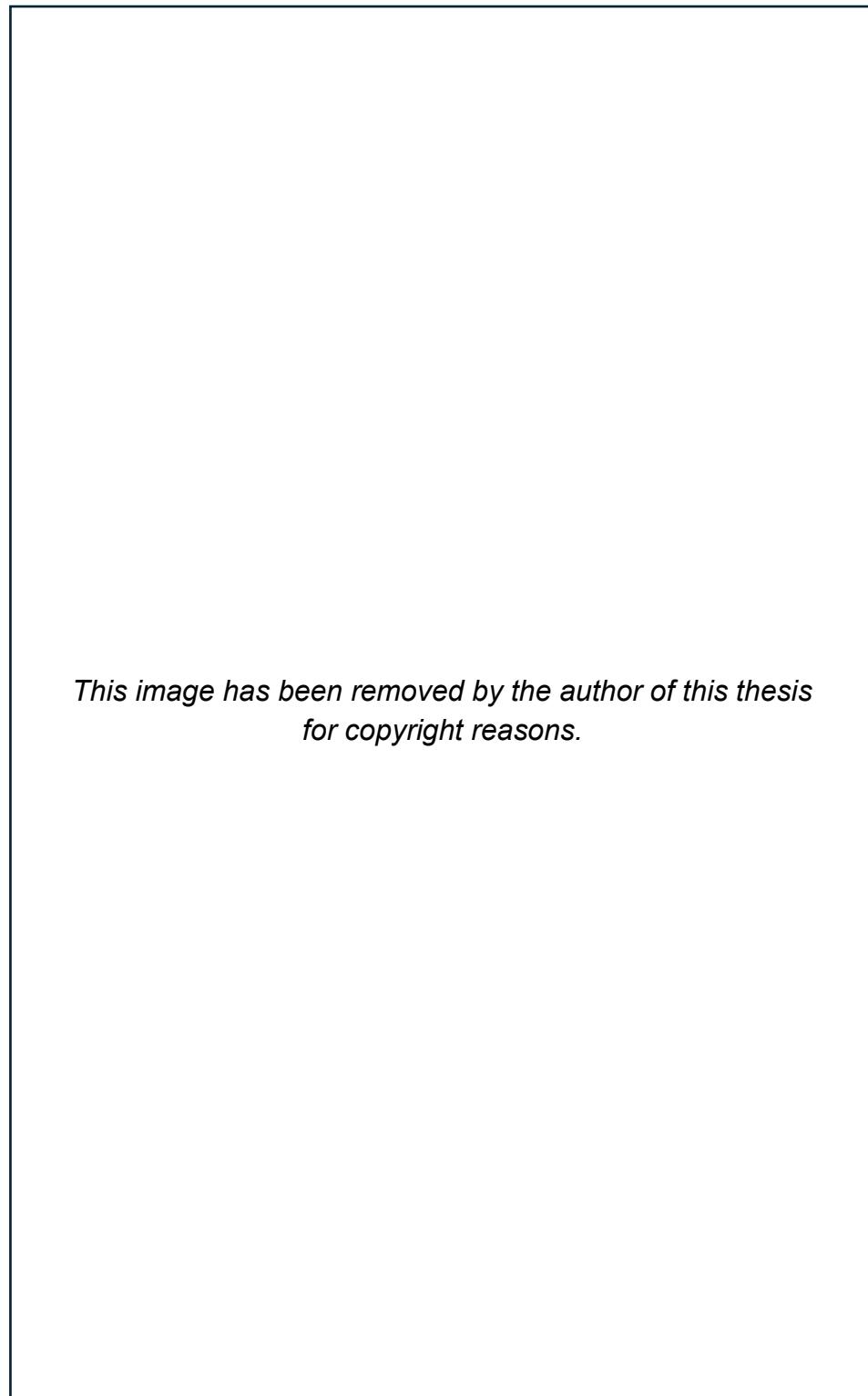


Figure 123 - Advertisement for the Co-operative Drapery Department, Albion Street, Leeds (and others). June 1942. *Leeds Co-operative Record*. [University of Leeds Library]. 65(7), p.120. [Accessed 18 January 2023].  
Available from: University of Leeds Library.

The changing nature of wartime clothing consumption patterns was further explored, on countless occasions, following the implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme some few months after Rationing. What the Scheme would mean for retailers, in quality of stock, in monetary recompense, in the impacts it would, without question, have on the trade in cloth and clothing, retailers were seemingly in no doubt about in 1941. A reflection of initial consumer misgivings over Utility clothing, and the Scheme as a whole, continual questioning and argument from inside the retailing trade shows perpetuation throughout the war of interrogation of the public-private collaboration necessary for the Scheme to work. Such themes will therefore be explored here, as reflected in analysis of the manufacture of cc41 cloth and clothing compiled in chapter four.

## **West Riding Consumer Utility Purchases**

The consumer as an individual imparts discernment to purchasing, and then subjects the garment itself to wear, and potentially, to adaptation (Mida and Kim, 2015, p. 16). It is therefore integral to consider the role of those purchasing Utility garments. Though objective to the researcher, phenomenological subjectivity in perspective centrally in consideration of the importance of the individual in experience and interaction may be applied to the engagement of the consumer and their relationship with the garment. When viewing the object, just reflection upon the possible use and wear must be given; this correlates with the understanding that conditions were reflected in adaptations which had to be made in the use of clothing. This was reflected even in the comical notion that “there may be some slight danger of an increase in the use of the coat sleeve where the best manners prescribe a handkerchief; but the promised economy is worth the risk” (The Times, 4 March 1942, p.5).

The relationship of the consumer with Utility clothing connects with the notion of quality. As discussed, the marked shift in how civilians engaged with their wardrobes during wartime was reflected in testimonies shared in Mass Observation. To explore further, individual contributions emphasised the

importance of quality, in fabric and fashioning of garments to ensure longevity. Citing the “trend towards better clothes, in quality” participants stated how changes implemented under wartime Austerity “have made me realise more than ever the need for simple, well-made clothes”, that “I shall always go for quality rather than quantity”, and how, in relation to design and construction “ I shall always strive to get as good cut in my clothes as I can afford” (Mass Observation FR 1669R.5, April 1943, p.4). Such considerations strongly tie to the aims of the Utility Clothing Scheme, in standardisation, simplification, and quality of product, features which the discerning consumer was ever more mindful of given the wartime climate.

Shops across Britain stocked a wide range of different pieces made and sold as part of the Utility Clothing Scheme. Objects held in local archival and museum collections reflect surviving examples of purchases made by individuals in the West Riding. While some can be pinpointed to have also been manufactured in the region, recorded donation notes reflect that they were certainly acquired in Yorkshire. The range of different types of garments and accessories are indicative of the wider picture of fashion at this time, as well as social expectations around dress and dressing. They also highlight the role of the Utility Clothing Scheme in accounting for these clothing requirements. As retailers held expertise and insight into consumer demand, different products remained in stock as part of the Utility clothing Scheme. Gloves were deemed an essential, not only in terms of styling and expectations for dress during the period, but also for practicality. Leather, alongside wool, was another area of processing recognised in the West Riding. Though the place of manufacture for this pair of leather gloved held in the Yorkshire Fashion Archive (YFA) is unknown, they are likely to have been purchased, and therefore retailed, in the region [fig. 124 and fig. 125].



Figure 124 - *Pair of Utility gloves*. ca.1941-1952. [Leather].  
At: Leeds: Yorkshire Fashion Archive. 1940-180.



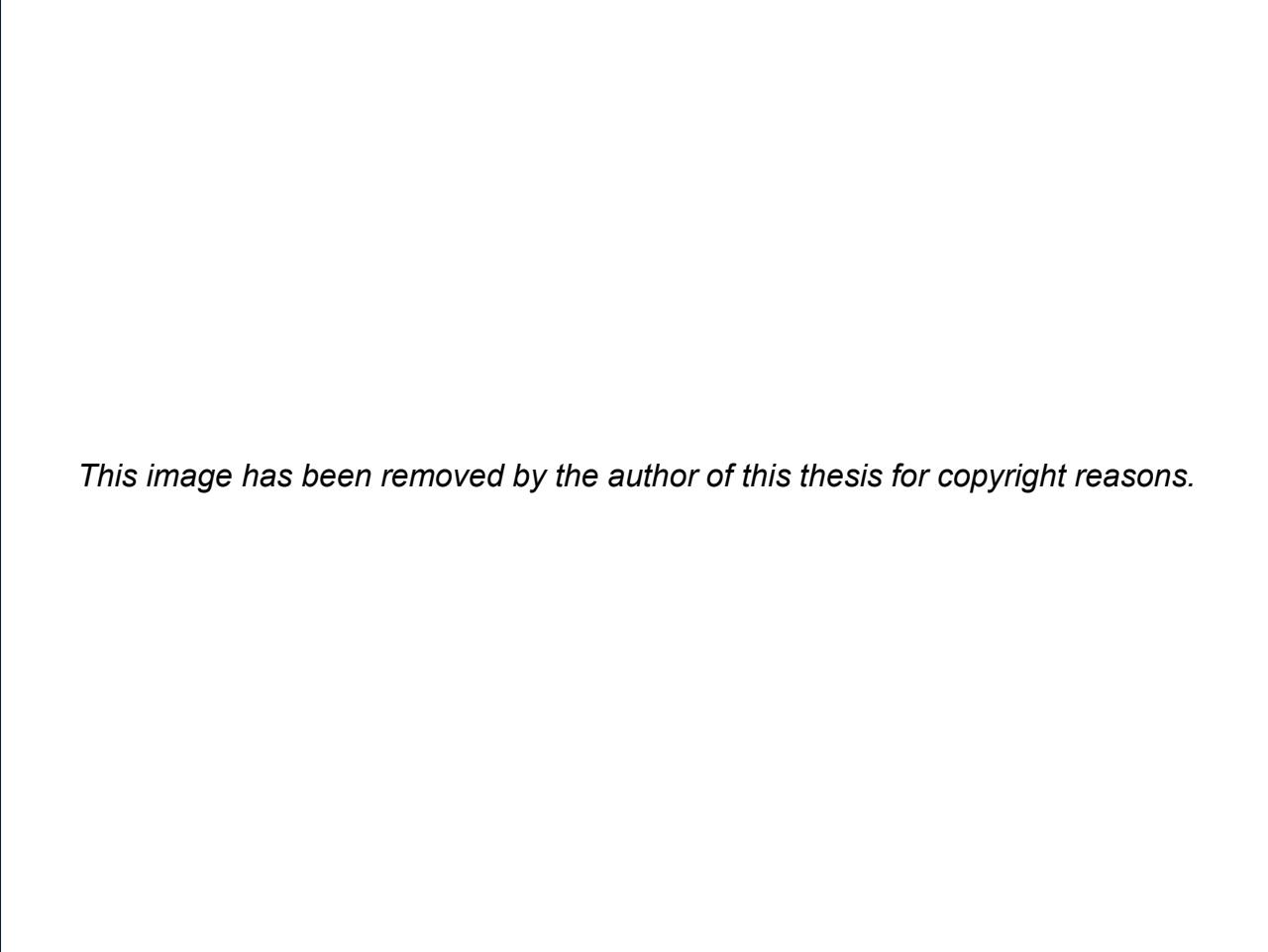
Figure 125 - Detail of cc41 stamp, pair of Utility gloves [interior]. ca.1941-1952. [Leather].  
At: Leeds: Yorkshire Fashion Archive. 1940-180.

When styled with a cc41 skirt suit, such as that depicted in figure 126, in advertisement of manufacturer by C & M Sumrie Ltd. of Leeds, the essential elements remained stylish yet simplified, correlating with contemporary consumer communications. Participant contributions to a Mass Observation survey considered the merits of the simplified tailoring of wartime, proposing “rationing and wartime trends have had the effect of making me more careful in choice of clothes and wear simpler styles”, something which another participant considered to have made them “grow fonder of plain clothes” (Mass Observation FR 1669R.5, April 1943, p.4), a styling trend which also proved to influence another contributor to suggest that they may also continue to wear more simplified garments after the war (Mass Observation FR 1669R.5, April 1943, p.4). Advertising for the suit points to its London address for wholesale requests by trade [fig. 126]. Though London was noted by some businesses as the point of contact for acquisition of product, others chose to highlight their historic connection to the north, in recognition of established manufacturing prominence.

In relation to leather goods, although shoes were not originally incorporated into the Scheme, there was call for their inclusion from consumers. Contributing to Mass Observation, Winifred M. Gill of 34 Moor Park Villas, Headingley, Leeds 6 commented “shoes particularly have advanced in price to a really outrageous extent, in my opinion, and I hope they will soon be included in the “Utility” scheme” (1 May 1942, p.1). The example pair of suede shoes pictured in figure 127 from the collection of Bankfield Museum, Halifax and originally purchased in the West Riding, testament to the range of Utility shoe styles produced. The breadth of styles particularly evident when considered alongside figure 128 a boxed pair of *Clarks* shoes, the shoebox itself [fig. 129] made-up of recycled materials in its construction [fig. 130] in order to follow recycling regulations limiting the use of paper resources.

