Constructing the Affluent Citizen:  
State, Space and the Individual in Post-war Britain, 
1945-79 

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Abstract

This thesis is about the post-war British state’s use of space to organise society and to manage the individual in ways which have been largely ignored within post-war historiography. The thesis shows that the state’s power over the physical fabric of everyday life was deployed in a manner, and in pursuit of objectives, which demand a reassessment of the ways in which the relationship between the state and society in post-war Britain is conventionally understood. Space was used in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways, but state actors evidenced a persistent desire to restructure the physical environment in order to construct normative models of the citizen-subject, to enable new modes of wealth creation, and to disrupt and marginalise unwanted places and practices. Crucially, the thesis argues that state spatial interventions were often used to construct and privilege a model of the citizen-subject as a consuming individual. The thesis focuses on state intervention in four aspects of social experience: shopping, personal mobility, domesticity, and employment. In each case the study shows that reorganising space was viewed as a key tool of government, and was deployed in order to service and manage perceived socio-economic needs. The thesis demonstrates that spatial reordering had identifiable social consequences—spatial projects were not simply indications of the aspirations of governing elites, but reconstituted the material conditions in which a whole range of social, economic, and cultural practices took shape.

The thesis argues that historians have not found adequate ways of integrating the structuring force of space into their analyses of socio-historical processes. The focus of much recent historiography on the agency and identity of the individual is in danger of overlooking the ways in which social and cultural practices are constrained, shaped, and managed by external factors. This thesis particularly engages studies of post-war consumerism, where the inventive cultural practices of the individual consuming subject have been emphasised at the expense of interrogating how consuming habits were managed and organised by the state and commercial actors. A central claim of this thesis is that, through spatial reorganisation, state actors regulated mass consumerism in the interests of ensuring a continued economic base for deindustrialising cities facing an uncertain political and financial future.

This thesis also makes a concerted effort to overcome disciplinary divides, and to demonstrate the value of empirical historical research in testing and revising theories developed in adjacent disciplines. Within urban geography, sociology, and contemporary urban studies, characterisations of the post-war, Fordist, Keynesian, welfare state have been used to construct an influential narrative of epochal social, political, and cultural change across the second half of the twentieth century. An inclusive, collectivist, and redistributive regime is widely understood to have been radically transformed from the late-1970s into a neoliberal, entrepreneurial, consumerist, and individualistic polity. This thesis uses empirical historical research to produce conclusions which challenge this narrative of epochal political and social change.
Declaration

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Introduction

At first glance, the role of the state in post-war Britain, and the collective endeavour it represented, seems clear. In both popular memory and in many academic accounts, the three decades after 1945 emerge as a period in which social democracy flowered, and the relationship between state and society is located squarely within overarching narratives of post-war collectivism, political consensus, Keynesianism, and welfare.¹

The notion of ‘the welfare state’ dominates any effort to conceptualise the British polity after the Second World War, with its familiar associations of support ‘from the cradle to the grave’, and of a new social contract which guaranteed the wellbeing of each individual member of the nation.² In academic narratives this picture of the state’s role in society is evident in conventional modes of periodising post-war Britain. Martin Pugh’s history of twentieth century Britain, for example, groups the years from 1940 to 1970 under the category of ‘consensus: the age of the benign state’.³ In popular histories and cultural memory, the welfarist model of the post-war state is evident in accounts such as David Kynaston’s Tales of a New Jerusalem, or, more polemically, in director Ken Loach’s 2013 film The Spirit of ’45 which presents a triumphalist picture of post-war collectivism.⁴ Despite revisionist political histories which have questioned ‘the myth of consensus’, and the extent and durability of post-war collectivism,

¹ The classic historical account here is Paul Addison, The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War (London, 1975), but more recent works, for both academic and popular audiences, are often framed in similar terms. For examples, see David Kynaston’s multi-volume series, Tales of a New Jerusalem; Peter Clarke, Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-1990 (London, 2004); or the contributions to Jonathan Hollowell (ed.), Britain Since 1945 (Oxford, 2003).
² See, for example, Rodney Lowe’s characterisation of the years from 1945 to 1975 as the period of ‘the classic welfare state’, Lowe, The Welfare State in Britain since 1945 (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 79.
⁴ Kynaston’s multi-volume series is ongoing and published by Bloomsbury. Loach’s documentary film was released in 2013 by Sixteen Films.
understandings of the role of the state in post-war society continue to be organised
around welfare provision, and the character of state intervention is constructed as social,

There is, however, another dominant narrative of post-war Britain, one organised around
affluence and mass consumerism. In this story of social and cultural progress,
liberalised social attitudes and the offerings of a consumer society provided citizens
with new opportunities for individual advancement, self-expression, and personal
fulfilment. In Arthur Marwick’s social history for example, consumerism and
the cult of the teenager, disposable incomes, personal mobility via the car, the expansion
of home-based leisure and consumption, social participation through the television—
have generally been narrated as a ‘cultural’ story, centred on the individual consuming
subject. The British state is often absent from these narratives of social and economic
modernisation. In some accounts, the story of late modern consumerism is one of the
growing irrelevance of the state, and the supersession of public governance by the

This thesis questions whether these dual characterisations of the state’s role in post-war
society—as benign welfare provider, or as benevolent bystander in consumer-driven
modernisation—are fair ones. Such portrayals sit uneasily with wider histories of the
development and operation of modern statehood, in which the workings of the state are located in techniques of social and territorial control, power, and domination.\(^8\) Within post-war historiography itself, sub-disciplines and emergent histories—of race, immigration, sexuality, and the city, youth cultures, feminist, and queer histories—have begun to trace alternative narratives of marginalised or disadvantaged groups in post-war society whose exclusion was bound up with the rationalities and workings of state power.\(^9\) Beyond the discipline of history, in urban geography and critical urban studies, understandings of modern statecraft emphasise the state’s coercive role in ordering society and ensuring the bases of production and accumulation.\(^10\) It seems improbable that the post-war state played only a marginal, reactive, role in the emergence of a culture reorganised around the consuming habits of the individual, in which the conditions for social participation, and the bases of wealth-creation, became so dependent on specific models of consumerism.

This thesis tells a different story of the British state, one based on a more expansive conceptualisation of the state’s role in the organisation of society than is offered in accounts of the politics of post-war welfare. In order to offer a different interpretation of the relationship between state and society, this study marries empirical historical

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research into the governance of British cities with critical urban theory and with histories of state power. It presents the state’s control and management of space—of the physical fabric of everyday life—as a critical element in the operation of government, as the key interface between state and citizens, and as a crucial mechanism for the production and policing of socio-political norms, and the disruption and destruction of undesirable practices. Control over the physical environment was simultaneously the most immediate and irresistible point of contact between governors and governed, and a means by which state actors constructed and enforced particular models of society, and of the citizen-subject, in post-war Britain.

In his 1977 study *De l'état*, the philosopher and urban theorist Henri Lefebvre asked, ‘is not the secret of the state, hidden because it is so obvious, to be found in space?’

Drawing out this operation of the state in post-war Britain, ‘hidden’ in the shaping of society through the organisation of space, is a necessary intellectual task because doing so undermines widely-held views of what the state was, and what it did, both within the discipline of history and beyond. The post-war state assumed an unprecedented role in the organisation of space, inserting itself into the physical fabric of citizens’ lives in ineluctable ways. Experts and public officials used their powers over the urban environment to shape and reconfigure leisure, domesticity, work and economic activity, personal mobility, and consumption. Through concrete interventions into the lives and habits of its citizens, state actors undertook a restructuring of society through the reorganisation of space, and the aims and consequences of these efforts cannot satisfactorily be viewed through the prism of post-war welfarism. The objectives behind projects of socio-spatial ordering were multiple and sometimes contradictory, but they evidenced a desire to facilitate and organise new modes of wealth creation, to construct

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normative models of the citizen-subject, and to displace and marginalise groups and practices that were judged to be problematic.

The thesis advances three main arguments, each of which, I suggest, can be evidenced by attending to state actors’ attempts to manage society through the reorganisation of space. The first challenges accounts of the post-war state as a ‘benign’ polity, concerned primarily with individual and collective welfare. I argue that projects of spatial reordering often reveal a coercive state, in which experts and officials sought to compel citizens to behave in certain ways. The violent destruction of specific urban environments was used to displace and marginalise people and practices which were judged as undesirable, and new planned environments sought to impose specific models of citizenship, social participation, economic activity, and urbanity through compelling material interventions. This spatial violence and prescription demonstrates a level of coercion which poses a challenge to the familiar story of the benign post-war state.

Models of urban consumption and the consuming individual were a key element of state actors’ material reworking of urban space and society. The second major contention of this thesis is that the state, through the management of space, played an overlooked role in the governance of a post-war society of consuming citizens. The physical fabric of cities was remodelled around the needs of a re-imagined post-war subject—the affluent, mobile, consuming citizen—and public officials endorsed and facilitated a preeminent role for the commercial domain, and organised capital, in determining the form and function of the urban landscape. Through dramatic, and destructive, redevelopment projects, the geography of cities was refashioned to produce new infrastructures of commercial consumption and new consuming spaces in which a public culture of
affluence was staged. This thesis thus reinserts the state into histories of post-war consumerism.

The third major contention of this thesis concerns issues of periodisation in the second half of the twentieth century, both within the discipline of history and beyond. I question the conventional chronological division of Britain’s recent past between a post-war period of welfare and social-democratic consensus, and a post-1970s period of aggressive individualism and neoliberal politics. Within urban geography, sociology, and critical urban studies, this narrative of epochal transformation in the role of the state is highly influential. Scholars in these disciplines often present urban governance in the three decades after 1945 as a high point of collectivist endeavour, the golden age of a social democratic project which, by the early-1980s, disintegrated in the face of global economic restructuring and the rise of neoliberalism. The thesis challenges this narrative of rupture and reorientation in the objectives and practices of urban governance, and the lionisation of the post-war state which is contained within in, using empirical historical research. It shows that many of the paradigmatic features of ‘neoliberal’ urban governance—a commitment to servicing commercial demands in partnership with the private sector, consumerist models of the city and the citizen, and development projects which underlined and reinforced unequal power relations within urban society—were key characteristics of the governance of cities in the decades after 1945.