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Figure 126 - Advertisement for *Sumrie* Utility skirt suit. November 1942. *British Vogue*.  
[University of Huddersfield]. November, p.8.[Accessed 5 May 2022].  
Available from: University of Huddersfield Library.



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Figure 127 - *Utility shoes*. ca.1942-1952. [Suede, leather, wood, and metal].  
At: Halifax: Bankfield Museum, Halifax. 2021.209.



Figure 128 - *Utility shoes*. ca.1942-1952. [Suede, leather, and wood].

At: Author's own collection.



Figure 129 - Shoebox [end view]. ca.1942-1952. [Paper and Card].

At: Author's own collection.



Figure 130 - Shoebox [lid and base]. ca.1942-1952. [Paper and card].  
At: Author's own collection.

## Cc41 and the Commodification of Collaborative Working

Collaborative working between private businesses and government was essential to the 'success' of the Utility Clothing Scheme. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1942, Hugh Dalton commended:

The constant cooperation which I and my predecessors have had from various elements with whom we naturally have to do so much co-operative work, the representatives of various sections of trade and industry, who have taken extremely well on the while and in very fine spirit indeed various most disagreeable Regulation which we have had from time to time to impose in the interests of the war effort (Hansard HC Deb., 23 July 1942).

The above comment drawn from a Parliamentary discussion on *Industrial Concentration And Retail Trade* contrasts with several different elements which highlight the variation between involvement of traders in the Utility Clothing Scheme and Dalton's positive sentiment on collaboration. For example, consideration of cost and resultant repercussions for profit proved a central element of contestation. Sladen (1995) refers to small business, and that "Utility profit margins were too slender to allow them to compete with the chain stores (although an editorial pointed out that on the whole it was better to have price controlled, Utility stock to sell than none at all)" (p.45) with reference to articles published in the Drapers' Record (Sladen, 1995). This was coupled with concern by retail and wholesale at the announcement of the Utility Clothing Scheme related to the effects this would have on "buying policy" for retailers, and the processing of coupons in wholesale (Drapers' Record, September 6, 1941, p.11). Such ramifications for retailing were universal. Regulation outlined that the sellers of Utility clothing had to comply with stipulated protocols of communication, another process in buying policy.

## **Ramifications for Retailing: Selling Utility Clothing in the West Riding of Yorkshire**

Through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, several businesses began to cater for those with lower incomes, but able to spend some of their earnings on consumer goods. Industry development widened access, through reduced prices and greater output. With this growing market in mind, Michael Marks established “Marks’ Penny Bazaar” in 1884. Michael Marks had sought refuge in Britain, escaping religious persecution in Russian Poland in the 1880s. Similarly to others who had come to Britain under comparable circumstances, Marks found himself in Leeds. Within the established Jewish community Marks grew his business, from working under license as a peddler, travelling through Yorkshire to sell goods, to setting up a stall in Leeds Kirkgate Market, the selling strategy Marks employed “Don’t Ask the Price, It’s a Penny” was one which would serve the business well through this initial expansion, and to its growth into covered markets and shops (Chislett, 2009, p.9). Such an overt statement on pricing proved immensely popular, drawing in potential customers through an inclusive marketing method.

Partnering with Tom Spencer, Simon, Marks’ son, and friend Israel Sieff in 1894, the business was reborn as Marks and Spencer (Worth, 2007, p. 11). Throughout the company’s growth, including the opening of Marks and Spencer’s first shop premises in 1904, adoption of countless new lines of product to retail, and business reorganisation, Marks’ initial customer-base, the working class, remained at the forefront of the firm’s focus. The emergence of a growing number of competitors, particularly influenced by similarly founded British ‘bazaars’ and the establishment of a number of stores by the American giant Woolworths, coupled with inflation resultant from the Great War, meant that the initial working model and pricing system of Marks and Spencers required revision in order to maintain the company’s position (Scott and Walker, 2017, p. 181).

It can therefore be understood that, as argued by Worth (2007), Marks and Spencer, particularly following the introduction of clothing to their stock in the

mid-1920s, products which would soon become staples of the firm, held a noteworthy place in access to new clothing in the early twentieth century (Worth, 2007, p.5). From the beginning of adding clothing to the range of goods for sale, Marks and Spencer saw this area of trade quickly grow to become increasingly popular. Alongside the business' prominence, chain store competition also informed the retailer's engagement with developments in textile technologies. Therefore, the position of Marks and Spencer within supposed democratisation also accounts for the prominent role the company held within the Utility Clothing Scheme, as a retailer, and also within the Scheme's development, enactment, and the alterations which were made to the restrictions of wartime manufacture and sale.

## **Marks and Spencer and the Utility Clothing Scheme**

As a trusted name with an established and flourishing garment retailing department, Marks and Spencer became one of the leading stockists of Utility clothing. Marks and Spencer was well placed to meet several of the aims of the Utility Clothing Scheme, particularly that of the company's market reach and enabling consumer access to affordable garments. Already with a representative of the company present on the supplier's committee advising the BoT on the rationing of clothing, as stated, matter contested by the editor of the Drapers' Record (9 August 1941, p.6), Marks and Spencer would become a central figure in the Scheme. The Imperial War Museum notes how Marks and Spencer aided the government in the development of specifications for cloth (Imperial War Museums, 2025, UNI 14386). Proven methods of working within the company cemented their position to advise.

Recognised for the quality and accessibility of their clothing range, Marks and Spencer have a strong connection with the retail of clothing for the masses. The manufacture of clothing for M&S was recognised by Sir Simon Marks in 1934 to be founded in "a right balance between variety and uniformity, for if uniformity makes for economy in production, it is variety which makes the appeal to the

purchaser" (Gillie, ca.1944-1945, p.84). The business acknowledged the need for standardisation to ensure prices remained low while also creating clothing which would meet with customer expectations, emphasising that "it is right the customer's freedom of choice should be respected" (Gillie, ca.1944-1945, p.84). This was emphasised through a range of methods, including display in shops.

As a retailer, the business used selling techniques such as clear and open price-point selling which aided marketability of goods; such practices were recognised in the standardisation of pricing for Utility clothing. This correlates with the prominent position which chain stores more broadly held in the wartime fashion economy. Certain elements of the Marks and Spencer approach to business were maintained through the war and even became a more prominent feature of their practice. Quality of cloth was assured to have been maintained through raising prices, distribution remained equitable amongst stores, and connections with British manufacturers had increased in the interwar years, meaning access to stock was maintained into the war. (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, June 1940). The latter also served another important role which corresponded with wartime associations of national pride; "the value of the "Buy British" policy which was increasingly followed by the Company before the war [was] most fully realised now when foreign sources of supply [were] no longer available" (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, June 1940, p.5). Assured access to supplies of goods was integral to Marks and Spencer's continued prominence as a retailer through wartime, despite changes to the clothes themselves, founded in wartime Austerity measures.

In a letter to Israel Sieff penned soon after the implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme (6 November 1941) Simon Marks remarked on the company's devising specifications for "good quality utility garments" suggesting that "there is no doubt that a catalogue of utility garments can be worked out at moderate prices" (Marks, 6 November 1941, CR/B/3/1/23). This suggests interest in creating garments which correlated with the requirements of the Utility Clothing Scheme by the business, as well as collaboration with the government.

However, though elements of business practice were incorporated within the Utility Clothing Scheme and access to goods through connection to manufacturers remained relatively stable, M&S shop staff encountered the impacts of changes to established systems. Economies were made through the reduction in the range of lines offered, distribution became more closely monitored, and prices were increased, removing the 5/- (five shilling) limit which the company had previously followed (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, June 1940). Despite elements of trading remaining relatively similar to those practiced before the war, changes to systems of working resulted in the need for communication regarding alterations to methods of approach. Accurate understanding of details including price and quality guarantees were identified as essential to sales assistants in customer interaction, particularly in wartime (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, June 1940, HO/3/2/2/3/10). Informed stockroom assistants, sales assistants, and merchandisers were integral to this process (Marks and Spencer Limited, ca. late 1940s, HO/6/1/2/1). Under the Utility Clothing Scheme, staff acted as intermediaries of a sort, connecting state and business with consumers. Marks and Spencer had established training for staff which ensured that information was directly communicated through methods of display and customer interaction. Different roles were integral to promotion and consumer understanding.

Though many changes were implemented which altered retailing in wartime, from Rationing and pricing to resource-saving means of display, the importance of window dressing, which had been established for several decades, continued to hold an integral place as a method of selling. The wartime street-facing display often prominently positioned national pride centrally, as shown earlier in this chapter. This was replicated within promotion of related wartime government schemes, including Utility. M&S also followed this practice, drawing custom from the street to their Marble Arch store in London with inventive advertising within the context of war [fig. 131]. The display, made up of jackets, shoes, and accessories, behind glass decorated with a marching band conductor figure, was depicted alongside text which reads “colour with a military air” (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, 1945, P1/1/201/2).

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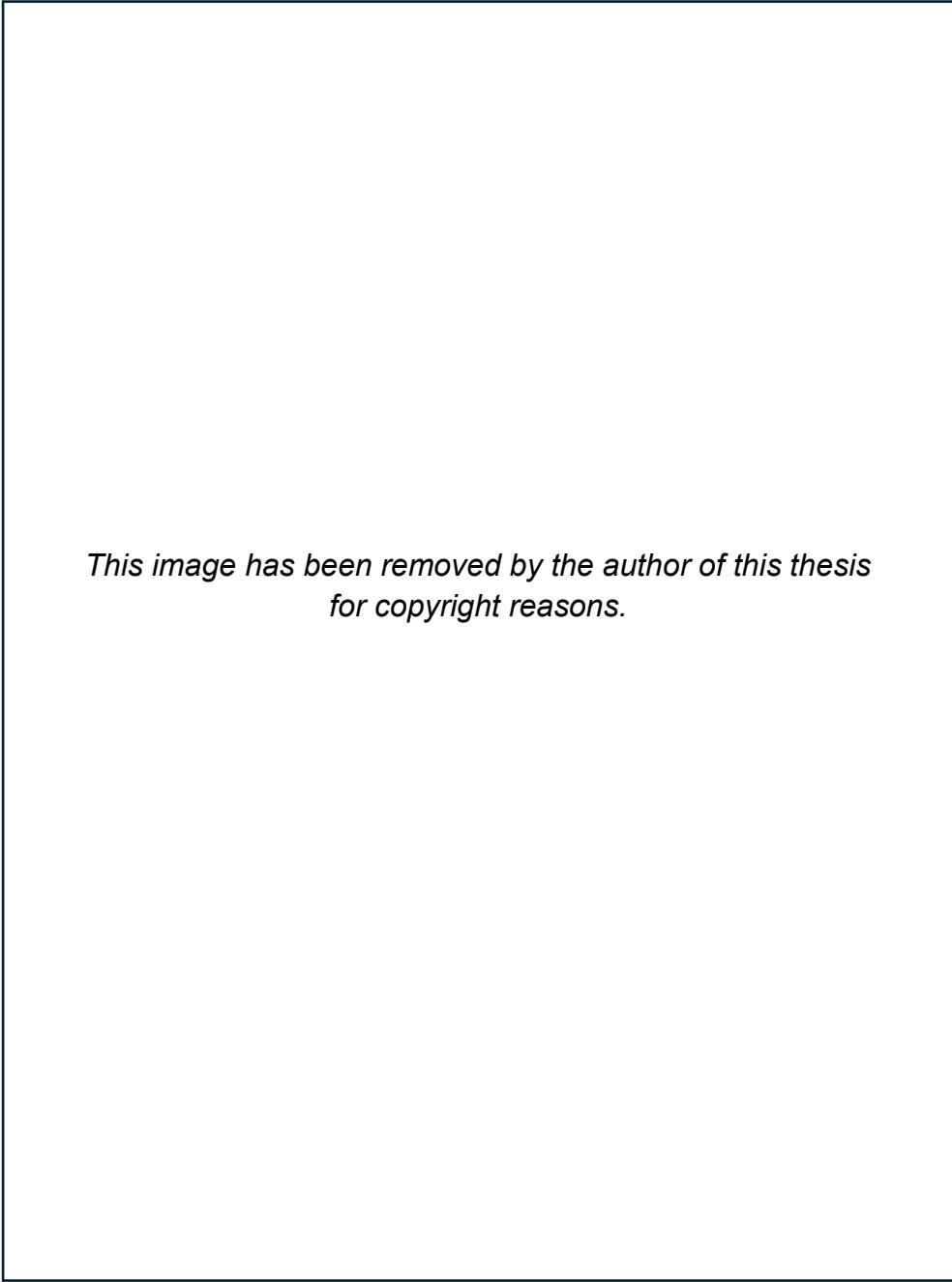
Figure 131 - *Photograph of Marble Arch store: Window Display*. 1945. [Photograph].  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive, Photographs of Marks & Spencer stores  
and Head Office buildings. P1/1/201/2.