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Historiographical Debates

This thesis intervenes in three areas of scholarly debate. The first concerns the need to challenge existing understandings of the role of the post-war state, which is conventionally located in national policy-making and social welfare, and the sub-disciplinary divisions within modern British historiography which militate against alternative intellectual approaches to the relationship between state and society. The second field of debate concerns the history of post-war consumerism, where the urban setting in which specific consumer cultures emerged has received limited attention, and where the identity and agency of the consumer is often foregrounded at the expense of analysing the ways in which a consuming society was regulated and managed. A third field of debate which this study addresses concerns the changing nature of urban government and the role of the local state across the twentieth century. Here both urban historians and those working in contemporary urban studies have proposed models of post-war urban governance which I suggest provide only a partial picture of the ways in which state actors sought to manage society through the organisation of space.

Within post-war British historiography, intellectual approaches to the state are focused on political personalities, national policy-making, and the management of the national economy. Vernon Bogdanor’s introduction to a recent edited volume states baldly that ‘the political history of Britain since 1945 can be written largely in terms of the ideals held by [its] eleven prime ministers’.\(^{13}\) Fifteen of the twenty three essays in Jonathan Hollowell’s edited volume on *Britain since 1945* deal with national and constitutional politics, or with economic performance.\(^{14}\) This rather narrow view of the political, focused on personalities and policy-making at Westminster, characterises many post-

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\(^{14}\) Hollowell (ed.), *Britain since 1945*. 
war political histories. Economic historiography has also generally been conducted within tightly-defined parameters which reproduce the preoccupations of politicians and economists with Britain’s decline as a global economic power. Such approaches tend to consider the operation of state power only in the limited terms of its practitioners. ‘Politics’ and ‘the economy’ are constructed at a remove from the spaces and practices of everyday life, and understandings of the state’s role in society are largely restricted to the formulation of national welfare policies.

Although post-war reforms to social security, education, and the provision of housing and healthcare were undoubtedly important developments in the relationship between the British state and its citizens, this thesis suggests that the system of welfare services was not the only means through which state actors intervened in, and shaped, social processes. It argues that the spatial powers of the state—the capacity to manage, demolish, and reorganise the physical fabric of cities—also represented a significant and


unavoidable point of contact between the decision-making of elites and the experiences of individuals. The thesis shows that these powers were repeatedly used to pursue objectives which went beyond the ameliorative impulses of housing improvement, or the sanitisation of urban environments.

In a critique of the ‘overly discrete accounts’ produced within post-war historiography, Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters highlight the danger that histories ‘remain locked in wholly distinct realms, as if “politics” and “society” had very little to do with each other’.  

Other historians have agreed with this assessment. Matthew Hilton notes that ‘one long-acknowledged problem of contemporary British history is its fragmentation into specific fields of social, economic, cultural, and political history’. 

The recent ‘state of the field’ working paper produced by the Modern British Studies research centre at the University of Birmingham also points to ‘problematic disciplinary, analytic and theoretical fragmentation’, and suggests that ‘this problem is more acute for the late-twentieth century than any other period’. 

Thus, whilst a vibrant field of cultural studies has usefully directed attention away from the concerns of political elites and towards individuals’ role in the production and experience of shared systems of meaning, continued intellectual distance between approaches to ‘the political’ and ‘the cultural’ makes it difficult to explore the dynamic relationship between the governance of post-war society and the shifting cultural practices of the post-war subject.

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21 Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London, 1979) is a foundational text in post-war cultural studies. For more recent accounts which have taken up this concern with cultural forms and individuals’ consuming practices see Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London, 2007); Mark Gottdiener (ed.), *New Forms of Consumption: Consumers, Culture and Commodification* (Oxford, 2000); Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Oxford, 1997); Frank Mort, *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 1996); Celia
In this thesis, attention to the changing spaces of everyday life, and to the role of state actors in managing those spaces, is presented as a means of attempting to overcome some of the problems of disciplinary fragmentation within modern British historiography. Reorganising the spaces in and through which individuals lived, worked, travelled, and shopped, was a political project in that it was orchestrated by state actors, and aimed at reshaping society through governmental initiative. And yet projects of spatial reordering inevitably collided with, and reconfigured, the economic activities, social habits, and cultural practices of those who experienced them. Indeed, this was the explicit intention of such interventions, as state actors sought to manipulate the material world in order to govern patterns of employment and production, personal mobility, modes of consumption, and domestic experience. Through irresistible environmental transformations, the objectives and rationalities of governing elites were brought into immediate contact with the habits and rhythms of everyday life, in a process which reshaped the material conditions in which socio-cultural practices took place.

One major area of social experience which state actors intervened in through material reorganisation was personal consumption and this thesis argues that the state’s involvement in the management of consuming habits is an important, but neglected, element of the history of post-war consumerism. Although chronologies of the emergence of a ‘consumer society’ or ‘consumer culture’ are much debated, post-war Britain was a society in which rising disposable incomes, and the capacity to mass

produce consumer goods, combined to dramatically expand the scope for individuals to participate in commercial consumption.\(^{22}\) As a result:

the intensified impact of consumption has become enshrined as one of the master-narratives of the 1950s and early 1960s. Together with economic growth, full employment, political consensus and the rise of the welfare state, it has been used as one of the basic building blocks to tell the story of post-war society.\(^{23}\)

As a range of investigations have shown, the post-war intensification of personal consumption inextricably connected economic activity with cultural experience, provided individuals with new opportunities to engage in creative practices of self-construction, and led to the proliferation of new forms of knowledge ‘dedicated to the greater identification of the consumer’.\(^{24}\)

Accounts of the dynamics of post-war consumerism, however, often overlook the extent to which state actors engaged with, and sought to shape, consumerist notions of self and society. In Frank Mort’s assessment, for example:

the management of post-war affluence was formed at the intersection of a number of commercial and intellectual systems of entrepreneurship…this process was characterised by the growth of knowledge and expertise dedicated to understanding the modern consumer economy [and was] conducted on the terrain of commercial society rather than through the state.\(^{25}\)

This thesis argues that state actors were also highly responsive to the figure of the consumer, and to the perceived demands of a consumer society. It shows that understandings of the citizen as a consuming individual, with needs based on their


\(^{23}\) Mort, ‘The Commercial Domain’, p. 36.


personal desires and selfhoods, entered into public officials’ models of domesticity and urbanity, and were subsequently mapped onto the fabric of cities. Crucially, the thesis also shows how space was used repeatedly to organise patterns of consumption and manage the individual consumer in order to bolster local economies. It argues that, through space, the state was proactive in the orchestration and governance of a consuming society.

This thesis is therefore concerned with the ways in which commercial consumption impacted upon urban politics and urban space, and with the efforts of state actors to manage and shape consuming practices. Existing historical approaches to the politics of consumption are organised around two strands of inquiry and both I suggest have limitations. Research by Matthew Hilton, Lawrence Black and Peter Gurney has located the politics of consumption in forms of consumer activism and organisation, and their impact upon national political cultures, rather than in the less spectacular, but perhaps more significant, shifts in the practices and role of the state which were produced by a recasting of citizens’ needs in terms of their consuming demands. Furthermore, accounts of the politics of affluence have not yet been extended to consider how urban governments responded to, and managed, the demands of consuming citizens.

A second approach to the politics of consumption has focused on the relationship between consumerism and notions of citizenship and has explored how models of the consuming subject came to influence and reshape understandings of the political

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subject. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman argues that consumerism has eroded and replaced citizenship, in a process which marks the end of ‘real politics’ and ‘the citizen’s retreat’. For historians, these strident claims are problematic, and accounts of the reformulation of citizenship in concert with consumerism often lack specificity and empirical detail on how models of the citizen-subject were transformed by consuming habits, and what this meant for existing forms of public provision and for the relationship between the state and the individual. Thus, Frank Trentmann suggests that generalised critiques of consumerism and citizenship such as Bauman’s rest on abstractions and ideal-types, rather than an ‘empirical reassessment of the historical dynamics of consumption’. In line with this call for historical specificity, this thesis explores practical changes to the way state actors managed society and space which came about as a result of the conceptualisation of the post-war citizen-subject as a consuming individual. As will be seen, attending to the social and spatial processes through which consumerist models of the citizen-subject were constructed and enforced also reveals the boundaries and exclusions of these formulations—not all consuming citizens were created equal.

An analytical focus on the governance of urban space provides a useful way of countering generalised narratives of post-war consumerism with empirical detail, yet for the post-war period the spaces and the urban settings in which specific consuming

29 Trentmann, ‘Beyond Consumerism’, p. 373.
practices and cultures emerged have been little studied.\(^{30}\) This is in marked contrast to studies of the consuming spaces and cultures of eighteenth, nineteenth, and early-twentieth century cities which show that ‘urban contexts were central both to the learning of new consumption practices, and to their pursuit’.\(^{31}\) The relative absence of an urban context in histories of post-war consumerism also stands in contrast to scholarship within urban sociology, cultural studies, and cultural geography on the consuming spaces of present day cities. Accounts of the ‘post-modern’ consumer city present spectacular consuming environments such as shopping malls as central to the changing experience, culture, and politics of cities.\(^{32}\) This thesis shows that, in the post-war city, state actors selected and endorsed particular models of urban consumption and of the urban consumer, whilst simultaneously marginalising or destroying others. By building such models into the fabric of cities, state actors played an important role in shaping the practices and cultures of commercial consumption, and reorganised civic space, culture, and participation around affluent consumerism.