Official imagery captured by the Ministry of Information Photo Division shows a shop display of Utility garments, created by Norman Hartnell [fig. 132]. Dated 1942 and distinctively bearing signage for 'Berkertex Utility frocks', these garments were presumably part of Hartnell's collection created for Berker Sportscraft Ltd. Though produced by a London-based manufacturer, and while the location of the retail outlet in which this image was obtained is unspecified, such a photograph demonstrates practice in retail display with particular focus on Utility garments. Displays in shops showcased the breadth of exciting shapes, styles, colours, and, though limited by wartime restrictions, decorative

application that could still be achieved in garment detailing. This sought to emphasise how attractive, and fashionable, Utility clothing was [fig. 132].

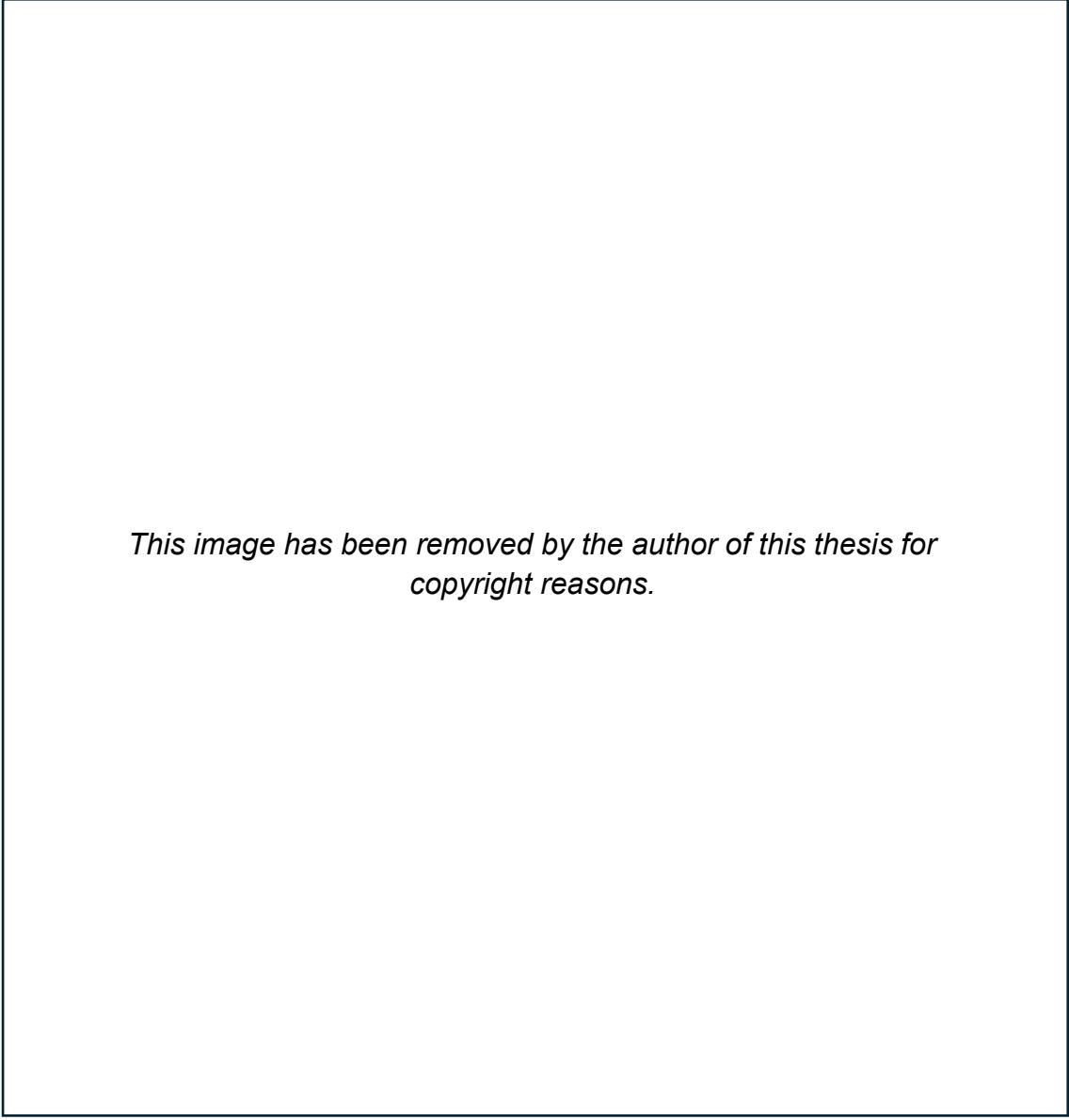
Inside shops, simple, clear means of communicating pricing met with wartime restrictions in areas such as the use of paper. Price was required to be clearly articulated to the customer, as highlighted in the pictured display of Utility dresses and skirts [fig. 133]. Such display of pricing or promotion through the use of paper display was also restricted. An “advertising window bill, advertising showcard or advertising display card” was not permitted to measure any larger than 100 inches square except for those created earlier than 14<sup>th</sup> September 1942, with any other form of advertising poster only acceptable having been produced before 12<sup>th</sup> November 1941 (Cooper, 1945, p. 28). Regulation, therefore, also stretched to retail display; pricing clarity was necessary, and savings were essential to materials used in such communication, namely, paper and card.

While the display of Hartnell garments pictured in figure 132 was clearly identified as Utility, figure 134 illustrates how Marks and Spencer incorporated Utility and non-Utility clothing into their stock without identifying the different garments in signage. In the foreground of the photograph, a display of various types of childrenswear is visible – cc41 labels affixed to wool jumpers and buster suits are clearly noticeable, with other garments such as winceyette pyjamas, also bearing the cc41 mark making up stock in the children’s clothing department (Marks and Spencer Company Archive, ca.1941-1952, ACC/23/044). As a ‘seller’ of Utility, another role of retailers like M&S was to ‘sell’ the Scheme to customers. Informed staff were essential to these different elements of selling, as was merchandising of displays. By incorporating different garments into their stock, with pricing and coupon value clearly identified, the retailer communicated the key messages of Utility. This played a mutually beneficial role to the retailer and the government; to maintain and even encourage consumption ensured sales, meeting with the aims of both the public and the private sector.



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Figure 132 - Display of Berkertex Utility garments by Norman Hartnell. 1942. *WARTIME FASHIONS: UTILITY CLOTHING*, 1942, Ministry of Information Photo Division  
Photographer, Ministry of Information Second World War Official Collection.  
At: Imperial War Museums. D 10727.



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Figure 133 - Ministry of Information Photo Division Photographer Jack Smith. 1943.  
*Photograph of Pauline Craske discussing a Utility dress with a department store assistant in London.* At: London: Imperial War Museums, Ministry of Information Second World War Official Collection. D 12269.



Figure 134 - *Photograph of shop displays*. ca.1941-1952. [Photograph].  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive. ACC/23/044.

## Marks and Spencer Objects Under Analysis

Objects, similarly, as evidence for analysis of manufacture, also serve an important role when investigating the histories of retail and retailing practice. When coupled with exploration of surviving documents, much can be ascertained about the impacts which the Scheme had on those tasked with selling Utility clothing. The *Marks & Spencer Company Archive* (M&S Archive) holds a vast collection of pieces from the retailer's history. To begin, this paper bag proves an interesting and important artefact which aids understanding of the period [fig. 135]. The bag itself represents wartime economies; encouragement of paper recycling during the war and in the immediate postwar period, as discussed in the case of the Clarks shoebox [see figs. 128-130, pages 365-367], highlights this object as a rare survivor.

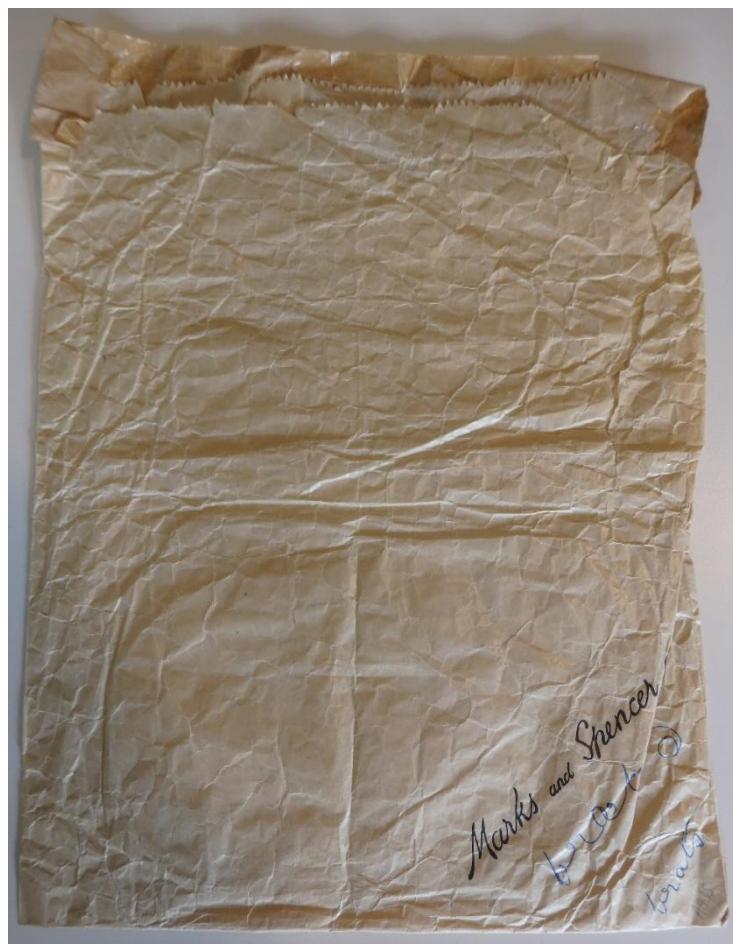


Figure 135 - Marks & Spencer. ca. 1941-1952. Paper bag. [Paper].  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive: T100/1/9.

Prior to the advent of the Second World War, a range of different men's shirt styles were retailed by M&S, a practice which would continue under the Utility Clothing Scheme in order to meet with consumer expectations. Short and long sleeved, with or without attached collar, day, evening, and sportswear shirts could be found at Marks and Spencer (Checking List Index, Textile Group: Men's Wear, 28 March 1939). Depending on style, as well as fabric used, these varied in price; a "Double-fronted Horrockses' Cambric Tunic, Striped" for example, retailed for 3/11, while a "Double-fronted Fine Twill, Tunic" fetched a price of 5/- (Checking List Index, Textile Group: Men's Wear, 28 March 1939).

Inside this St. Michael branded shirt [fig. 136], a Utility label affixed to the inside collar, bears the identifying number 302 included under the cc41 mark [fig. 137]. This indicates that the shirt is fabricated from "cambric or poplin shirtings, white, plain dyed or printed." for use in "men's or boys' shirts", according to the First List of Cloths (The Drapers' Record, 30 August 1941, p.16). The St. Michael shirt is woven in a striped pattern, providing detail. The width of this fabric type was woven at 36 inches, at a cost of 11d. net to the manufacturer (The Drapers' Record, August 30 1941, p.16). Sold with two interchangeable collars, a common retailing practice which made the most of the scarce clothing coupon allocation under clothes rationing, both collars feature the distinctive cc41 mark stamped centrally [fig. 138]. The striped fabric used would also be suited to wearing with a plain white collar, the likes of which being sold separately [fig. 139]. Such a method of selling sure to encourage consumer confidence in the Scheme, promoted with conviction by Marks & Spencer.



Figure 136 - St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. *Utility shirt*. [Cotton with plastic buttons].  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive: T1941/10.



Figure 137 - St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. *Detail of collar and branding / 'cc41' label, Utility shirt.* [Cotton with plastic buttons].  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive: T1941/10.



Figure 138 – St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. *Detachable collars (x2), Utility shirt.*  
[Cotton with plastic buttons]. At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive: T1941/10.