The use of state power over the urban environment to undertake compelling, and socially-selective, redevelopment projects in the interests of organised capital and affluent citizen-shoppers, raises questions about the way post-war urban governance has conventionally been characterised, both within the discipline of history and beyond. Much of the historiography of post-war urban government and planning is focused on ‘the high moment of collectivism’, that is, the relatively short-lived period in the immediate aftermath of war in which city planners were emboldened to produce ambitious visions for the reconstruction and rationalisation of cities. Beyond the immediate post-war years, the provision of council housing has been an important area of study. These terms of enquiry mean that the planning and governance of post-war cities is too often subsumed within the wider narrative of the welfare state, and thus seen as a, somewhat heavy-handed, example of the state’s commitment to improving the lives of its citizens. This thesis considers the objectives and activities of city governments over a broader period than the immediate post-war ‘moment’, and looks beyond social housing to explore the role of state actors in the wider management of urban society and space.


One way in which historians have interrogated post-war urban transformation in broader terms than those which present town planning as one element of national welfare provision is through the notion of modernisation, and the extent to which British cities can be said to have been modernised in the decades following the Second World War. This approach has the advantage of foregrounding the way in which the transformation of the post-war urban environment was narrated by contemporaries—discourses of modernisation were central to the framing of urban change in the period. Accounts of the modernisation of cities, however, are complicated in some cases by a lack of clear shared terminology. Thus, the modernisation of post-war cities has been variously associated with town planners’ rationalist visions of orderly environments, with the aesthetic Modernism of pioneering architects, or with more populist, commercially-driven urban developments such as office blocks and shopping centres. The thesis argues that historical treatments of urban modernisation have also failed to adequately interrogate how modernising rhetoric was deployed by various actors to justify what were in practice highly sectional projects, with clear winners and losers, in what planning theorist Rachel Weber has called ‘the intense socio-political struggle’ over the values attached to different uses of the urban environment.

What is clear is that, although modernising discourses were used to frame a range of different developments, the political and cultural authority which was attached to the notion of ‘the modern’ in the post-war period meant that both state and non-state actors


were keen to present their objectives in modernising terms. Simon Gunn has noted that post-war redevelopment was guided by ‘the belief in the modern as the guarantor of efficiency, progress, and human satisfaction’. In this context the ability to frame one’s objectives as quintessentially modern was a persuasive political tool. Conversely, the ability to frame places and practices as ‘obsolete’—as the antithesis of modern—was a mechanism through which portions of the urban fabric (and the patterns of use which they sustained) were devalued, and their destruction presented as an apolitical, technical, exercise. Post-war discourses of modernisation were thus part of basic material conflicts over urban space and resources, and were often deployed to pursue sectional and exclusionary projects. By attending to which groups were advantaged, and which marginalised, by specific redevelopment projects, this thesis draws out the material politics of post-war urban modernisation.

The thesis also speaks to scholars beyond the discipline of history and uses empirical historical research to challenge widely-held assumptions about the governance of post-war cities in related urban disciplines. In urban geography, urban sociology, and contemporary urban studies, post-war urban government has been widely characterised as a vehicle for the collectivist and redistributive provisions of the Keynesian welfare state. Geographer Kevin Ward, for example, talks of a post-war ‘urban Keynesianism’ in which the city was viewed as a ‘means through which to redistribute resources and address inequalities’, and was governed by the local authority in a ‘collective’ mode. Such portrayals of post-war urbanism draw on the influential analyses of geographer David Harvey who argued that, from the 1970s, the practices, make up, and objectives of urban governance underwent a transformation from ‘managerialism’ to

38 On the function of discourses of obsolescence in present day urban redevelopment see Weber, ‘Extracting Value from the City’, pp. 522-523.
'entrepreneurialism'. For Harvey, managerialist urban government is understood to have been ‘primarily focused on the local provision of services, facilities and benefits to urban populations’, whilst urban entrepreneurialism is a form of governance ‘preoccupied with the exploration of new ways in which to foster and encourage local development and employment growth’, pursued through partnerships between the public and private sectors.

The narrative of epochal change in the nature and activities of the city governments, encapsulated by the idea of an ‘entrepreneurial turn’ around 1980, is enormously influential within contemporary urban studies, and is bound up with a wider story of the structural transformation from ‘Fordist’ to ‘post-Fordist’ modes of capital accumulation, and from a ‘Keynesian welfare national state’ to a neoliberal and globalised polity.

Geographers Phil Hubbard and Tim Hall, for example, write that ‘[the entrepreneurial] reorientation of urban government is characterised by a shift from the local provision of welfare and services to more outward-orientated policies designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development’. The entrepreneurial turn thesis is a key organising framework for contemporary urban studies, and it is central to the periodisation of Britain in the second half of the twentieth century. Indeed, this

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40 David Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism’, Geografiska Annaler B 71 (1989), pp. 3-17. See also Harvey, The Urbanization of Capital (Oxford, 1985) in which Harvey’s analysis is developed at more length.
41 Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism’, p. 3.
43 Hubbard & Hall, ‘The Entrepreneurial City’, p. 2.
chronology mirrors traditional historical accounts of transformation in the state’s role in society from a post-war period of welfare and consensus to a period of Thatcherite individualism.

Accounts of the turn to entrepreneurialism are, however, largely based on analyses of national policy changes, rather than empirical historical research into the governance of post-war cities. This limitation is acknowledged by Hubbard and Hall:

> Abundant interest in the emergence of entrepreneurial forms of urban politics has been displayed by planners, sociologists and cultural theorists...what is lacking is any consensual understanding of how entrepreneurialism differs from previous forms of urban governance and local growth alliance or how it relates to the broader dynamics of advanced capitalism.  

Hubbard and Hall therefore recognise the need to bring historical rigour to analyses of the politics and governance of the post-war city, and to undertake a wider exploration of the relationship between state and enterprise in the city under ‘advanced capitalism’, than is offered in overly-simplified narratives of a transition from collectivist, ‘urban Keynesianism’, to ‘neoliberal’ entrepreneurialism. Geographers Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore agree, and criticise suggestions of ‘a linear transition from a generic model of the “welfare city” towards a new model of the “neoliberal city”’. This thesis examines post-war urban governance in order to question and revise assessments of the relationship between state, enterprise, and the city which are offered in adjacent disciplines. It shows that city governments between the 1940s and the 1970s were centrally concerned with the pursuit of economic growth, and deployed their political, financial, and spatial powers to remodel cities in concert with organised capital, and in pursuit of objectives that were neither collectivist nor redistributive.

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Methodologies

In order to investigate the state’s use of space to organise society, economic activity, and the individual, this thesis takes two English cities, Manchester and Leeds, as case studies. The cities have been chosen not because they are exceptional, but because they function as a sample of the way cities across the country were governed in this period. Both Manchester and Leeds were paradigmatic industrial cities of the nineteenth century and experienced rapid growth and industrialisation in that period. In the twentieth century both cities experienced the decline of manufacturing and were forced to pursue new economic models which were largely organised around commercial consumption. Manchester and Leeds were by no means the worst hit by industrial decline. They did not suffer the collapse of their economic base which occurred in other urban areas such as Liverpool, Tyneside, or Clydeside. Nonetheless their governments were forced to respond to changes in the geographies of accumulation, production, and employment, and the thesis will demonstrate that the remaking of space was a critical means through which this response was pursued.

The development and governance of Manchester and Leeds in the nineteenth century is relatively well-documented, but for the twentieth century the historiography is sparser, particularly after 1945. Manchester has received more scholarly attention than Leeds, yet outside of the familiar terrain of social housing provision and 1940s reconstruction planning, we know little about how either city was organised and governed across the three decades after 1945. Beyond the discipline of history, both cities have been

46 For surveys of the two cities (both with a focus on the nineteenth century) see: Alan Kidd, Manchester (Edinburgh, 2002); Derek Fraser (ed.), A History of Modern Leeds (Manchester, 1980). The nineteenth century development and governance of Manchester and Leeds is also covered in Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (Harmondsworth, 1963), pp. 88-138 & pp. 139-183 respectively.

47 On social housing see Peter Shapely, The Politics of Housing: Power, Consumers and Urban Culture (Manchester, 2007); Andrzej Olechnowicz, ‘Civic Leadership and Education for Democracy: The Simons and the Wythenshawe Estate’, Contemporary British History 14:1 (2000), pp. 3-26; James Greenhalgh,
identified as representative examples of the form of entrepreneurial urban politics and governance which is understood to have emerged in British cities from the 1980s.\textsuperscript{48} The two cities therefore provide useful examples with which to build the case for one of the major claims of the thesis, namely, that the governmental practices which are associated with post-1980s entrepreneurialism and neoliberalism were key features of the politics and planning of post-war cities.

The governance of post-war society and space has generated rich archives of documentary material from both local and national branches of the state which form the primary source material for this thesis. I have made use of the records of Manchester City Council and Leeds City Council, held at the Greater Manchester County Record Office and the West Yorkshire Archive Service respectively. These local collections have been supplemented with central government records held at The National Archives. Central government records are useful in filling gaps in local collections, where less rigorous standards of retention and preservation were followed, and where informal documentation is often removed from files. The thesis also makes use of local and national press reporting, collected from both documentary archives and from digitised collections. This material functions as both a source of information on specific development projects, as well as an insight into the narration and presentation of urban transformation in the public sphere.\textsuperscript{49} Finally, because the thesis is focused on the social and political significance of transformations in the physical environment, it also draws

\textsuperscript{48}See the contributions to Jamie Peck & Kevin Ward (eds.), \textit{City of Revolution: Restructuring Manchester} (Manchester, 2002); Gwyndaf Williams, \textit{The Enterprising City Centre: Manchester’s Development Challenge} (London, 2003); Ward, ‘The Limits to Contemporary Urban Redevelopment’.

on digitised image collections, maps and plans. Where this is the case, visual material is not only illustrative but is also accompanied by reflection on its production.

The thesis is concerned primarily with the activities of state actors and the operation of state power. As a result, it is necessary to explain how ‘the state’ is being understood and approached in this study. As noted by sociologist and state theorist, Michael Mann, ‘the state is undeniably a messy concept’. Nonetheless, this thesis does seek to locate the working of state power in specific strategies and interventions and to identify how such interventions were used to shape and manage social forms and practices. The approach to the state is one which marries sociological and Foucauldian emphases on the institutional capacities and technologies of the state, with Marxist accounts of the socio-economic functions of the state. My central argument here is that the spatial and infrastructural power of the state was deployed repeatedly to shape and organise the geographies of socio-economic activity, and to manage the consuming practices of the individual subject.

Sociological approaches to the state have, following Max Weber, focused on the institutions and organisational capacities of state formations. Weber defined ‘the primary formal characteristics of the modern state’ in the following terms:

It possesses an administrative and legal order subject to change by legislation. This system of order claims binding authority, not only over the members of the state…but also to a very large extent over all action taking place in the area of its jurisdiction. It is thus a compulsory organisation with a territorial basis.

For Weber then, control over the activities taking place within a demarcated territory is a defining feature of statehood. Mann also highlights the ‘infrastructural power’ of

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modern states, and their capacity ‘to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions’. Others have agreed with this assessment and argued further that the ability to manipulate and reorganise territory itself is a central mechanism through which state objectives are pursued. Political scientist James C. Scott’s work on twentieth century statehood shows that the physical reorganisation of peoples and the environment is a critical means through which state actors seek to achieve socio-political objectives.

Within sociology and political science then, the capacity of the state to administer and organise space emerges as one of the primary ‘tools of modern statecraft’. What is less clear from sociological and institutional accounts of the state is the purposes for which these infrastructural capacities are deployed. Here there are useful insights within Marxist accounts of the functions of the state. Marxist scholars have debated (sometimes exhaustively) the extent to which ‘the state’ should be seen as a straightforward instrument of capital, or as a ‘relatively autonomous’ entity adjudicating between competing social interests. Such treatments can be unhelpfully focused on constructing ever more complicated theories in an attempt to account for all possible permutations of state functions. The less formalist approach of Henri Lefebvre, however, is more germane to the purposes of this study, and it is one which usefully foregrounds

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55 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p. 4.

the spatiality of modern statehood. Lefebvre starts from the premise that space—the physical arrangement and geographical distribution of populations, infrastructure, property, and resources—is fundamental in enabling and shaping economic activities and social practices.\textsuperscript{57} As a result, the modern state concerns itself with the organisation of space as a means of managing both economy and society. The ability to govern and reorganise space is, for Lefebvre, the state’s ‘privileged instrument’, and the infrastructural power of the modern state identified by sociologists is deployed as a means of coordinating and orchestrating productive and wealth-creating activities.\textsuperscript{58}

In modern states, Lefebvre argues, the complexity of the interconnected technologies, resources, and activities which make up the national economy combine with the expanded organisational and infrastructural powers of the state to the extent that it is appropriate to think of a ‘state mode of production’, articulated and managed through space.\textsuperscript{59} This thesis uses Lefebvre’s model as a starting point for thinking about the ways in which the post-war British state managed space and society. It shows that, in the post-war period of mass consumerism, the spatial and infrastructural powers of the state were increasingly deployed to manage and organise private consumption, and that this necessarily entailed a high degree of engagement with the individual consuming subject. Whereas the states which governed early-twentieth century economies were concerned with managing the infrastructures of industrial production, I argue that, in a mass consuming society, it was the infrastructures of commercial consumption which the state sought to coordinate. Furthermore, the thesis suggests that the importance of each individual’s choices to the functioning of a consumer economy meant that state

\textsuperscript{58} Lefebvre, ‘Space and the Mode of Production’, p. 226.
\textsuperscript{59} Lefebvre, ‘Space and the Mode of Production’, p. 226.
spatial powers were turned increasingly towards the management and regulation of the individual consumer.

Historians such as Patrick Joyce and Chris Otter have approached the governance of the individual through Michel Foucault’s notion of governmentality, and this thesis draws on some of this work to investigate how the post-war state sought to manage socio-economic activity through space.60 Foucault’s account of modern statecraft is not dissimilar to Lefebvre’s, in that it also emphasises the state’s management of individuals and their practices in space. Government, for Foucault, is concerned with ‘men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those things that are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities’.61 For Foucault, the concept of governmentality refers to the rationalities, technologies, and knowledges which make possible this more expansive (in comparison with earlier state formations) model of socio-spatial governance. Foucault’s propositions about the development of governmental forms have been widely-invoked within what is now a corpus of ‘techno-political’ history focused on the character and techniques of modern government.62 Such work has usefully decentred understandings of the mechanisms and locations through which state power operates so that it is possible to investigate governance through, for example, colonial filing systems, or school meals.63

60 Chris Otter, The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain (Bristol, 2008); Joyce, Rule of Freedom.
For the purposes of this thesis, governmentality studies point to the importance of the architectures and infrastructures of everyday life as technologies of rule through which society is constituted and managed. This thesis departs, however, from the dominant concerns of governmentality studies with regard to what Foucault called ‘the technologies of the self’. Patrick Joyce, Nikolas Rose, and Chris Otter have looked for material technologies and forms of knowledge which have shaped the emergence of a self-regulating, self-governing, liberal subject. Thus, Joyce argues that liberal government ‘depended on cultivating a certain sort of self, one that was reflexive and self-watching’. This thesis is concerned instead with how the state’s power over the physical fabric of everyday life was used as part of attempts to compel specific behaviours on the part of the individual, and, conversely, how the authority to appropriate and destroy specific environments was used to disrupt and marginalise undesirable behaviours. I am thus more concerned with the state’s use of space as a means of materially enforcing changes to social practices, than with the self-regulation of individuals.

While one of the key purposes of this thesis is to challenge chronological assumptions about urban regulatory change within contemporary urban studies, the thesis also makes use of intellectual approaches from critical urban theory. It does so because scholars in urban studies demonstrate a keen awareness of the structuring effects of urban spatial transformations, and of the socio-political implications (and exclusions) of redevelopment projects. David Harvey, for example, asserts that, ‘how a city looks and how its spaces are organised forms a material base upon which a range of possible

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64 Joyce, Rule of Freedom, esp. pp. 10-12; Law, Organizing Modernity, pp. 1-2.
sensations and social practices can be thought about, evaluated, and achieved’. 67 This emphasis on the material organisation of cities as a key structuring factor of the socio-cultural practices which take shape there is something which can be obscured within cultural histories which focus on the agency and identity of the individual subject. The post-war period witnessed a proliferation of technologies and expertise, both within and beyond the apparatus of public government, aimed at managing the habits and experiences of individuals and the thesis shows that the reorganisation of space was a critical part of this project.

Geographers and urban theorists have also emphasised that the governance and character of urban space has profound socio-political implications. Urban redevelopment projects, argue Mike Raco and Emma Tunney, are conducted on the basis of ‘selective and power-infused visualisations’. 68 Through redevelopment, the form and function of the urban environment is recast in ways which often privilege favoured practices and groups, while displacing and marginalising others. The concept of ‘the right to the city’, understood as both a political and a spatial entitlement, has produced a field of research devoted to exploring:

…how the material spaces of human society…are related to the varying constructions of citizenship present in shared understandings regarding what sorts of individuals and groupings can “properly” live and work in these spaces. 69

For scholars in urban studies, the recognition that ‘citizenship claims are conditioned by the urban built environments in which they take place’ drives critiques of contemporary

67 Harvey, Condition of Postmodernity, pp. 66-67.
development processes.\textsuperscript{70} Thus, ‘gentrification’, the regulation of public space, and the expansion of urban retailing environments, are all seen as indicative of the political function of urban space in producing geographies of exclusion and inclusion.\textsuperscript{71} This sensitivity to the material politics of urban redevelopment—the power relations, normative models, and exclusions inherent in specific urban environments—is something which is missing from many historical accounts of post-war urban development and ‘modernisation’.\textsuperscript{72} This thesis shows that the spaces produced through state intervention in post-war cities were inscribed with specific ideals of urbanity, of functionality, and of the citizen in ways which were tightly circumscribed and actively policed.

Finally, in order to understand the efficacy of spatial intervention in reshaping social practices the thesis makes use of some theoretical approaches drawn from science and technology studies (STS). Like Foucault and Lefebvre, much recent scholarship in STS has focused on the spatially- and materially-\textit{situated} nature of social practices. In such accounts, the actions of individuals take shape within, and are dependent on, specific configurations of material infrastructures and technologies. These mutually-constitutive arrangements of human actors and material objects or infrastructures have been conceptualised by Bruno Latour and others as ‘socio-technical networks’ or socio-


technical ensembles’. Cities have proved particular rich ground for such forms of analysis because they are essentially constituted of physical spaces, buildings, machines, and infrastructures which are in a state of constant interaction with the citizens who occupy and use them. There is a danger, however, of ‘over-theorising’ what are self-evident socio-historical processes. Put in simpler terms, sociologist Thomas Gieryn notes that ‘buildings stabilise social life. They give structure to social institutions, durability to social networks, persistence to behaviour patterns’. For the purposes of this thesis, STS approaches are drawn upon because such treatments underline the embeddedness of socio-cultural practices in specific environments, and thus provide a useful framework with which to draw out the practical and experiential consequences of state projects which disrupted, reconfigured, and reorganised the physical fabric of everyday life.

Thesis Structure

The first chapter addresses the absence of the state, and of the urban context, from histories of post-war consumerism. It does so by examining the dramatic reshaping of the urban shopping landscape which produced urban shopping centres. Created through alliances between the local state and property developers, these vast new consumer facilities transformed the physical and commercial structure of cities, introduced new

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types of shopping experience into British cities, and forcibly displaced pre-existing patterns of use. Shopping developments were framed by contemporaries, and have been interpreted by historians, as manifestations of a consumer-driven modernity. Yet this chapter emphasises the instrumental role played by the state, with its powers to appropriate, destroy, and rebuild urban space, in imposing this new model of retailing onto cities and citizens. Indeed, the chapter argues that modernising rhetoric glossed over the arbitrary and coercive nature of these developments, which materially disadvantaged existing businesses and marginalised alternative patterns of use. The chapter uses the public-private nature of shopping developments, in which state power and state finance was directed to support property developers accumulation strategies, as a means of challenging urban geographers’ narratives of a 1980s ‘turn’ to market-oriented urban governance. Finally the chapter shows how civic and commercial cultures were intertwined in the new urban spaces of shopping centres, and argues that such developments were key sites in which a new public culture of affluent consumerism was staged and policed.