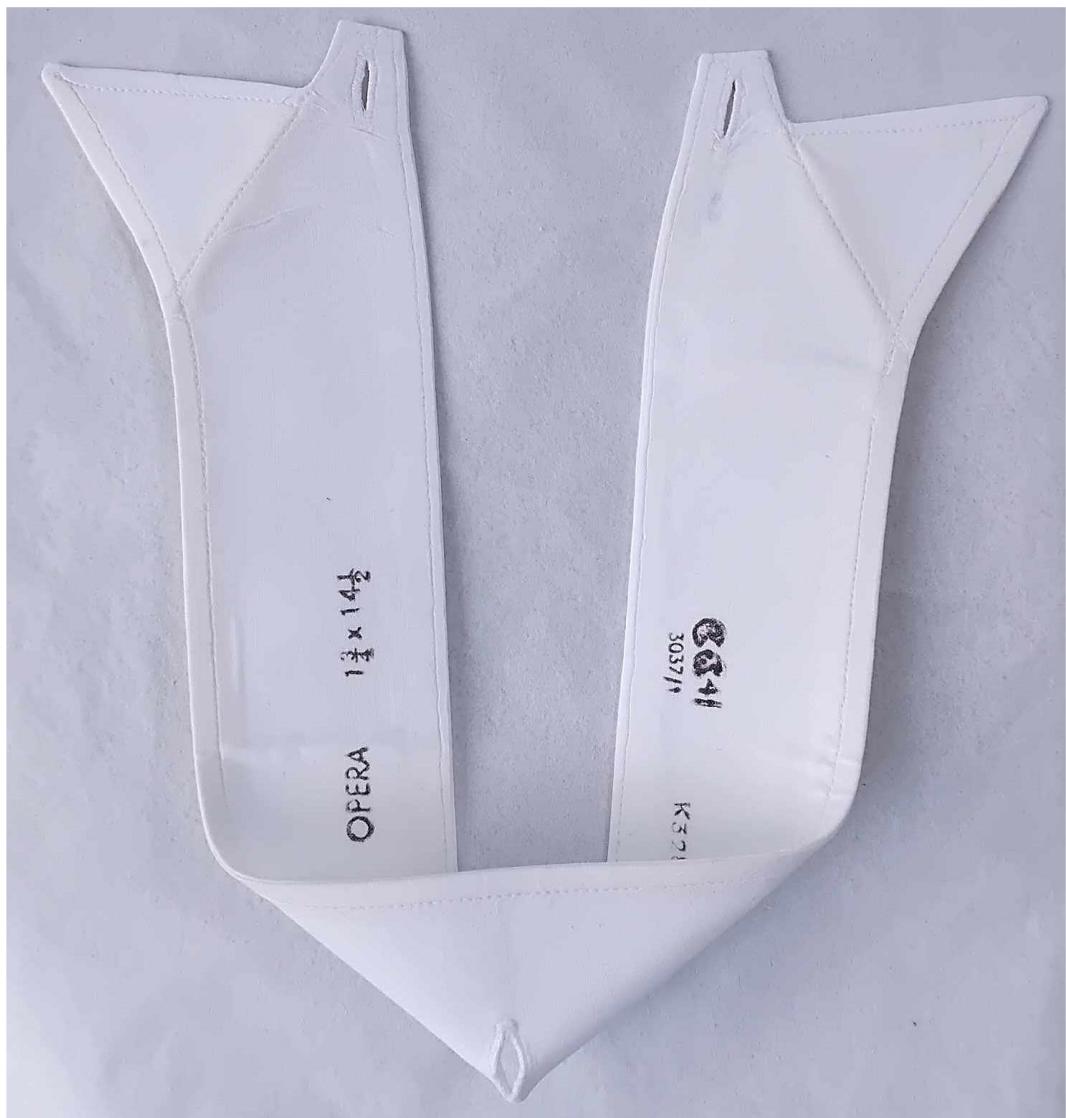


Figure 139 - *Utility shirt collar*. ca.1942-1952. [cotton]. At: Author's own collection.

In April 1942, Hugh Dalton announced a change to manufacturing which would “extend the scope of utility clothing” (The Times, 17 April 1942, p.2). In relation to men’s shirts, this meant that cuffs would become singular, and that the length of the shirt body was reduced by two inches (The Times, 17 April 1942). The fixed, singular cuffs on this M&S example show that it was therefore likely manufactured after the 1942 introduction of this specification [fig. 140]. Dalton suggested that the decrease in use of materials in men’s shirts, such as this M&S example, would result in a yearly reduction of 4,000,000 square yards of fabric as well as saving “the labour of 1,000 workpeople” (The Times, 17 April 1942, p.2). However, the selling of these changes to construction to established clientele would prove a task for retailers, as with the removal of turn-ups from trousers.

The use of packaging for this shirt is notable [fig. 141]. Throughout the Second World War, calls for saving of paper meant that going without paper bags to carry shopping as well as recycling were hugely important. The plastic and paper combination wrapping here shows that, despite the call to save materials, they were still used in several instances. Further research into this must be undertaken in order to ascertain the validity of this practice. In the case of the shirt covering, this has also served the purpose of preserving the garment prior to acquisition by the Marks & Spencer Company Archive. Inclusion of this object within analysis correlates with Pearce’s (1999b) connection of the object with time and place, in historical association. In relation to saving of material resource is evocative of the changing shopping environment of wartime.



Figure 140 - St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. *Detail of left-hand cuff, Utility shirt.* [Cotton with plastic buttons]. At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive: T1941/10.

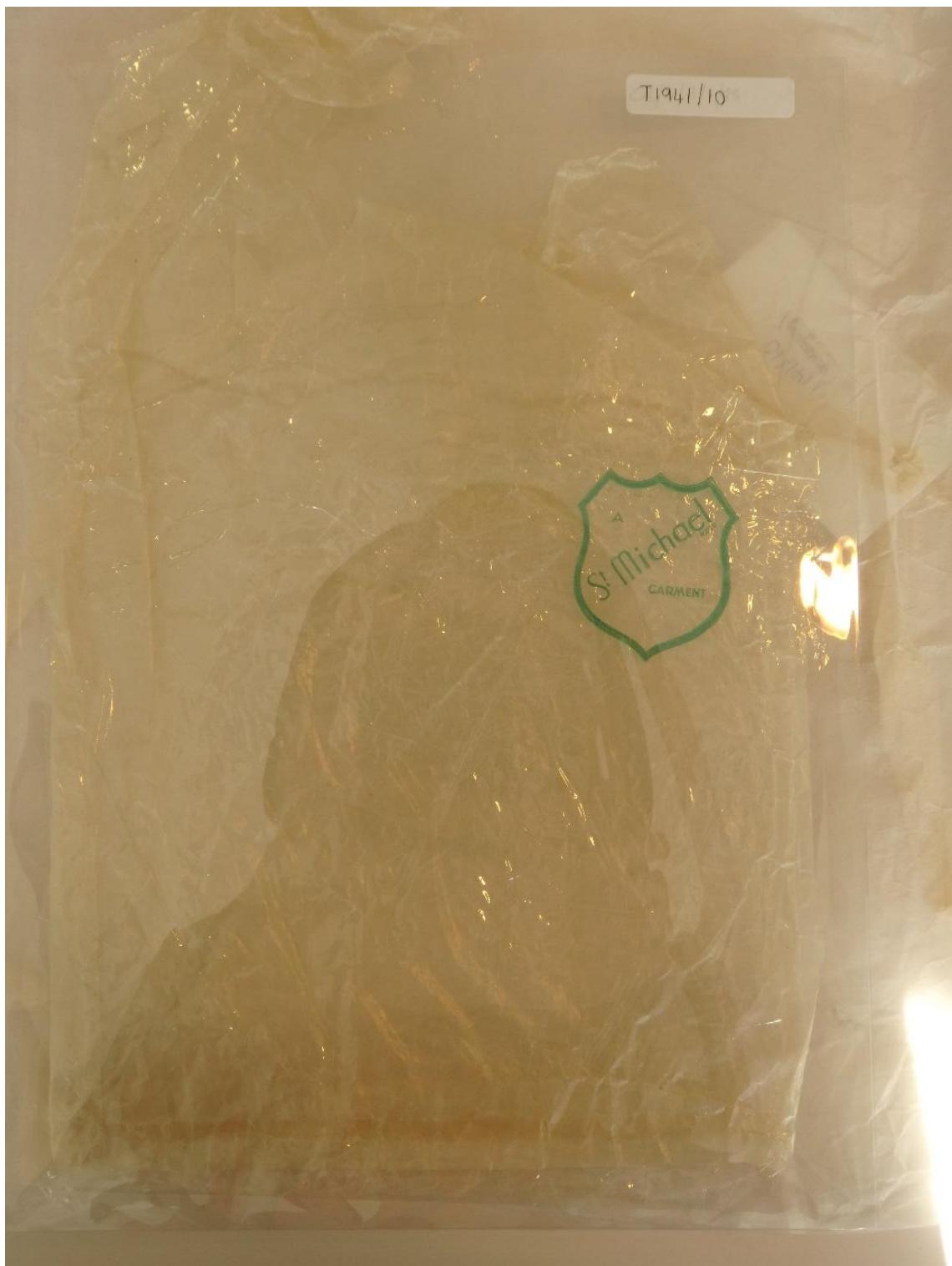


Figure 141 - St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. 'A St Michael Garment' packaging for Utility shirt. [Plastic with paper backing]. At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive: T1941/10.

In a report on the *Staff Position in the War Years* (ca.1944-1945), Staff Supervisor H. Gillie commented on the importance of “appeal to the eye” of garments suggesting “this differentiation can frequently be introduced in the final stages of production, thereby enabling the majority of processes to be undertaken on mass lines” (Gillie, ca.1944-1945, p.84). Through reducing the number of different lines produced and instead making garments in a range of fabrics, wartime regulations on design could be met while offering options to customers. T1941/48 and T1941/52 are exemplars of this practice. Both examples are Utility, and have comparable features, having been produced following the same pattern in construction. Produced under Marks and Spencer’s St. Michael label, these cc41 dresses both feature a large ‘Peter Pan’ style collar [fig. 142 and fig. 143; fig. 144 and fig. 145]. Additionally, materials which could possibly have otherwise been wastage were included as pockets [fig. 146 and fig. 147], and tie waist-belts. Both dresses have eleven plastic buttons to the centre front and are darted at the front and back of the bodice.

Despite the apparent similarities, there is differentiation between the two garments. These can be connected to production. For example, the pocket on T1941/48 measures nine and a half inches at its deepest point, whereas on T1941/52, this measure is eight and a quarter inches. Further, the tie-belt on 1941/52 measures an even one inch along the full length, whereas the belt of T1941/48 is uneven, undulating to vary between one and one and a quarter inches. Rolled hems and seams are also demonstrative of inconsistency in stitching and width. Available off-cuts of fabric and requirements of machinists may reason these disparities in mass manufacture; standardisation of processes did not account for individual practice. It also exemplifies the hugely influential human aspect of garment making, part of the ‘anatomy’ of each garment made (Prown, 1980, p.199) connected to construction of each of these dresses and the development of their individual and collective histories (Pearce, 1999b, p.19).



Figure 142 – St. Michael. ca.1941-1952.

*Collar, White and Green Cotton Utility Wear Dress with Foliage Pattern and Belt [front].*  
[Cotton with Plastic buttons]. At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive. T1941/48.



Figure 143 – St. Michael. ca.1941-1952.

*Collar, White and Green Cotton Utility Wear Dress with Foliage Pattern and Belt [back].*  
[Cotton with plastic buttons]. At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive. T1941/48.



Figure 144 - St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. *Collar, multi-Coloured Cotton Utility Wear Dress with Floral Print and Tie Belt [front]*. [Cotton with plastic buttons].  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive. T1941/52.



Figure 145 - St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. *Collar, multi-Coloured Cotton Utility Wear Dress with Floral Print and Tie Belt [back]*. [Cotton with plastic buttons].  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive. T1941/52.



Figure 146 – St. Michael. ca.1941-1952.  
*Pocket, white and Green Cotton Utility Wear Dress with Foliage Pattern and Belt.* [Cotton with plastic buttons]. At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive. T1941/48.



Figure 147 - St. Michael. ca.1941-1952. *Pocket, multi-Coloured Cotton Utility Wear Dress with Floral Print and Tie Belt.* [Cotton with plastic buttons].  
At: Leeds: Marks and Spencer Company Archive. T1941/52.

It can be understood from comparative analysis of the features of these two dresses that M&S approached limitations, in the number of different designs which could be produced and sold under Utility restrictions, through manufacture using the same pattern in a range of different fabrics. This offered variety to consumers at a defined price point – features of business practice at Marks and Spencer which, though altered to some extent to meet with government regulations, perpetuated at the firm. In this way, collaboration between retailers and government is exemplified. Large, chain stores, like M&S, were well placed to transfer to the requirements of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

Consideration of a range of sources held by the Marks and Spencer Company Archive indicates the value of a material culture approach to research. This relates to the collection itself (Riello, 2011), through the expansion of material held by the Archive overtime (Protheroe, 2005), as well as building understanding of Utility clothing manufactured for and sold by M&S during the period of investigation. It also connects to retailing practice. Each of these elements is indicative of the public-private business model of Utility, through which Marks and Spencer collaborated with the government to devise specifications for cloth and clothing, and methods of selling Utility garments. Collectively, analysis of materials, including garments as evidential source sites, furthers understanding of Utility clothing manufactured for and sold by M&S. The experience of wartime circumstances, under which Sir Simon Marks remarked “we are all well here and managing to live tolerable existences” (Marks, 17 January 1941, CR/B/3/1/17), influenced all areas of life.

## **Size Over Substance?**

As demonstrated, the shifting nature of production of clothing in wartime was reflected in alterations made to the practice selling of clothes. Utility had a marked influence not only in labelling, but also in pricing, and methods of promotion. Smaller outlets had closed during the Second World War in the years prior to the implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme, with results from the *Spending and Saving Survey for the National Institute of Economic and*

*Social Research* citing that in Leeds around 20 per cent of shops had shut down premises at the culmination of 1941, most of which being retailers of non-food products (*The Drapers' Record*, 23 May 1942, p.17). These were smaller, local outlets, with larger names recognised locally as well as nationally remaining integral to wartime selling.