The second chapter is also concerned with the state’s role in the organisation of consumption in the city, but looks at the regulation of urban mobility and the environment of the city centre as a whole. It argues that state actors remade the geography of cities around the perceived needs of the citizen-shopper, installing new road infrastructures for the shopping motorist and creating beautified urban landscapes for the shopping pedestrian. Whereas histories of urban transport have emphasised the ascendancy of the motorist over urban form, the chapter shows that it was the shopping motorist who was the privileged constituent of urban transport planning. It argues that the infrastructural demands of shoppers and shopping centres became the primary consideration in local officials’ regulation of mobility in the city. City governments’
efforts to create beautified, consuming environments for the shopping pedestrian are used again to challenge urbanists’ chronological assumptions about when and why the state became involved in the creation of ‘postmodern’ consumer-oriented urban spaces. Finally, in a challenge to accounts of the benign post-war state, the chapter highlights the violence and compulsion which remaking urban infrastructure entailed. It shows how the architecture of the street was used to channel citizens into shopping developments, and that creating a ‘modern’ road network was a destructive and arbitrary process shaped by unequal class and power relations in the city.

The third chapter demonstrates how post-war public officials reimagined the citizen-subject as an individualised consumer and sought to accommodate this figure through the regulation of domestic space and domestic experience. In contrast to many accounts of post-war housing policies, the chapter focuses on the state’s intervention in privately-owned housing. It shows how state policy and state finance was instrumental in the dramatic expansion of home-ownership, and the intensification of associated cultures of home-centredness and home-based consumption. The chapter therefore models a wider role for the state in the management of domesticity than is offered in accounts of local authority housing programmes. It looks at debates about the design and provision of housing across the public and private sectors to show how new models of the consuming individual were mapped onto the spaces and technologies of British homes, and produced new ways of classifying and regulating the citizen-subject in their home. Finally the chapter argues that officially-sanctioned norms of domesticity served to problematise the council tenant as a flawed consumer of housing, as shifting models of the citizen-subject established new lines of social difference and exclusion.
The fourth and final chapter of the thesis examines the state’s role in the management of urban industry and employment in the three decades after 1945. It shows that city governments were intensely concerned with the effects of shifting patterns of production and employment on their localities. From as early as 1945, local officials developed interventionist and proactive urban development policies as part of efforts to stimulate and rejuvenate manufacturing. These policies were pursued through spatial interventions as local officials sought to implement expansive plans for the physical reorganisation of industry. The chapter foregrounds this neglected aspect of post-war urban governance in order to challenge urbanists’ assumptions that the local state began to concern itself with economic prospects as part of the 1980s entrepreneurial turn. The chapter also draws on theoretical approaches from science and technology studies to interpret the effects of spatial reorganisation on local industry. It uses evidence from affected industrialists to show that the spatial reordering of industry was a violent and disruptive process which damaged the economic base of inner urban areas. The wholesale destruction of industrial districts and the disruption of established patterns of economic activity contributed materially to the process of deindustrialisation. The chapter argues that economic historians’ failure to integrate space into their analyses of post-war industrial change has led them to overlook the state’s role in producing the set of ‘inner city’ problems which continue to challenge present day cities.
Chapter One: Space, Politics, and the Shopping Centre

The expansion of shopping and associated cultures of consumerism is one of the defining features of the post-war period. Mass consumerism inextricably linked economic activity with cultural forms, offered individuals new opportunities to engage in creative processes of self-construction, and established new forms of commercial expertise as central to the organisation of post-war society. Yet we know remarkably little about how post-war consuming cultures impacted upon, and were shaped by, the environment of cities, or how state actors responded to and managed shopping practices through the organisation of space. Indeed, post-war consumerism has conventionally been narrated as a story of social and cultural change which took place at a remove from the objectives and operations of the state. This chapter reinserts the state into the history of post-war shopping by showing how city governments used their powers over the urban environment to reshape the shopping landscape.

The chapter focuses on the development of a new type of consuming space—the shopping centre—and the dramatic remodelling of city centres which this development entailed. The chapter uses the development of shopping centres to show that ‘modernising’ urban shopping facilities was a coercive and arbitrary spatial project which destroyed and displaced alternative patterns of use and materially enforced changes to the commercial structure of cities. The chapter also argues that the

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collaborative, public-private development of post-war shopping centres poses a serious challenge to urban geographers’ narratives of a post-1970s ‘entrepreneurial turn’ in urban governance.² Finally, the chapter shows how new shopping spaces transformed the public experience and culture of cities by providing new sites for civic performance and participation, with new codes of behaviour, conditions of access, and modes of policing.

Shopping centres, or malls in the US terminology, do have a discrete literature, but it is one which is dominated by the American experience of out-of-town malls. American scholars have explored ‘the malling of America’ in which new landscapes of consumerism took shape outside of, and in opposition to, the conventional public spaces of the city.³ Cultural theorists have narrated the American mall as a paradigmatic ‘non-place’ of post-modernity, a ‘hyperreal’ consuming environment in which the space and the experience of shopping is itself commodified.⁴ The much smaller literature on British shopping centres has generally taken its cue from US scholarship. Thus, geographer Michelle Lowe has documented the emergence in the 1980s of US-style,

out-of-town shopping centres in Britain.\(^5\) Sociologist Steven Miles approaches the shopping centre as an archetypal post-modern ‘pseudoplace’, where fantasy, experience, and consumer desire are brought together in an environment which reflects the triumph of neoliberalism and consumer culture over public governance and civic space.\(^6\)

As this chapter will show, the post-war urban shopping centre does not fit neatly into these existing categories of enquiry. Post-war shopping centres were not situated in new locations beyond the boundaries of the city, but were centrally-located, transforming the physical fabric and experience of existing city centres. Nor were urban shopping centres the creation of unfettered consumer capital. City governments were instrumental in the development of shopping centres, and deployed their powers over the urban environment to create consumer facilities which blurred the boundaries between civic and commercial cultures, and between the public and private realms. The first section of this chapterforegrounds the role of the British state in this transformation of city centres. It shows that discourses of modernisation and consumer demand were mobilised to validate what were in practice arbitrary material reorganisations of the physical and commercial landscape undertaken by the state.

Post-war shopping centres were created through political alliances between local government and property developers, and redevelopment was shaped by the interests of commercial actors. Dramatic new shopping facilities reflected city governments’ efforts to reinvent their cities as shopping destinations, and commercial experts who claimed a privileged knowledge of the consumer were invited into the apparatus of public


government. The chapter uses this public-private collaboration in urban shopping provision to argue against the influential narrative within urban geography and contemporary urban studies that the 1980s witnessed the emergence of a new form of ‘entrepreneurial’ urban governance which is ‘perceived to be fundamentally different from the other forms of city governance which have preceded it’. Theorists of the entrepreneurial turn argue that economic restructuring and neoliberal ideological impositions forced city governments to abandon post-war welfarism in favour of ‘initiatory and “entrepreneurial” forms of action’. The ‘new urban entrepreneurialism’ is characterised by partnership with the private sector, and promoting cities as shopping destinations has been identified as one of the key features of this new mode of governance. The second section of this chapter argues that the suggestions of an epochal shift in urban governance contained within the entrepreneurial turn thesis are not supported by empirical historical research into the practices and objectives of urban governance from the 1940s to the 1970s.

While we know that mass consumerism transformed modes of cultural production and expression, we know little about the impact of post-war consumerism on the public culture of cities. This gap reflects the relative absence (in comparison with the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries) of studies of the urban settings and spaces in which new modes of commercial consumption took shape. The final section of this

8 Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism’, p. 4.
chapter argues that shopping centres were venues in which the public culture of cities was transformed in concert with affluent consumerism. The integration of municipal services into shopping centres, the ritualised civic performances of opening ceremonies, and the new forms of participation in urban public life which shopping centres offered, are all understood as examples of a growing alignment between civic and commercial cultures. In an engagement with urban historians’ debates about the twentieth century decline of civic culture, I argue here that the spaces of the shopping centre were sites in which the public culture of cities was reoriented around consumerism, establishing new models of civic participation and new conditions of access to the public life of the city.\(^\text{11}\) The chapter takes two particular shopping developments as case studies, the Arndale Centre in Manchester and the Merrion Centre in Leeds. These cases have been selected due to the rich evidence that survives in local and national archives regarding their planning and development, but wherever possible I have referred to other developments, sometimes in other cities, in order to show that the two case studies are not exceptional.


Making a Modern Shopping Landscape

The post-war development of urban shopping centres was repeatedly framed by public officials and private developers as a modernising project. As the advert for Leeds’s Merrion Centre above shows, the shopping centre was sold to the public as ‘Britain’s most modern’. As such, shopping centres, along with other forms of commercial development such as offices, have been subsumed into the wider historical narrative of the modernisation of post-war cities and society.\(^\text{12}\) Peter Mandler, for example, writes that commercial shopping developments represented a ‘different vision of modernity’ to

that espoused in the rationalist, statist, plans of the 1940s. For Mandler, the post-war shopping centre was a manifestation of ‘the modernity not of the expert but of the voter, the consumer, the worker’. This picture of competing versions of modernity, one expert-driven and the other populist and consumer-driven, is problematic. Firstly, it reproduces the sense that commercial shopping developments were an inevitable part of an inexorable process of social change. As this discussion will show, the suggestion that shopping centres represented inevitable and progressive ‘modernisation’ was a useful rhetorical device, but it was one which glossed over the contingencies of deals between councils and developers, widespread opposition from retailers, and the use of state power to select and install specific high-value models of urban shopping.

The second problem with Mandler’s formulation of a demotic, consumer-driven urban modernity is that it writes the local state out of the governance and organisation of urban shopping. Thus Mandler writes that after 1951, ‘the guiding force’ in British urban redevelopment was ‘consumer sovereignty in a free economy, rather than the “plan” of local elites’. Yet, as this chapter will demonstrate, the power of the local state to plan, appropriate, destroy, and reconfigure the urban environment was fundamental to the creation of urban shopping centres. In conjunction with property developers, local officials undertook a dramatic and violent reshaping of the landscape of city centres, using space to reorganise urban shopping habits, and in the process disrupting and expelling pre-existing patterns of use (including pre-existing patterns of retailing). This section of the chapter shows that the creation of urban shopping centres was not a physical manifestation of consumerist modernity. Rather, developing shopping centres was an example of the state’s use of its power over space—a power

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Henri Lefebvre calls the state’s ‘privileged instrument’—to materially transform the conditions in which urban shopping took place, with identifiable consequences for future patterns of consumption and development in cities.\textsuperscript{16}

In order to illustrate the scale of destruction which accompanied the development of shopping centres, a number of photographs are included here which illustrate the dramatic process of demolition and transformation of the urban environment. Some of the images here were taken by members of the public and subsequently donated to local archive collections.\textsuperscript{17} In the case of Leeds, the city engineer’s department assiduously photographed redevelopment in the city and produced extensive collections of images.\textsuperscript{18}

Such collections evidence an impulse to record urban transformation which is suggestive of contemporary observers’ sense of the historical significance of urban environmental change. Photographs often depict similar subjects, such as demolition in progress, ‘before and after’ shots of particular locations for juxtaposition, and ‘contrast’ shots of clean, new buildings set amidst the older urban landscape. These stylistic devices and modes of presentation all suggest a shared impulse to draw attention to the transformative impact of redevelopment.


\textsuperscript{17} Both Manchester and Leeds City Councils have large online collections available to the public: \url{http://images.manchester.gov.uk}; and \url{http://www.leodis.net}. Manchester’s Chetham’s Library also has a significant local image collection: \url{http://www.flickr.com/photos/chethams_library}

\textsuperscript{18} The department’s voluminous image collection was collated into albums which are available at Leeds Central Library. Many of the photographs have also been digitised as part of the city’s Leodis online image collection.
Figures 2 and 3: Images taken by a Manchester resident, Margaret Newbold, showing the scale of demolition undertaken to create the Arndale shopping centre in Market Street, Manchester. The images are undated but are circa 1972-3 in the early stages of construction. Source: Chetham’s Library Collection (online source) https://www.flickr.com/photos/chethams_library/ [Accessed 25 October 2014]
Figures 6 & 7: Two images of shopping redevelopment in Leeds produced by the city engineer’s department. Both are undated but the first image shows the site of the Merrion shopping development circa 1962. The second shows demolition in progress to create the Leeds Shopping Plaza in Bond Street again in the early-1960s. Taken from the Leodis Photographic Archive of Leeds (online source) http://www.leodis.net [Accessed 25 October 2014]
Figure 8: In this 1971 image taken by Manchester resident Margaret Newbold, passers-by are shown stopping to observe the demolition process near Victoria Bridge, on the northern side of the Market Place redevelopment in Manchester. The image highlights not only the dramatic nature of demolition, but also local residents’ interest in the transformation taking place, and has been composed in a manner suggestive of outsiders looking in. Taken from Chetham’s Library Collection (online source) https://www.flickr.com/photos/chethams_library/ [Accessed 25 October 2014]

Demolition on the scale illustrated by these images radically transformed the urban environment and represented a dramatic rupture in the social, economic, and physical fabric of city centres. Densely-built districts characterised by a mix of housing, shops, entertainment venues, and industrial premises were destroyed to be replaced with single-purpose shopping complexes (see figure nine). Many pre-established practices and patterns of use were disrupted and marginalised by such redevelopments. Retailers who were already established in development areas, for example, were often strongly opposed to shopping centre schemes because of investment in their existing premises, and because the significantly higher rents demanded by shopping centre operators threatened the viability of their businesses. In the case of the Manchester Arndale scheme, where the Ministry of Housing and Local Government considered the proposal
at a public inquiry, there is valuable documentary evidence from dozens of retailers which demonstrates their resistance to redevelopment.

Figure 9: Plan showing the pre-existing urban landscape around Market Street in Manchester which was destroyed to create the Arndale shopping centre. The narrow streets and courts sustained functions and practices which were also destroyed in the redevelopment. Reproduced with kind permission from Graham Bowden, University of Manchester.

The Wallis clothes chain lodged an objection to ‘the disturbance to trading facilities’ which the Arndale development would entail and noted that rents in the new shopping centre would be ‘beyond the means of the majority of existing traders and over-burden-some to all but a few of the minority’. The result of this, feared the company, would

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19 Objection letter from Testers to MHLG, 20 October 1966. The National Archives [TNA]—Ministry of Housing and Local Government records [HLG]—HLG 79/1187
be that ‘many traders will...be forced out of business’.  

20 Godley’s, a shop selling electrical appliances, objected that the company ‘conducted a very substantial and expanding business’ at their current premises and thus had ‘good grounds for raising this objection’. 21 Prices Tailors objected on the basis that their own and adjoining premises had been ‘completely rebuilt in 1953 with full planning permission’, and that, as a result, ‘the proposed demolition of such a new building is wholly [sic] unrealistic’. 22 Another retailer wrote that ‘the Corporation’s proposals...are unreasonable and likely to cause extreme hardship to their business’. 23 The jewellers, H Samuel, ‘considered such a grandiose scheme...is not in accordance with good town planning principles and would result in much disruption to the Shopping Centre of Manchester’. 24 A combined objection from Montague Burton Limited and Jackson the Tailor Limited stated that the redevelopment was ‘not necessary’ and ‘imposes hardship upon the companies’. 25 This selection of objections, many from national retailers with multiple stores, shows that retailers affected by wholesale redevelopment viewed it as an arbitrary and unnecessary imposition upon their businesses.

While national retail chains objected to giving a greater share of their profits to developers, and were able to hire lawyers to represent their interests, smaller businesses and local residents were in a more precarious position and their concerns were easily dismissed by officials. Local residents affected by the Manchester Arndale redevelopment struggled to articulate their views in ways which state actors would acknowledge. One resident wished to ‘object as a matter of principle’, but accepted that

20 Objection letter from Testers, 20 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187  
21 Objection letter from Godleys, 24 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187  
22 Objection letter from Prices Tailors Ltd, 17 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187  
23 Objection letter from Frank Westbrook, 29 September 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187  
24 Objection letter from H. Samuel Ltd, 27 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187  
25 Objection letter from Montague Burton Ltd, 4 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187
they had ‘no valid objection in a legal sense’. Another simply stated that the shopping development was ‘unnecessary and/or inappropriate’. Small shopkeepers were especially vulnerable to redevelopment as they were unable to meet the new rental costs of premises within shopping centres. Yet archival records suggest that state actors were unconcerned about the potential loss of small retailers in city centres. In a confidential file note, one official at the Ministry of Housing wrote that small traders were ‘often riff-raff and do the centre no good’. A 1962 report in The Guardian provides evidence that the experience of small traders in Manchester was representative rather than unique. The report detailed ‘complaints being made all over the country by local traders as the combination of municipal ambition and outside financial interest leads to the wholesale demolition and rebuilding of town centres’.

Through redevelopment then, local residents were expelled and the profile of economic activity in central areas was transformed. Low-value businesses, and the particular forms of buying and selling they operated, were removed in order to introduce new shops that would yield higher rents. Larger retailers who were able (somewhat reluctantly) to take on new premises in shopping centres were well aware that redevelopment represented an attempt to capture a portion of their profits, as their objections to the Manchester Arndale scheme make clear. The role of the local state in facilitating these arbitrary projects of expulsion and reconstruction, which serviced the accumulation strategies of property developers and investors, presents a challenge to conventional portrayals of post-war urban government and planning. Within urban historiography, scholarship is focused on the ‘modernist rationalism’ of town planners,

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26 Resident’s objection letter, 1 March 1967. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187
27 Resident’s objection letter, 9 January 1967. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187
28 ‘Stretford M.B. Central Area Redevelopment’, dictated notes, 10 September 1962. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1404
particularly in the high moment of reconstruction planning in the 1940s, and as a result post-war urban governance is often viewed as a (largely abortive) attempt to realise state experts’ visions of a reordered urban environment.\textsuperscript{30} The work of Peter Mandler and Frank Mort, however, has noted the relative brevity of this post-war planning moment. Mort points to ‘the systematic erosion of [the 1940s] planning consensus from the early 1950s’, and identifies a ‘reassertion of a much more familiar facet of urban growth [namely] commercial and speculative development’.\textsuperscript{31}

Mort and Mandler’s research provides an important corrective to histories of post-war urban government as an exercise in collectivist technocracy driven by professional town planners. Yet there is a danger that their accounts imply that state actors withdrew from the organisation of the urban environment in favour of entrepreneurs, developers, and ‘consumer sovereignty’.\textsuperscript{32} Local officials’ close and proactive involvement in commercial redevelopment was an essential precondition of the reshaping of the shopping landscape. It was the powers of the local state to appropriate and reorganise urban space which made possible the realisation of shopping centre schemes, and the protests of retailers make it clear that they objected to the arbitrary use of state power, in the form of compulsory purchase and demolition, to pursue redevelopment. The development of post-war shopping centres should not be seen as indicative of consumer sovereignty, but rather as the product of the use of state spatial power to select and privilege particular models of retailing and urban function while destroying others.