A recurring area of contention within the trade was that of larger concerns involvement in government advisory committees, as an integral element in heightened competition with smaller independents. Concern raised by editors of *Drapers' Record* note smaller interests of the trade, that of the independent retailers and small-scale manufacturers. Prior to the implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme, where Marks & Spencer representatives were members of BoT advisory boards for both suppliers and retailers, the Editor of *Drapers' record* queried the validity of such affiliation, questioning:

To what extent is wholesaling or manufacturing carried on by M and S? In my view, it is neither right that they should be on the suppliers' committee nor that any individual big firm should have special representation on bodies composed almost entirely of trade association officials (*Drapers' Record*, 9 August 1941, p.6).

In this comment, the Editor gave due attention to the cause of the small independent, possibly foreseeing the future for such traders, as well as reviewing the legitimacy of such a retailer as M&S in their ability to advise in different areas of both production and sale. However, General Secretary of the National Chamber of Trade, Patrick Howling, stated the case for inclusion of the voices of independents within such boards and discussions:

Danger to-day, is cultivation of the idea among Government officials that the independent trader is not so essential to the community as those with close knowledge of the matter know him to be. There has been a tendency in recent years to recruit representatives of big businesses on official and semi-official bodies in advisory capacities. We want to see this curtailed. I do not think the small man is being adequately cared for in relation to the distribution of supplies.

Many MPs know the practical difficulties of the small man, but under our parliamentary procedure they have limited opportunities of raising issues. Parliamentary machinery should be amended to ensure that, before regulations are made, they will be examined and approved by special

House of Committees composed of members able to bring practical knowledge to bear (Drapers' Record, 23 August, 1941, p. 7).

Acknowledgement that the voice of smaller local traders was being overlooked, something also reflected in the acquisition of stock by these retailers, within the National Chamber of Trade highlighted multiple problems encountered by those selling clothing prior to the Utility Clothing Scheme's enactment. This was further explored in discussion of Concentration, which were commented on in relation to further exacerbation of these issues. Once enacted, it was certain Concentration, both voluntary and compulsory, would result in closure of both manufacturers and as a result, retailing concerns of a smaller output (Drapers' Record, 23 August, 1941, p.7).

A further dispute was that of ceiling prices placed on the sale of Utility garments. Retailers protested at the Drapers' Chamber of Trade Executive Council Meeting, objecting to the "iniquitous" nature of the capping of profits, citing resultant unfairness which the restrictions of selling Utility clothing placed on traders (Financial Times, 3 June 1942, p.3). In less than a year from the Utility Clothing Schemes implementation, calls were made for objection to be made to government due to financial implications, access to supplies, and impacts on trade and traders. Such debate demonstrates how contention was repeatedly founded nationally as well as locally.

As reported in The Drapers' Record (2 May 1942) the Retail Distributors Association and Drapers' Chamber proposed increases to prices asked for both cc41 cloth and clothing at point of sale. By anonymously answering the questionnaire *Operating expenses inquiry for retailers selling cloth and apparel*, trading year 1941-1942, which was made up of 65 different elements, the trade itself was able to argue their position (The Drapers' Record, 2 May 1942). The answers provided in the questionnaire were representative of factors such as number of employees, size and amount of outlets, and sales, for example. These reasons, were felt to be appropriate evidence to submit to the Central Price Regulation Committee, by those involved in selling Utility clothing and having chosen to contribute answers to the questionnaire (The Drapers' Record, 2 May 1942). Due to the active role of retailers and their representative

bodies, consultation with government, availability of goods, and restrictions, directives for profit margins and therefore maximum pricing fluctuated through the lifetime of the Scheme.

At the centre of these disputes, retail establishments continued to trade, countering the challenges of the wartime trade. One such outfitters was George Hall Ltd. Located in Huddersfield, the business' Cash Paid Book reveals several insights into their wartime stock purchasing and associated expenditure. Initially what stands out is the variety of different suppliers from which clothes were acquired – different manufacturers producing a range of garment types, ensuring the outfitters had the levels of product in store to meet the demands of consumers. Clothing makers including Wolsey Ltd. and Lister & Co. feature repeatedly within the company's records, highlighting the networking of George Hall with garment makers in the West Riding of Yorkshire (Geo. Hall, 1942, B/GH/16).

In addition to stock acquired from local manufacturers, the firm also recorded procurement of stock from other British manufacturers outside of the region, such as Berkertex Ltd (Geo. Hall, 1942, B/GH/16). With designer Norman Hartnell contributing several ranges to the Utility Clothing Scheme through work with Berketex, the interconnected working is exposed. Though it was proposed that "area trading restrictions" through "zonal distribution" (The Drapers' Record, 16 May 1942, p.7) may be enacted due to transportation of goods, due to area specialisation, this would prove distinctly difficult. Under such a move, some areas would have been excluded from being able to acquire clothing in the type and proportion needed, due to the scale of manufacture within different regions, for example, the West Riding and its mass manufacture, compared to London, with a large share of clothing production practiced in smaller workshop type settings (Riello, 2012). The Drapers' Record (16 May 1942) suggested such a move would not be practicable in actuality, due to limitations which would be placed on access:

... so far as Lancashire cotton goods, Yorkshire woollens and Leicester hosiery are concerned, the position might arise where these are distributed to warehouses in different areas according to local population

and coupon needs, retailers having to rely for made-up garments primarily on what is produced in their own districts (The Drapers' Record, 16 May 1942, p.7).

Government controls on the movement of goods within Britain would affect access to Utility garments. Within the trade, the argument for such a move was actively contested by retailers. Further, outfitters such as George Hall stocking Berketex garments is demonstrable of the fact that noted 'designer' goods were available for sale within the West Riding, along with the garments manufactured following the IncSoc patterns, for example.

In consideration of the small retail outlet and the impacts of the Utility Clothing Scheme, George Hall's Outfitters recorded its understanding of the Board of Trade's consideration of removing Purchase Tax from Utility clothing. This company considered this as "most UNJUST" in no uncertain terms, commenting that the removal of this additional cost would be enacted "before Retailers had reasonable time to clear their present stocks... and would be sure to reduce the company's profits by a very considerable amount ie – approximately £1,000 or even more on the years trading" (Geo. Hall, 7 October 1942, B/GH/3). The Utility Clothing Scheme was impactful on smaller traders, for whom retail turnover was comparatively much less than a chain store, such as in the case of Marks and Spencer. The position of larger stores to carry Utility, in defining parameters as well as in continuity of trade and resultant income meant, similarly to experiences within manufacturing, that chain stores held a prominent position.

## Longevity

The changes which occurred in manufacturing and retailing between 1939 and 1945 re-fashioned the textile trades, quantifying Cooper's (1945) assertion that, in 1945, even before the end of conflict, on the commencement of return of countless servicepeople from engagement in war work that "these men are returning to a new business world" (Cooper, 1945, p.1.). This homecoming

necessitated the publication of informational material for those returning to employ in retail. *Questions on Control*, an informational publication, produced by the Editor of the Drapers' Record, B. A. Cooper, reveals much about the longevity of the Utility Clothing Scheme through the post-war period, dealing with points of note deemed important to the returning retailer. In introduction, the questions posed were listed as:

- How may I price my merchandise?
- What exactly is Purchase Tax? To what goods does it apply? What is the rate? How does it affect my buying and selling prices?
- May I serve customers as in pre-war days? What about staff wages?
- What precisely are Utility products? How do they differ from articles that are not Utility?<sup>26</sup>
- What does Austerity imply?
- What have I to learn about coupons? (Cooper, 1945, p.1).

The inclusion of these queries, alongside detail provided within the publication, show the vast and varied knowledge required by those selling goods in wartime, not least those retailing Utility clothing. In relation to Utility, the Scheme is defined, in order to describe and reason its implementation, as well as its parameters, as summarised:

Its declared purposes are to restrict the rise in cost of living, see that wearing apparel and other goods are available at reasonable prices, under war conditions for people with limited incomes, maintain the closest possible control over manufacturing and selling prices, and secure a larger output with available machinery and labour (Cooper, 1945, p. 2).

Therefore, the justification of the Utility Clothing Scheme correlates with that of other government schemes, including rationing, make-do and mend. The rationale of the Scheme being by 1945 perceived as one not only for consumers, but also of huge benefit to industry and trade. This further exemplifies the resultant democratisation of fashion, through engagement of industry and trade with the Scheme's public-private business model.

The changing nature of the Scheme, which required response to many factors not least availability, demand, and resultant government restriction, extended to

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to note here that Utility furniture had by this time been introduced.

the maximum prices able to be charged for Utility garments by retailers at this time (as dated 1 April 1945, following revisions to the original 12 March 1945 publication due to implementation of BoT Orders) [table 17].

Promotion of Utility clothing continued in the vein of national pride connected to the war effort. One such tactic was to engage service personnel in the showcasing of the latest Utility designs – as seen in Utility garments modelled by members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1945. The WAAFs, engaged by John Lewis, acted as mannequins [fig. 148], as described in the original wartime caption which accompanied the images:

Different types of utility clothes were recently displayed to W.A.A.F. at an Aircraft Repair Depot in order to give the airwomen guidance on the type of Utility garments available, the prices, number of coupons required and the most essential<sup>27</sup> items for a basic wardrobe. Some of the W.A.A.F. themselves acted as mannequins in addition to the professional ones provided by John Lewis & Co. (Imperial War Museum, 1945, CH 15996).

Following the end of the conflict, several such drives instituted during the war continued, with some even expanded upon. Consequently, post-war fashion showcases such as the 1945-1946 *Théâtre de la Mode* produced miniature iterations of garments in order to avoid using large quantities of scarce fabrics to showcase an array of designs, inspired by fashion dolls of previous centuries (Ramzi, 2024). Liberation brought with it new design possibilities, through reduction of restrictions. However, within Britain, Clothes Rationing remained in place until 1949, and the Utility Clothing Scheme was only disbanded in 1952.

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<sup>27</sup> This is a typographical error on the item description gallery label, Royal Air Force official photographer. 1945. *Leading Aircraftwoman Sally Graham, R.A.F. Henlow, displays a grey wool mixture jumper suit with a contrasting collar.* [Gallery label]. At: Imperial War Museum, AIR MINISTRY SECOND WORLD WAR OFFICIAL COLLECTION. CH 15996.

1945, No. 184 (4d.)

Here are the permitted maximum retail margins on Utility apparel, added to cost price:-

	Per cent.
Domestic and industrial overalls, girls' pinapores and overalls ...	33½
Underwear and Nightwear, stockings and socks ... ... ...	33½
Men's, youths' and boys' shirts, neckbands and collars, and boys' blouses ... ... ...	37.94
Corsets and brassieres ... ...	42.86
Nursing uniforms and equipment –	
(a) Overalls (not being women's dress overalls), operating midwifery, and fever gowns and smaller garments ... ... ...	33½
(b) Other apparel including outerwear –	
(i) Men's apparel ...	37.94
(ii) Women's apparel, including dress overalls ... ...	42.86
Raincoats, oilskins, and waterproofed garments ... ...	37.94
Fur apparel (except sleeveless waistcoats) ... ...	50
Fur apparel, being sleeveless waistcoats ... ...	42.86
Gloves ... ...	42.86
Outer clothing (other than above) –	
(a) Men's, Youths' and boys' outer clothing and caps ...	37.94
(b) Women's and maids' apparel	42.86

(c) Infants' and girls' apparel and headgear ... ... ... 42.86

Braces ... ... ... 42.86

[NOTE: In respect of fur apparel, retailer adds his permitted margin and then adds the amount of Tax Paid].

Where the retailer's maximum selling price does not exceed 5s., he must round it to the nearest half penny; where it exceeds 5s., to the nearest penny. But he must not round it up to more than his permitted "ceiling".

*Alterations.* – When a retailer arranges to alter a Utility garment within three months from date of sale he must not charge (a) for a *ready-to-wear* garment, other than fur apparel, more than the actual cost to him such alterations, or 10s., whichever is the lesser amount; (b) for a *ready-to-wear* fur garment, the actual cost to him such alterations, or £1, whichever is less; (c) for a *made-to-measure* garment (fur or otherwise) more than one penny. All such alterations must be separately charged. A suit is equivalent to one garment.