\textsuperscript{32} Mandler, ‘New Towns for Old’, p. 226.
The power of the state to appropriate and destroy portions of the urban fabric was also used to remove streets and buildings which sustained practices viewed as problematic or undesirable, and this is illustrated by the case of Manchester’s ‘coffee clubs’ which were destroyed as part of the Arndale redevelopment. Prior to the area’s demolition, the narrow lanes and courts in the back streets of the shopping district housed a number of live music venues which formed part of Manchester’s ‘beat’ scene (this pre-existing streetscape can be seen in the plan in figure nine).\(^{33}\) In Manchester, as in other cities in the 1960s, unlicensed music venues with the nominal status of private members clubs were used by young people as ‘spaces removed from the normative effect of the adult gaze’.\(^{34}\) Historian Louise Jackson has shown how ‘coffee clubs’ were a source of moral panic in the early 1960s, and that Manchester’s police devoted considerable resources to attempts to infiltrate the clubs.\(^{35}\) A *Times* newspaper reporter in 1965 claimed that ‘the worst of these clubs have been…used for drug trafficking; for the harbouring of young prostitutes, absconders and the new breed of “teenage tramps”; even for some small scale white slavery’.\(^{36}\)

Jackson stresses that both the appeal and the fear of these clubs was based on their status as spaces which were physically and culturally removed from established jurisdictions. The determined efforts of police to enter and regulate the physical spaces of clubs underline the inherently spatial nature of the ‘coffee club menace’.\(^{37}\) The redevelopment of the entire Market Street district provided an opportunity to obliterate,  

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33 There is an online forum where individuals who participated in the beat subculture and frequented these clubs have shared their experiences: [http://www.manchesterbeat.com/index.php](http://www.manchesterbeat.com/index.php) [Accessed 24 November 2014]


rather than simply regulate, these problematic spaces, and to displace the cultural practices which took place within them to other parts of the city. A collection of testimonies and memories from former patrons of the clubs destroyed by the Market Street development includes images of the demolition of Cromford Court (the location of a number of clubs), accompanied by comments such as ‘the sad end at Cromford Court’, and ‘long lost under the architectural glory that is Arndale!’ Such memories are suggestive of a sense of loss, and of the knowledge that the cultural experiences sustained by these clubs were forcibly evicted from the area in the interests of installing a shopping centre. Redevelopment involved implicit judgements about the value of particular spaces and practices, and the city government’s decisions about which buildings and districts could be demolished sit alongside the police’s activities as techniques of social regulation through spatial reorganisation. As will be seen, in the new environment of the shopping centre, young people’s behaviour was much more easily policed than it had been in the closed off spaces of coffee clubs.

\[38\text{http://www.manchesterbeat.com/venues/manchester_cbd/magicvillage/magicvillage.php [Accessed 24 November 2014]. Details of the distinguished list of bands and musicians who performed at Cromford Court are also given as part of this collection. Many of the artists (such as The Rolling Stones, David Bowie, The Kinks, and The Animals) are now world famous figures whose performances would presumably be welcomed in the cultural economy of present-day Manchester.}\]
The arbitrary, disruptive, and exclusionary process of rebuilding central shopping districts was justified through the dual discourses of modernisation and obsolescence, and these linguistic constructions played a critical role in validating the spatial projects of city planners and developers. The rhetoric of modernisation was central to the way shopping developments were presented. Leeds’s Merrion Centre, for example, was ‘Britain’s Most Modern Shopping Centre’. The identification and satisfaction of ‘modern’ needs were recurring themes in the Arndale Company’s presentation of its

39 ‘Where’s Britain’s Most Modern Shopping Centre?’, promotional leaflet for Leeds Merrion Centre, N.d.[c.1963]. WYAS—LCC—LLD1/2/817111
shopping centres. The company boasted of its ‘wealth of experience in modern shopping’, and, ‘up-to-date awareness of modern retailing methods’. Journalists too, presented alluring accounts of the futuristic spaces of the shopping mall, emphasising the presence of exciting new technologies such as escalators. A Guardian reporter described the ‘modern scheme’ of the Merrion Centre ‘almost exhilarating’. Similar enthusiasm over the ‘modern-ness’ of the shopping centre characterised press reporting on the proposals for the Manchester Arndale Centre when they were first revealed in the late-1960s. The Manchester Evening News described the ‘Super-plan [for] covered air-conditioned pedestrian malls’ as a ‘futuristic picture…of Manchester’s main shopping area’. Another report in the same newspaper highlighted the ‘escalators and lifts connecting the various shopping levels’ in the ‘ultra-modern shopping and office centre’.

Simon Gunn has noted that post-war urban redevelopment was guided by ‘the belief in the modern as the guarantor of efficiency, progress and human satisfaction’. This association of the concept of modernisation with progressive social change was critical to its rhetorical value as a framing device for developers and city officials. Associating shopping centres with modernity allowed such developments to be presented as inevitable, natural, and unproblematically progressive. Thus, in an advertising feature in the Yorkshire Evening Post, the Merrion Centre was described as ‘a natural and logical extension of the existing shopping centre [of Leeds]’. The general manager of the Merrion claimed that ‘centres like ours…are an important part of modern city

40 Town & City Properties Limited, Arndale Covered Centres, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 1 & p. 4. Greater Manchester County Record Office [GMCCRO]—Q21/1
41 An untitled image of the Merrion Centre’s ‘moving pavement’ was published with a notification of the official opening in 1964 in The Guardian, 24 March 1964, p. 3.
This sense of inevitability was also apparent in the evidence given by the architect of the Manchester Arndale scheme, Lewis Womersley, to the public inquiry which considered the proposal in 1968. Womersley told the inquiry that, ‘it is more than time that Manchester had a first-class modern shopping centre [and] this is the obvious site for it’. Through modernising rhetoric, developers were able to present their schemes as part of a national effort to ensure the welfare of citizen-shoppers. At the Arndale Property Trust’s 1964 annual general meeting company chairman Arnold Hagenbach told share-holders that ‘social betterment…must involve the modernisation of Town Centres all over the Country, where people can do their shopping and conduct their business under pleasant conditions of safety and comfort’.

The discourse of modernisation was a rhetorical device which presented developers’ sectional and widely-opposed projects as eminently desirable and part of the British state’s responsibility to its citizens. Such language also served to condemn existing business practices, consumer habits, and shopping spaces as problematic, obsolete, and anti-modern. By laying claim to a privileged knowledge of ‘the modern’, developers and city planners were able to castigate the existing urban fabric as obsolete and out-of-step with the demands of the modern consumer, smoothing the way for compulsory purchase and demolition. The Arndale Company, for example, argued that ‘many shops are outmoded and unsuitable for modern retailing’. At the 1968 Manchester Arndale inquiry, J Haworth, representing the city council, argued that the existing shopping district was ‘hopelessly inadequate for modern requirements’.

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48 Womersley’s statement to the inquiry was reported in Michael Morris, ‘Pavement Cafes in Plan for Manchester’, *The Guardian*, 20 June 1968, p. 20.
officer argued that ‘action is clearly needed to deal with the evident conditions of bad layout and obsolete development’.\textsuperscript{52} The Arndale scheme would facilitate, in the planning officer’s opinion, ‘the development in depth of the obsolete property that lay behind the high value frontages’.\textsuperscript{53}

Writing about contemporary urban redevelopment, planning theorist Rachel Weber describes the concept of obsolescence as an ‘alibi for creative destruction’.\textsuperscript{54} Weber notes how, ‘on the surface’, the language of obsolescence is morally and politically neutral, ‘as if the social has been removed from an entirely technical matter’.\textsuperscript{55} Drawing on David Harvey’s conception of demolition and redevelopment as a means of revaluing urban space (and thus enabling a renewal of its profit-making capacity), Weber sees ‘obsolescence’ as a discursive tool through urban spaces can be stigmatized, and redevelopment presented as necessary, inevitable, and desirable.\textsuperscript{56} Although Weber frames this use of the concept of obsolescence as a relatively recent product of ‘the marketized ideologies of neoliberalism’, her analysis does provide a way of understanding how the discursive formulations of post-war urban elites served a political function in contests over the ownership and uses of urban space.\textsuperscript{57} By framing their objectives in terms of modernity and obsolescence, officials and developers were able to present arbitrary appropriations of urban space as progressive technical improvements.

\textsuperscript{52} City and County Borough of Manchester, \textit{City Centre Map 1967}, p. 58. GMCRO
\textsuperscript{53} City and County Borough of Manchester, \textit{City Centre Map 1967}, p. 58. GMCRO
\textsuperscript{55} Weber, ‘Extracting Value from the City’, p. 532.
\textsuperscript{56} For Harvey’s account of this ‘creative destruction’ see \textit{The Urbanization of Capital} (Oxford, 1985), pp. 138-139.
\textsuperscript{57} Weber, ‘Extracting Value from the City’, p. 531.
The transformation of the post-war shopping landscape was a project which promised to sweep away ‘obsolescence’ and replace it with ‘modern retailing’, yet the ability to define these terms lay with a relatively small group of city officials and property entrepreneurs who were focused on maximising the value of city centre land. While historians have tended to ignore the political functions of modernising rhetoric, contemporaries were well aware that such language was used to present highly-sectional objectives as straightforwardly progressive. In a 1975 work on the property development industry, geographers Peter Ambrose and Bob Colenutt noted that:

> The task of determining the use to which a piece of land is to be put is not a technical one. It is a profoundly political one because it embodies a basic conflict between different interests…Many of those engaged in redevelopment like to present it as a socially responsible activity and as “progress” for the town or city in question. Sometimes it may be, but that depends on one’s definition of progress. On the whole it seems unwise to leave that sort of judgement to those who are making a lot of money out of it.\(^{58}\)

There is a danger that historical accounts of Britain’s post-war ‘negotiation of various modernities’ abstract and essentialise processes of social change, and thus fail to interrogate how modernising discourses were deployed as part of political conflicts over urban space and resources.\(^{59}\) Indeed, James Vernon has warned that an insufficiently critical adoption of the concept of modernisation by historians risks perpetuating, rather than interrogating, teleological and progressive narratives of the post-war period.\(^{60}\) In the context of post-war shopping redevelopments, languages of modernisation were used as part of discursive attempt to depoliticise projects which were clearly contested and resisted by many.