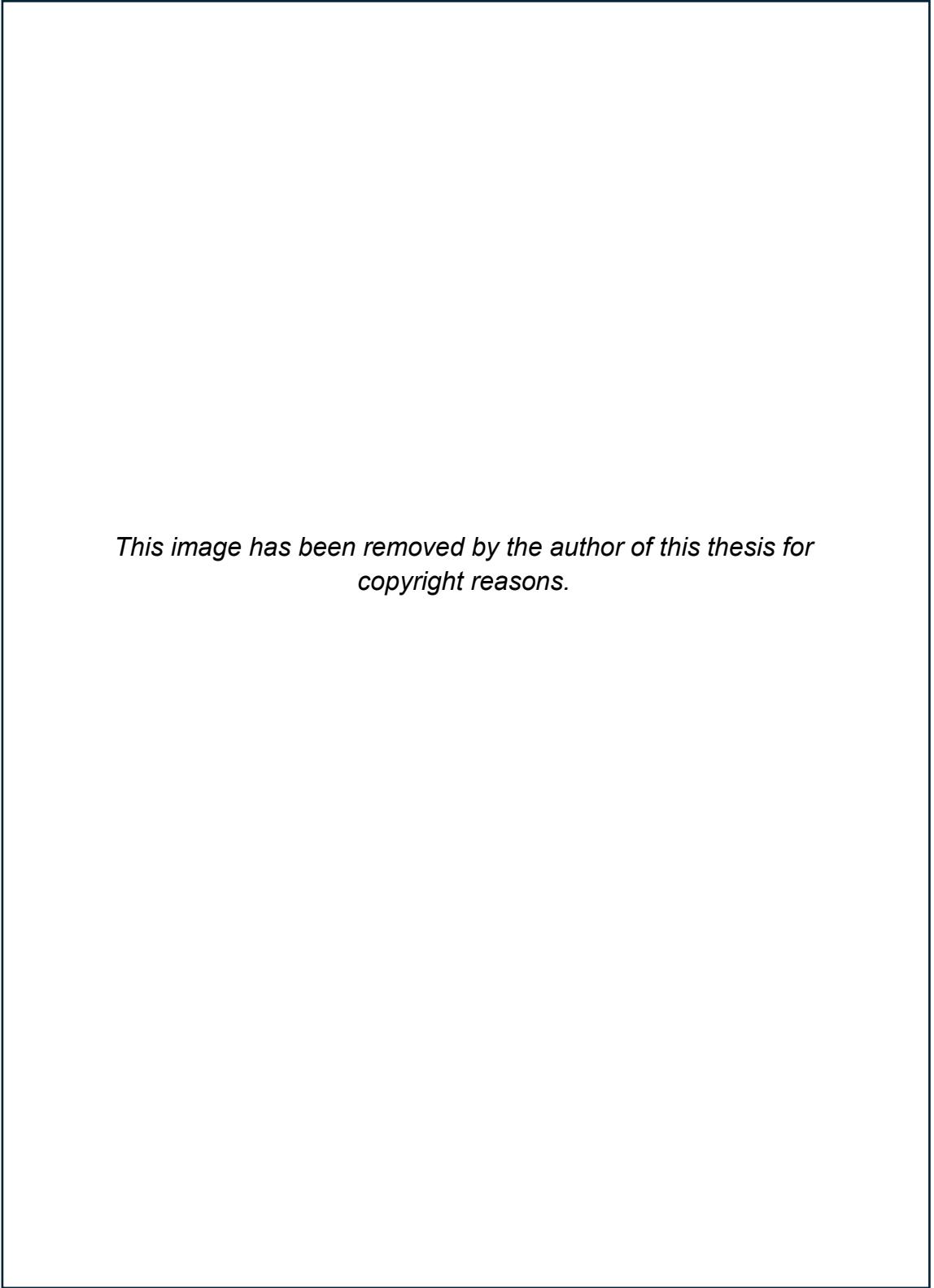
These are the Related Schedules (to 1945, No. 184) in force on March 12, 1945):

MEN'S YOUTHS' AND BOYS' OUTERWEAR (except knitted apparel and gloves): No. 1b (4d.).

MEN'S, YOUTH'S AND BOYS' SHIRTS, UNDERWEAR AND NIGHTWEAR (except knitted apparel): No. 2a (3d.).

WOMEN'S AND MAIDS' OUTERWEAR (except knitted apparel and gloves): No. 3a (4d.) and Supplement No. 1 thereto (2d.).

Table 17 – Facsimile table showing Maximum profit margins (percentage) for retailers of Utility garments, as outlined in Cooper, B. A. (1945). *Questions on Control: As it affects Retailers of Drapery and Allied Goods*. London: The Drapers' Record. [British Library]. p. 3. [Accessed 13 June 2023]. Available from: British Library. 8231.c.92.



*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for  
copyright reasons.*

Figure 148 - Royal Air Force official photographer. 1945. *Leading Aircraftwoman Sally Graham, R.A.F. Henlow, displays a grey wool mixture jumper suit with a contrasting collar.*  
[Gallery label]. At: Imperial War Museums, AIR MINISTRY SECOND WORLD WAR  
OFFICIAL COLLECTION. CH 15996.

## Chapter Section Conclusions

A range of different mediums were used to deliver messages during wartime. Print, film, photography, and exchange directly with and from retailers resulted in the creation of communicative tools evident of the politics of promotion of the Utility Clothing Scheme. Various mediums of dissemination were reflective of 'selling' the Scheme. A range of associated meaning was ascribed to Utility, which in turn was presented to consumers as well as makers and sellers of cc41 garments. Propaganda materials produced to articulate a joint cause drew upon national pride and collective identity as central modes of positive promotion. Under the PESTELE interpretive framework, these elements evidence the interconnectedness of the Political and the Sociocultural in the Second World War. However, these modes of communication were not always met with positive interpretation, for consumers, as well as within the trade. Retailing practices were in themselves altered by the regulations of the Utility Clothing Scheme. Contention, collaboration, and changes made to controls would mutually benefit industry, trade, consumer, and government. The retailer played an immeasurably important role within the Utility Clothing Scheme, as much as the Scheme itself altered selling strategies.

The exemplar case study of Marks and Spencer has demonstrated that, working in collaboration with the government, the techniques which had been implemented into the company's selling and came to define their practice can be seen within the Utility Clothing Scheme itself. Prior to the Second World War, M&S stocked ranges of garments produced in standardised lines. Into the War, Marks and Spencer was involved in devising and advising on the Scheme. Capping profit margins for retailers and controlling the prices at which Utility garments could be sold was a reflection of Marks and Spencer's clear articulation of the cost sought for goods from consumers, something which had been instituted within the company since its foundation. As a business founded on accessibility, clear articulation of prices, and innovative practices, these ideals became linked to the company's selling of cc41 clothing, which made up a range of different stock. Turning to Utility available at Marks and Spencer, these practices this fed into the company's approach to stocking cc41 clothing

in store, something which the company was quick to showcase. Customers were assured of confidence in the Utility Clothing Scheme through these associations.

Retailing practice reflected the standardisation which the Utility Clothing Scheme embodied; as shown in analysis, the active role of retail was apparent in both large and small outlets, reflecting through PESTELE the position of the trade within Technological, Environmental, Legal. Contention within the trade demonstrates that control was not ultimately achieved through instantaneous consensus in public-private collaboration. In addition, trusted businesses ensured that consumers were aware of regulations and the realities of standardisation. Shops, therefore, were essential in the successful implementation and adoption of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusions

The Board of Trade have no wish to adopt the role of Fashion Dictator. Indeed, fashions and the language of fashion no longer have a place in this war. The Board recognise, however, that the art of styling belongs essentially to the clothing industry and that encouragement of good styling is one of the ways in which Government can assist that industry (Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear, 29 May 1942a, p.354).

As exemplified within this thesis, the above quote taken from Tailor & Cutter and Women's Wear incorporates realities of the Utility Clothing Scheme alongside elements which have been questioned within this study and throughout the lifetime of the Scheme. Existing investigations of cc41 have accounted for ways in which the Utility Clothing Scheme impacted the wartime fashion economy. As demonstrated by this thesis, the role of manufacturers and retailers has often previously remained underrepresented. Where Sladen (1995) offers insight into the founding of the Utility Clothing Scheme, its receipt and promotion by the trade, and consumer reactions, debate from within government and industry remained underexplored. In contribution to knowledge, this thesis builds on extant debates. Expanding on existing historiography concerning the Utility Clothing Scheme, including the impacts of the Scheme on those working within the textile trades and industries, the application of a phenomenological approach to the study provides a positive addition to extant literature on the subject. In this way, by considering how, through the public-private business model which formed, the makers and sellers of clothing in wartime were connected to the Scheme. As a result, in contribution to the field of wartime research, this thesis demonstrates that compliance with regulations was not absolute.

Where the documented one-sided, top-down perspective offered within officially recorded legislation and parliamentary debate suggest control through

necessary regulation, this thesis accounts for the active voice of practitioners' integral to the making and selling of Utility clothing through other 'top' sources such as trade bodies and the trade press. It is also argued that those involved in industry and trade were, because of their agency as practitioners, also influential in the making and selling of the Scheme itself. Methods of evidence acquisition were founded in traditional historical investigative techniques used in combination with novel approaches particular to the dress historian, such as documentary research, visual analysis, and object-based research. When viewed in tandem through sociological interpretive perspectives, this has accounted for the underrepresented and underexplored aspects of the Utility Clothing Scheme to date, including research of under-utilised informational sources.

Centrally, objects were used to challenge hegemonic accounts of consensus and control, by demonstrating that collaboration between government, industry and trade was required to ensure Utility met with aims of clothing the population, securing the workforce, and making the most of available resources. Policy, production, products, promotion and purchase were formed and re-shaped through this partnership, which was necessary to meet consensus between the state and private businesses throughout wartime Austerity. The methods employed within the thesis and findings expressed contribute to the growing field of research and scholarship focussed on everyday fashion. Through approaching written records and cc41 garments held in local archives in combination, clarity on the types of Utility clothing being made in the West Riding has been gained. By utilising resources such as the Yorkshire Fashion Archive, a significant collection of material pertaining to the study of everyday dress, the experience of living through wartime is articulated. Connecting analyses in this way expresses active participation by manufacturers and retailers in discussions in which government directives were devised, developed and altered in-practice, prior to or following initial implementation. Further research would need to be conducted on how the public-private business model that formed under the Utility Clothing Scheme impacted on post-war textile and clothing manufacturing and retailing through into the 1950s.

In addition, value is also presented by this thesis in contribution to current debates on fashion practice. The narrative of supposed democratisation is not simple, particularly as the Utility Clothing Scheme represents an integral point in the mass manufacture of clothing. The juxtaposing nature of the Scheme is reflected in the benefits of standardisation, access, and saving material resources from which the postwar fashion economy of mass manufacture and consumption developed. Utility can therefore be argued two-fold - while wartime systems attempted to regulate production and consumption, mindful of sustainable developments within industry and trade, the Utility Clothing Scheme also marks the beginning of wide-spread mass-manufacture, ultimately serving as the turning point towards mass-produced 'fast fashion' as we now experience it. What can be taken from understanding cc41 clothing is the consideration of manufacture, of everyday dress, and present debates around sustainability.

Conversely, while holding personal attachments and links to identity and expression through dress, the role of the wearable wardrobe of the collector-connoisseur enables our wider relationships with clothing to be considered. Current changing relationships with clothing raise questions over industry and consumer practices. Wearing garments some 80 or more years after their original manufacture reflects the foundational elements of the Utility Clothing Scheme, as well as other wartime programmes. Connecting with present debates, the legacy of cc41 garment longevity in these ways serve as important lessons in how consumers can prolong the lifetime of their clothing; this can be in reflection of individual style as well as mindfulness towards sustainable wearing through the revival of practices such as Make-do and Mend. In addition, the fashion system may incorporate practices which serve to regulate for sustainability reasons, akin to how Rationing limited the use of materials due to wartime shortages.

The reasons for engaging in the study of the Utility Clothing Scheme were namely founded in existing literature, which draws on a chronological and oftentimes top-down view of cc41 clothing. There remained a gap in focus; therefore, this thesis establishes inquiry into consensus and control, through the defined public-private business model of the Utility Clothing Scheme.

Furthermore, popular press and regulations themselves are integral sources in these investigations. In addition, there is also underrepresentation of northern centres in relation to the Scheme, in making and selling Utility garments. Here, the intrinsic value of connecting the written record and the physical object has been emphasised through employment of theory and methodological examination. In consideration of the range of source types and methods of approach to the study, the identified frameworks of PESTELE and phenomenological approach have been explored and explained. By incorporating elements of the techniques by Prown and Pearce, outlined in chapter two, object-based research and material culture approaches to engaging with source materials exemplified how the involvement of makers and sellers of Utility clothing would be supported through examination of surviving garments and archival sources. This thesis therefore bridges gaps in existing literature by identifying new resources from which extrapolated evidence has challenged conceptualisations of consensus and control under the Utility Clothing Scheme.

As explained in chapter two, through application of methodologies including PESTELE via a phenomenological perspective, written records and period industry and trade publications, alongside private papers and unpublished letters have made visible perspectives on the Utility Clothing Scheme in this thesis. From analysis of the position of government and private business, during the time in which Utility through the Second World War, this thesis has argued for the relevance of collaboration. The need for the private and political realms to work together is apparent within written records, through parliamentary debate and in trade papers. Evidence has been presented to support reflection on the true nature of the Utility Clothing Scheme as a physical embodiment of wartime consensus and control through collaboration.

As a marker, the cc41 label was easily identifiable and indicative of the detailed elements outlined by the government. However, along with this marker came individual and collective interpretations. In this way, the politics imbued within the Utility Clothing Scheme encountered active debate throughout its lifetime. In understanding the Utility Clothing Scheme, reasons for the Scheme's

implementation along with the role of textile goods in the wartime economy were considered. Parliamentary debate presented in chapter three juxtaposed interpretations of the Utility Clothing Scheme amongst politicians, and official Acts and Orders served to establish grounding for later interpretation of industry and trade engagement with the state. What was integral to the reasons behind the Scheme – regulating industry and standardising production and sale, and, as a result, establish equality of access – were demonstrable of the need to collaborate. By contributors working together, through communication and collaboration to meet consensus, the Scheme was enabled, in both theory and practice, to work.

Though some of the case studies employed within this thesis encompass large businesses which have been explored through other lenses of investigation in existing studies, examination of such histories within the thesis concentrates on the Utility Clothing Scheme. Alongside these larger firms, smaller makers and sellers, as well as localised independents have also proved central to analysis. As a result, the manufacture and sale of cc41 clothing have been brought to the fore. This is exemplified through focus on the makers and sellers of cc41 garments in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The richness of archival material demonstrates the position of the West Riding in the manufacture and retail of Utility clothing, a previously understudied area. Through exemplar analysis of practice of the West Riding founded in object-based research, the thesis bridges the gap in existing historiography. By positioning cultures of creation centrally within analysis, this regional investigation accounts for northern business and enterprise, having considered the role of contributions of locally-based businesses within the wartime fashion economy, an area, to date, which has been overlooked. For example, though histories of manufacturing within the region in the periods surrounding the Second World War have been charted, what has been previously overlooked is the role which area specialisation played in the Utility Clothing Scheme, areas explored within chapter four of the thesis. Fabric makers such as Rowland, Mitchell & Co., woollen manufacturers of Huddersfield and their ties with mass tailor Montague Burton Ltd., connections within the region produced garments which maintained popularity through cc41 lines. Innovative practices by firms such as Montague Burton Ltd.

reflected the clothing needs of the population in garment making and selling knowledge which was reflective of the needs of Utility clothing production. Such networks were present throughout Britain, with regional variation. In this way, the West Riding of Yorkshire is recognised as a notable centre for the manufacture of fabrics and finished garments, centring on wool cloths and tailoring.

Making sure that Utility clothing followed fashion was important to its success. The impacts and influences which wartime had on clothing – such as in the wearing of uniform, of practicality in style – were mirrored in approach to design, manufacture, and promotional methods of civilian clothing. These features illustrated that despite restriction, regulation, and standardisation, the clothing made, sold, and consumed as part of the Scheme could still be desirable. Business practice reflected public consciousness through active participation in refashioning industry and trade under the Scheme. In shaping the politics of promotion, how the Scheme worked in practice ensured that the central aims of efficiency and control of limited commodities and resources in a war economy justified the need for Utility. In this way, the central role of participants in making and selling Utility garments is posed in further analysis within this thesis. While chapter three sought to outline the fundamental elements of the Utility Clothing Scheme, chapters four and five alluded further to some of these debates. The hegemonic conceptualisation of the Utility Clothing Scheme as a marker of consensus and control has therefore been tested through breaking-down narratives of democratisation, the politics of production and promotion, and understanding everyday fashion.

However, challenges posed from businesses, as well as the consumer public, question ideas of passive engagement. Instead, the actuality of working to the regulations of the Scheme, and, in turn, present the experience of living under wartime restrictions. Consideration of Mass Observation contributions within chapters four and five suggest public unease in some areas. In order to ‘sell’ the Scheme, and dampen misgivings over the notion of standardisation, a range of governmental strategies were employed. A major move, presented in chapter four, was collaboration with the Incorporated Society of London Fashion

Designers; association with leading names in clothing design sought to connect ideas of high-end quality with Utility clothing, demonstrating that cc41 garments were far from a civilian uniform.

The West Riding of Yorkshire as an established centre of manufacturing industry and retail traders proved important to business' involvement in the Utility Clothing Scheme. From the natural environment to political engagement, as well as the types of products and methods of manufacture employed in the locale, alongside prominence within the tailoring trade, evidence was presented in the thesis to centrally position the study of the connection of West Riding manufacture and retail with cc41. Weaving both light and heavy cloths, mass manufacturing tailored garments, as explored through chapter four, within sections one and two, and retailing them in association with these connections in mind, demonstrated in chapter five, developed consumer recognition alongside ability of practitioners was integral to producing and selling Utility. The unique networks similarly played an important role in the ability of regional practice. Established communication and collaboration, specialisation, textile cultures, and connections within the fashion economy of the region presented several opportunities for the contributions of the West Riding to the Utility Clothing Scheme.

As highlighted in chapter four, the methods of manufacture and products of the West Riding were integral to the Scheme. The mass scale which was an area specialisation meant that makers of Utility cloth and clothing could turn their production to the requirements of the Scheme. This accounts for the 266 of the 1,006 clothing manufacturers being Designated Clothing Factories, selected to make Utility clothing. Supporting evidence illustrates how cloth and clothing makers contested many of the regulations implemented by the Board of Trade, not least Designation itself, under which smaller practitioners felt overlooked. Trade body representatives were central in arguing the case of manufacturers of fabric and finished garments. For example, though assisting in many different instances, on one occasion the Woollen and Worsted Trades' Federation contributed on behalf of makers-up who were lacking in fabric resource due to Designated firms receiving cloth as a priority, despite fabric manufacturers not

having a contract with these firms. This served to provide General Licenses under Order No.777, therefore shaping regulation through active engagement and challenging controls.

Through analysis of surviving garments known to have been produced in the West Riding, investigation of pieces within chapter four, for example, those made by Montague Burton Ltd., Thomas Marshall Ltd., Alexandre Ltd., and Shibden Valley Textiles Ltd., the breadth of different manufacturing outputs of the region was exposed. Each of these pieces raised questions over the strictness of regulations. Through the lens of the economies of the fashion industry, exploration of garments alongside written documents and elements of existing historiography challenged the idea that manufacturers and retailers passively accepted controls expressed by the Utility Clothing Scheme, and that adherence to regulations was debated and therefore quite different to in practice. Uneven hems, possible lack of application of a cc41 label, application of buttons and vents, to name but a few findings from garments themselves demonstrate this position. These elements raised questions over the level of standardisation which was in place and posed questions around whether the changing nature of employ could be one of the reasons behind 'quality' of output. In addition, standardisation also resulted in the need for consumers to alter garments themselves, challenging the accessibility of Utility garments as suitable for the whole of the population.

To further understand the politics of promotion and the role of retail, consideration of dissemination was integral to analysis presented in chapter five. From propaganda and mass media to window dressing and the role of retailers' direct engagement with the public, photographs and surviving garments from the period proved to illustrate how different methods were engaged with to 'sell' the Scheme. Though notions of national pride were central to many elements of messaging, from within the trade, interpretation of regulations contested elements such as profit margins. As posed within The Drapers' Record, the cc41 mark was considered "That Objectionable Symbol" (20 September 1941 p.10). Changes to consumption in wartime were shaped by state involvement in private business. Arguments presented by the trade,

therefore, needed to be addressed by the Board of Trade in order to counteract negative perceptions, which could have potentially been passed on to customers. Individual interpretation by consumers was evident within Mass Observation recording, offering the government additional insight into perspectives. Therefore, a range of collaborative tactics were employed to engage individuals and businesses with the Scheme.

The case of Marks and Spencer formed central analysis of chain-store participation in the Utility Clothing Scheme, alongside consideration of smaller retail outlets located in the West Riding, within interpretation of the public-private business model and retail presented in chapter five. For M&S, the Scheme proved to correlate with many of the company's longstanding retailing practices. As a central figure in what Worth (2007) deemed the democratisation of fashion, the Utility Clothing Scheme seemed well suited to the established way of working of M&S. The company was involved with the supplier's committee advising the Board of Trade, though contested by other retailers due to the size of the business and status as a chain store, this integral role within the Scheme reflects the customer base of Marks and Spencer and the relation of this to Utility clothing. Despite the continued success of M&S through wartime, other retailers based in the West Riding had vastly different experiences. The impacts of ceiling prices on incomes, reduced access to goods, and shop closure resultant from such wartime economies were all presented by committees and representational bodies. It must be stated that, consensus and control, then, proved to have a range of impacts on retailers in the context of the wartime economy.

Approaching industry and trade offered wider insight into the Utility Clothing Scheme. Through social and geographic study, more focused understanding of the work and perspectives of the West Riding industries and trades. Research value presented in findings sourced within contemporaneous documents and through analysis of extant garments articulated the necessity for collaborative working to ensure that businesses were able to practically apply regulations. Though the Utility Clothing Scheme may be conceptualised through the collective experiential gaze of control and conformity in creation and access, it

must be acknowledged that regulations were not necessarily adopted and accepted with immediate effect. The active argument of industry and trade, as well as consumer, is central to understanding the challenges and changes made to regulations. By connecting source materials, arguments for the position of the makers and sellers of cc41 garments brought the role of industry and trade to the fore. As a result, orthodoxies that consensus and control were guaranteed were challenged by this study. In this way, reading evidence gathered from documentary and object-based research has demonstrated that the communicative and collaborative function of the public-private business model of the Scheme shaped and altered directives to align with requirements of manufacture and retail through collective consensus. Businesses themselves were involved in devising specifications for the Scheme, incorporating established methods of mass manufacture into the making of Utility clothing, communicating with the public, and offering feedback to government, through formalised means as well as in debate from within, to alter regulations to better suit ways of working.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

This thesis highlighted studies of manufacturers and retailers involved in making and selling Utility clothing and the methods employed to do so. Communication between industry, trade, and government emphasised the need for collaboration to reach consensus. How garments conformed to regulations was speculated through methodological application, which led understanding of material culture through associated research of documentary sources.

Archival collections have provided significant contributions to this study. Notwithstanding this, what must be considered is the potential wealth of further information that may be contained within these holdings. This may be represented by new materials currently covered by date embargo or 'closed' status, as well as material which has not been evaluated or recognised within this application

due to parameters of methodological inclusion and exclusion. This includes both primary documentary and object-based resource.

As this thesis centred on building understanding of the immediate impact of cc41 between 1941 and 1945, in relation to the public-private collaboration between business and government, room remains for investigation into evaluation of the physical changes to garment making. Further research through comparative analysis of garments created in the period immediately prior to the implementation of the Utility Clothing Scheme could give further in-depth understanding of the level of change to manufacturing processes which the Scheme adopted. In addition, future research focussed on the period following the end of the Second World War through to 1952, when the Scheme finally concluded, could demonstrate the changes in regulations and the public-private business model. Continued Austerity and, conversely, gradual improvements to availability of resources would explain the erosion of the Utility Clothing Scheme and how this affected control and the practice of industry and trade.

Policy, Production, Products, Promotion and Purchase have exemplified the major aspects of the first four years of the Utility Clothing Scheme. These five components have guided analysis of the collaborations between the government, and cloth and clothing manufacturers and retailers. Through wartime consensus, which steered an evolutionary path of controls to meet the demands of Austerity, the needs public morale and government compliance were aligned. Within an environment of conflict, both symbolic and belligerent, engagement with industry and trade were met with shortage of economic, material and human resources. Consequently, the interaction between these elements has shown the necessity of communication through the public-private business model. This collaboration developed controls through consensus to meet the aims of the Utility Clothing Scheme between 1941 and 1945.

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## Maps

Map showing clothing manufacturing sites located in the Little London area of Leeds (1930). 1:2,500, British National Grid (EPSG:27700). ©University of Edinburgh.

Map of Yorkshire, depicting areas with manufacturing sites identified on the *Board of Trade Apparel and Textiles Order, 1942 Designated Clothing Factories List*. Colour is indicative of number, with locations containing manufacturing sites implied by encirclement. Map taken from Mee, A. 1941. *The King's England: Yorkshire, West Riding*. London, Hodder and Stoughton Limited.

Detail of map showing Halifax Piece Hall (labelled "Market Hall" and Borough Market (1930). 1:2,500, British National Grid (EPSG:27700). ©University of Edinburgh.

Detail of map showing Huddersfield Cloth Hall, highlighted in red. (1890). 1:1,800, British National Grid (EPSG:27700). ©University of Edinburgh.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix One – The West Riding through Manufacture and Retailing Histories**

Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries industries and trades associated with the textile and clothing industries intensified. A range of textile specialisms – from raw material processing and dyeing to cloth weaving, tailoring, dressmaking and clothing manufacture more generally – can be connected to different geographic areas. In the fabric and finished garment industries, specialised focus on certain articles of cloth and clothing were cemented as key to the West Riding through the nineteenth century. While the historic West Riding is most commonly associated with wool and worsted fabric production and garment tailoring, producers located in the area had established a reputation for the manufacture of a variety of different consumer goods, as well as having an important role in devising and developing the machinery used in the production of such consumables (Cookson, 1997). The various textile-related industries of the region were testament to the position and reputation of practitioners of the West Riding.

### **Area Specialisation**

Throughout Britain, the number of centres specialising in a variety of different textile products grew in number and size through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Each of these locations experienced an increase in population density, and geographic area which were particularly notable. Industrial development which occurred in Britain meant market reach expanded further on established national and international links as that seen in the buying and selling of textiles carried out under the British East India Company, for example (Erikson, 2014). Trading bridging import and export from Asia, Europe, and

America intensified, with raw materials, textiles, and finished garments exchanged on these markets on a wider scale (Zhang, 2021). Resultant imitation and nationalism, and technological advancement developed to a scale previously unseen. Where the system of domestic manufacture had been in place for some centuries prior, the emergence of new-found consumer goods and emerging markets in the eighteenth century altered manufacturing to encompass a wide range of innovations. Emergent technologies included mechanisation in the textile industry. Development of new and innovative textile technologies – including machinery for raw material processing, invented for combing and spinning – meant that the scale of production resources significantly increased to meet demand within the home and overseas markets (Clayton, 1962). Spinning, weaving, and sewing were founded in the spinning jenny (Hargreaves, originally conceived ca.mid-1760s) and spinning mule (Crompton, 1779), the flying shuttle (Kay, patented 1733), the harness attachment, the powerloom (Cartwright, patented 1785), the Jacquard loom (Jacquard, first demonstrated 1801), and a range of iterations of the sewing machine (with origins to Saint, ca. late eighteenth century), amongst others. Machinery evolved from 'hand' operated to powered, and therefore enabled workers to oversee several weaving looms simultaneously, as a result, increasing output.

The advancement of textile producing technologies also resulted in a substantial shift in the architecture which housed cloth manufacture. The cottage industry, with home production, grew from manufactories housing only one or two operatives, to mills, both small and large in scale, employing many hundreds. The re-structuring of textile production and the move to increasingly urban centres to meet technological change and be closer to transportation concerns, coincided with a culmination of population movement. Towns and cities grew to engulf outlying villages in order to accommodate population shift through the growth in manufacturing; urbanisation a key feature of increased industrialisation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Clayton, 1962). The increase in the number of businesses which aimed to exploit new fashion-based markets was no different in the West Riding of Yorkshire to other centres, such as Lancashire, where, as Smail (1999) draws reference to, "...the most

important development in the Yorkshire wool textile industry in the first half of the eighteenth century was the emergence of relatively large-scale manufacturing concerns" (Smail, 1999, p. 2-3). This industrial progression continued throughout the century, growing further over the next hundred years to cement market prominence for the region in fine woollen and worsted cloth production, as well as in tailoring (Honeyman, 1993).

Gregory's (1982) argument that the West Riding held 'supremacy' over its competitor regions in the production of woollen cloth can be attributed to several factors, including geographic location and interconnectivity as a result of that location. This interconnectedness was a key differentiating feature that enabled producers based in the West Riding to overtake competitors previously chiefly centred in the West Country and East Anglia (Gregory, 1982). With an interlinked number of rivers, and a developing system of canal networks, the West Riding was well connected to other centres for trade. Further access to abundant natural resources including coal and water, which were essential for textile production, further secured the West Riding as a site of prominence (Gregory, 1982, p.48), and the area was recognised as a key trading point due to these distinct features.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the role of travel and business networks, migration, trade and industry, and market forces must be acknowledged as cementing the longevity of the West Riding of Yorkshire in its prominent position. Lower wages and lower living costs provided impetus for manufacture to be carried out in northern counties (Gregory, 1982). So too did access to raw materials and trading centres close to sites of production (Gregory, 1982); as the output of fabric on newly developed machinery was much greater than on earlier looms, access to increased quantities of unprocessed materials such as wool was essential (Clayton, 1962). As a result, the "labour-surplus economy" (Gregory, 1982, p.49) of the eighteenth century West Riding cemented its market prominence through specialisation associated with these distinctive elements of the county. Other features elements included interconnected business networks and migration, to be discussed below. Gaining of such manufacturing eminence was facilitated by these defining features, which

enabled the placement of production focus onto local, national, and international consumer demand, which Gregory (1982) links to the need for lower-cost woollens from around the middle of the eighteenth century.

Several scholars on the subject of the transformative landscape of fabric and finished garment production of Britain, including, for example, Gregory (1982), Hudson (1986), Shell (2014), and Smail (1999) have cited developments in textile technologies through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These are considered alongside the concurrent fashionable transitions which occurred in the early decades of the twentieth century, as explored by Honeyman (1993 and 2011), Jenkins and Ponting (1982), and Tragenza (2023), amongst others.

Yorkshire more widely shares a border with Lancashire, another county recognised for its textiles, although in cotton rather than wool. Geographically, “Yorkshire’s proximity to Lancashire partly explains the ease with which the technological advances in cotton were transferred across the Pennines and adapted for use in the wool industry” (Fowler, 2016, p.238). Sharing, imitation, and transferal of processes and practices was a common feature of textile manufacture. The nature with which processes of production were adopted and adjusted through technical alteration were testament to the skill, capability, and market demand of Yorkshire’s woollen manufacturing industries (Fowler, 2016). Though employment rates at the different sites varied, established sites grew, longstanding buildings were converted, and new mills were erected from the late eighteenth and through the nineteenth century across centres including Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, and Leeds, as well as surrounding locales (Jones, 1994).

## **Retail in the Riding**

As well as being a centre in the manufacture of fabrics and finished garments, the long history of textile production in the West Riding is mirrored by that of selling and exchange. Expansive sites for the retailing of both fabrics and

finished garments had been present throughout the county for some considerable time before becoming more formalised, through developing into recognised areas for both wholesale and retail trade during the eighteenth century.

As the eighteenth century progressed, so too did the emergence of sites for trade in the county. Cloth halls increased in number and scale across the West Riding, marking the area as an essential wholesale trading centre in Britain (Gregory, 1982) into the twentieth century. Re-shaping the environment, the development of industrialised settings and sites for trade on a wholesale level, numerous Cloth Halls were established throughout the West Riding during the eighteenth century to account for the various different textiles produced across the county. These included the Bradford Piece Hall which was erected 1773, and the early eighteenth century Halifax Cloth Hall which was accompanied by the Piece Hall in 1779 [map 3].

Completed in 1766 was Huddersfield's Manufacturers' Hall [map 4], Leeds had both a White Cloth Hall and Coloured Cloth Hall, the latter opened in 1756, and, as already mentioned, in 1776 Wakefield's Tammy Hall opened, replacing an outdated Cloth Hall. Traded in these halls were a plethora of fabrics; the White and Coloured Cloth Halls of Leeds being quoted by Gregory to have "...dominated the woollen trade" (Gregory, 1982, p.115).

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Map 3 - Detail of map showing Halifax Piece Hall (labelled "Market Hall" and Borough Market (1930). 1:2,500, British National Grid (EPSG:27700). ©University of Edinburgh.

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Map 4 - Detail of map showing Huddersfield Cloth Hall, highlighted in red. (1890). 1:1,800, British National Grid (EPSG:27700). ©University of Edinburgh.

Analysis of the White Cloth Hall, established in Leeds in 1711, located in the Kirkgate Lees area of the city, shows that this site alone served an essential role of exchange and trade in white fabric, known as undyed cloth. Prior to 1711, trade in fabric was conducted in Briggate. Surrounded by warehousing and across the river from the Aire and Calder Dock on the River Aire, the White Cloth Hall's central location in the city and prominent feature as a point of trade (Captain Tucker, 1850). Building of the New Cloth Hall in 1755 was testament to the thriving trade being funded by traders of the area as was its forerunner. In addition, two further Cloth Halls were situated in the centre of Leeds in 1775 and 1860, the longevity of prosperity evident from these developments and the time between. Construction of these central trading sites proved to acknowledge further the situation of manufacturing in city. These factors highlight the prominent position of Leeds as a forerunner in both the making and selling of textiles, as an example of the foremost importance of the West Riding more broadly.

*Kelly's Directory of Bradford and Suburbs* (1936) illustrates the changing trading landscape of the locale. Citing that prior to the creation of Bradford's Piece Hall in 1773, the White Lion inn was the trading place for manufacturers of the area, the Directory notes that each cloth producer had their own "closets, which they locked up from market to market." (*Kelly's Directory of Bradford and Suburbs*, 1936, p.xiv). It is also important to recognise here that the trade at this time remained relatively small, until the growth in Bradford's "resident merchant" population between c.1824 to c.1870s, which expanded in this period in large part due to the founding of connection and trading sites with businesses based in Germany (*Kelly's Directory of Bradford and Suburbs*, 1936, xiv). With the export trade established alongside a flourishing home market, products including worsted cloths, as well as unprocessed wool, tops, and woollen yarn cemented the position of Bradford at the heart of the West Riding's fine fabric trade (*Kelly's Directory of Bradford and Suburbs*, 1936).

## **The Political Riding**

Radicalism in search for workers' rights is reflected strongly throughout global history. Politicisation through social connection of united courses led to many collective politically founded movements over the centuries. The West Riding of Yorkshire was one region where such collective action was prominent. Navickas (2009) suggests that elements of the physical geographic environment were key tangible and symbolic contributors to the West Riding's united efforts of protest. The nature of the region's environs, namely moorland and open ground surrounding increasingly urbanised centres, served the purpose of providing the space for coming together. This was particularly important following the implementation of legislation to prevent mass gatherings in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Navickas, 2009), but also in the use of open land having additional gravitas to the collective consciousness of the local workforce. In this sense, such connective action was removed from embedded, and possibly divisive and dividing, structures which could have impacted upon such gatherings should they have taken place in alternative surrounds

(Navickas, 2009). Open meetings within the town and city setting had the capacity to generate an overall potential for riots. Conversely, the surrounding natural environment of the region therefore served as a physical embodiment of rebellion and enabling gatherings in secret.

As demand for textile products increased, and machinery developed to cater to this, handloom weaving was exchanged for machine weaving throughout the country (Clapham, 1906). Unrest within the textile industry grew through the foundation of technologies which reduced the number of workers required to work through mechanised means. Luddism challenged these advances, and was particularly identifiable by unique regional elements. Collective action in the West Riding was founded on the work of 'croppers', cloth dressers, working with the finest woollens (Binfield, 2004). In the late eighteenth century, the croppers formed an industry body which represented their arguments to Parliament, which fell to more fervent violent action in the early nineteenth century (Binfield, 2004). Unlike other locations embracing Luddism in their textile industries, such as the Midlands, "the rhetoric of Luddism in Yorkshire appears to have been more violent" due, for the most part to "the cloth dressers' prior experience with trade unionism and with methods of legal and forceful negotiations, and from the existence of an available legalistic discourse that could be used to advance some of the cloth dressers' claims" (Binfield, 2004, p.49). Consequently, following the Luddite movement of the nineteenth century, industries became more organised, and committees were founded to advocate for their members (Clapham, 1906). Such collective action, it has been argued, remained less formalised throughout Yorkshire until the early twentieth century (Fowler, 2016).

Fowler (2016) points to the impacts to acquisition of raw materials through importation, as well as exportation of fabrics and made-up pieces; these were felt throughout British manufacturing centres due to the First World War which played a central role in making unionism more official in the region (Fowler, 2016). By this time, Yorkshire had transitioned to the use of mostly British raw materials and British consumption, with a production focus of home rather than international markets by this time. Effectively, therefore, this enabled industry collaboration and unionism to progress, and was represented in the Wool

Control Board (Fowler, 2016). Collective action, linked to concerns over import and export, therefore reflected the establishment of formalised representation which was achieved through collaboration to promote consensus. Labour-centred trade union movements are illustrated in the numerous trade representative bodies and associations relating to a wide range of manufacturing.

## **Contextual Conclusions**

Through manufacturing a range of different types of cloth and clothing, each area of Britain was recognised for the uniqueness of its practices, which had its basis in globalisation, migration, technologies, unique networks, and political characteristic of that locale. This was no different for the West Riding. Initial interpretation placed geography and environmental factors prominently, in connectivity through canal and rail, and access to raw materials. In addition to this, several other contributing factors enabled practitioners of the region to contribute to a developing market. It is clear that the establishment of distinctive industrial practices in the creation of cloth and clothing in the West Riding held influence. Grown through specialisation, localisation, immigration, and industrial capability and adaptability, these diverse features positioned the West Riding as a market leader. Ideas developed in the county pertaining to fabric manufacture, in tailoring and the clothing making-up industries, and within retailing, proved to shape the British market in multiple ways, particularly in the early years of the twentieth century. The number of different trade representative bodies and associations present in the region can be attributed to the varied and specialised nature of the West Riding textile manufacturing industries, synonymous within localities. Each of these factors cemented unique business enterprise cultures which were a marker of the West Riding's heterogeneous nature in practice.

It can be seen from the long-established links with textile and clothing manufacture, particularly the expansion in industry from the eighteenth century

onwards, that the West Riding of Yorkshire was well placed to contribute to the Utility Clothing Scheme in a variety of ways. The scale with which the West Riding's manufacture was operating from beginnings in the eighteenth and through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – in processing and manufacturing, through to wholesale and retailing – set the scene for producing Utility clothing. Quality, durability and affordability, coupled with style in the finished cloth and garment came from ingenuity, and knowledge of the craft, enabling the manufacturers of the county to contribute not only products but knowledge of best practice to achieve these elements. With grounding in production and consumer requirements, collaboration with makers and sellers based in the West Riding would influence Government regulation and practice throughout Britain.

## Appendix Two - Designated Clothing Factories List

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Figure 149 - Board of Trade. 1 June 1942. *Board of Trade Apparel and Textiles Order, 1942: Designated Clothing Factories.* [Leaflet]. At: Kew: National Archives. BT 64/861.

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