Some of those affected by redevelopment grasped the political significance of the terms ‘obsolete’ and ‘modern’ and contested the terminologies which were used to condemn

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their premises and their activities. The extensive documentary evidence produced by the public inquiry into the Manchester Arndale scheme shows how these terms were disputed. A number of affected businesses objected to being labelled as ‘obsolete’ and proposed alternative strategies for ‘modernising’ the city centre. On behalf of eighteen publicans, the Manchester and District Brewers’ Society argued that:

Objector’s properties are not obsolete or sub-standard nor are they in need, and certainly not in imminent need, of replacement and their designation for compulsory acquisition cannot be justified on this or any other account; they are all of them sound properties with many years of useful life before them.\(^{61}\)

Dunn and Co., a men’s clothing and hat shop, voiced similar objections. The company argued that ‘our property and some others still retain an expectancy of life for many years to come’.\(^ {62}\) The company also proposed an alternative, gradualist method of improving the city’s shopping area, arguing that it would be ‘desirable to preserve the character of Market Street…and owners should be allowed to redevelop their properties…on a co-operative basis as and when the life of the buildings determine’.\(^ {63}\)

The city government’s notion of modernisation was explicitly contested by the shoe shop Timpson’s and by Prices Tailors. These two companies argued that:

In our opinion, the modernization of the centre of Manchester could be achieved, at much less cost, by natural development over a period of years without destroying the character of the Market Street shopping parade which traditionally is the finest shopping street outside London.\(^ {64}\)

Businesses understood that the meanings attached to the terms ‘obsolete’ and ‘modern’ had political and material consequences, and sought to contest their definition. Because urban change was narrated in modernising terms in the post-war period, basic material conflicts over urban space and resources were transferred into disputes over the

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\(^ {63}\) Objection letter from Dunn & Co., 25 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187

\(^ {64}\) Objection letters from Prices Tailors Ltd, and from William Timpson Ltd, dated 17 and 14 of October 1966 respectively. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1185
meaning of modernisation and obsolescence. If historians present post-war urban transformation in terms of modernisation, we also need to interrogate how different groups claimed, deployed, and contested such languages. In the case of shopping redevelopments, it is clear that the ability to define ‘the modern’ was used in ways which underlined and reinforced imbalances of power and resources in the city.

In addition to being presented by urban elites as inevitable modernisation, shopping developments were also framed by such figures as a necessary response to consumer demand. Yet, although the language of ‘demand’ was critical to the justification of commercial redevelopments, it was far from clear what sort of shopping facilities consumers or retailers desired, or how to identify and measure demand. Mandler’s suggestion that shopping developments were indicative of ‘consumer sovereignty’ again emerges as problematic.65 ‘Demand’ was an uncertain construct and, once trading, many centres received ambivalent or even hostile responses from shoppers and retailers. The closing discussion of this section argues that the creation of shopping centres in British cities should be seen not as a response to consumer desire, but rather as a material imposition which reshaped urban shopping habits. David Harvey has argued that the built environment of cities shapes and constrains the possibilities for economic activities and patterns of use. He argues that ‘when the physical and social landscape of urbanisation is shaped according to distinctively capitalist criteria, constraints are put on the future paths of capitalist development’.66 In this vein, the discussion here argues that the spatial powers of the post-war state were deployed to install new shopping infrastructures which irresistibly altered the material conditions in which urban shopping habits took place.

66 Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism’, p. 3.
Appeals to consumer demand were central to the justification of shopping centres. As a rationale for the development of a shopping centre on its Seacroft estate, Leeds City Council claimed that ‘the constantly increasing and insistent demand is for shops selling every sort of commodity’. Town and City properties claimed that Arndale shopping centres were necessary ‘to meet the inevitable ultimate increased demand’. With respect to the Market Street redevelopment in Manchester, the city’s Chief Planning Officer also argued that ‘there is an undoubted demand for some additional and well located shopping space’. Yet the certainty of these claims misrepresented the extent to which the identification and enumeration of consumer demand was an experimental and contentious ‘science’, and very much in its infancy in the post-war period. As sociologists Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose have argued, the development of new forms of consumer knowledge ‘does not merely uncover pre-existing desires or anxieties: it forces them into existence…it renders them thinkable by new techniques of calculation, classification and inscription’. The directors of the Arndale company realised the value of such techniques, and commissioned private consultancies to calculate local shopping demand (enumerated precisely in square feet of shopping floorspace) in order to strengthen the legal case for redevelopment.

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67 Leeds City Council, ‘Seacroft Town Centre’, promotional brochure, N.d.[c.1965?]. WYAS—LLD1/2/824956
68 Town & City Properties Limited, Arndale Covered Centres, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 5. GMCRO—Q21/1
69 City and County Borough of Manchester, City Centre Map 1967, p. 15. GMCRO
72 This strategy was used for the public inquiry into the Manchester Arndale scheme, and for a shopping centre scheme in Morecambe, Lancashire. Details are given in Nathaniel Lichfield and Associates, letter to Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 15 August 1967. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187; Inspector’s report of public local inquiry held at Morecambe, 14 May 1965, p. 12. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1213
‘shopping gravity models’ were produced to enumerate and spatialise the consumer’s essential requirements.73

Despite the sophisticated knowledge claims of city officials and developers, there were other actors who disputed the models of consumer demand on which shopping centre schemes were based. Responding to the Manchester Arndale scheme, officials at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government declared themselves ‘seriously concerned about the enormous build up in shopping space that such a development would entail’.74 Ministry officials did not accept the view that the new shopping centre was a necessary response to expansive consumer demand. Instead, the Ministry’s experts viewed the Manchester scheme as a ‘dangerously large extension’ which was likely to compete with, and take business from, surrounding shopping streets and districts.75 Ministry officials questioned the expertise on which calculations of ‘demand’ were based, with one official concluding that ‘we do not know of a forecasting method we could trust to guarantee the success of a scheme as large as this’.76 The confident projections of consumer demand which underpinned the remaking of city centres were not universally accepted even by sympathetic government officials. Consumer demand, like modernisation, was a contested rhetorical construct.

74 Ministry of Housing and Local Government [MHLG], ‘Manchester: Market Street C.D.A.’, internal note, 10 March 1967. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1184
76 MHLG, letter from Ministry official to John Millar (City Planning Officer, Manchester), 2 August 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1188
Retailers and businesses affected by the Manchester Market Street scheme also disputed constructions of consumer demand, and offered alternative claims to knowledge of the needs of consumers. Eighteen publicans and restaurateurs argued that ‘the need for a comprehensive plan for this central area of Manchester is incapable of proof’, and suggested that the development would ‘result in grave injury being done to…the welfare of the public whose essential requirements will not be met’. Numerous other retailers objected that the scheme was ‘excessive and too far reaching’, ‘overambitious’, ‘not called for’, and ‘not justified by the state of the national economy’. Although appeals to the needs of the consumer were central to the way shopping centre schemes were justified, even amongst experts and retailers there were competing understandings of the consumer’s needs, and disagreements over the nature and extent of demand.

Further evidence of the uncertainty of developers’ projections of demand can be found in the ambivalent responses of consumers to new shopping centres. In Leeds, both the suburban Seacroft Centre and the centrally-located Merrion Centre, struggled to attract shoppers. At Seacroft, city officials’ visions of the volume and types of shopping that the Centre would attract proved inaccurate. As a result, the city government had difficulties letting shop units, the Centre itself attracted negative publicity, and the council became embroiled in ‘public bickering’ with its existing shop tenants over poor trading. The commercial problems of the Seacroft Centre illustrated the tenuous relationship between homogenised projections of ‘demand’, and the diverse habits of

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78 Objection letter from Alexandre Ltd. to MHLG, 27 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187
79 Objection letter from William Timpson Limited to MHLG, 14 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187
80 Objection letter from Testers to MHLG, 20 October 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187
individual consumers. In the city centre, the privately-operated Merrion Centre faced similar problems. In November 1966, two and a half years after the Centre first opened, traders argued for reduced rents and compensation ‘for their disappointing trading experience which…was involving them in substantial losses’. \(^\text{82}\) A committee representing traders in the Merrion informed the management company that, ‘there was a distinct chance that 90% of the shops in the Centre would be vacated within the next six months’. \(^\text{83}\) While this claim may have been a bargaining position, it nonetheless illustrates that, based on initial trading experiences, there is little evidence that the new centre offered satisfaction to a voracious shopping public.

Problems with attracting shoppers to new centres were not unique to Leeds. Shopping centres in many towns and cities were greeted ambivalently by consumers, and this was evidenced by lower than expected footfalls, difficulties letting shop units, and accusations of ‘White Elephantiasis’. \(^\text{84}\) Flagship renewal projects like Manchester’s Arndale Centre (opened in 1976), Birmingham’s Bull Ring (opened in 1964), and London’s Elephant and Castle (opened in 1965) all experienced difficulties attracting consumers. \(^\text{85}\) In 1968, *The Guardian*’s property correspondent wrote of unpopular shopping centres across the country as ‘white elephants which bear testimony to over-optimism and bad judgement’. \(^\text{86}\) The reluctance of many consumers and retailers to buy and sell in shopping centres, especially in the first few years after opening, suggests that rather than spatial manifestations of consumer demand, new urban shopping centres

\(^{82}\) *Letter from Town Centre Securities to Town Clerk, 24 November 1966. WYAS—LLD1/2/833178*

\(^{83}\) *Letter from Town Centre Securities to Town Clerk, 24 November 1966. WYAS—LLD1/2/833178*


should more accurately be seen as an imposition on the city and on the consumer, to which shoppers, and shop-owners, were forced to adapt.

Despite the evident reluctance of many retailers to pay the increased rates demanded by shopping centre operators, it seems that shop owners were compelled to engage with the new shopping environment. The owner of a national chain of piano shops, Bill Swan, told the *Manchester Evening News* that ‘precincts represent a completely different way of marketing—a new trading era if you like. I feel we can’t afford not be part of it’. The evidence suggests that those shop-owners who could afford the move felt the same as Swan. In 1980, Manchester’s revised local plan assessed the effect of the Arndale development on the city’s shopping structure. As predicted by central government officials in 1967, the shopping centre had concentrated the city’s retailing, as shop-owners felt compelled to relocate from elsewhere in the city (see figure 11). In the three years after the Arndale opened, the number of empty shops in Manchester almost doubled. The majority of this increase was a direct result of relocations to the new shopping centre. Rather than satisfying expansive and expanding consumer demand, the Arndale Centre had drawn trade from adjacent districts, contributing to the decline of previously vibrant shopping streets like Oldham Street. The effect of the Centre on the commercial structure of the city was dramatic and by 1980 the city government recognised the seriousness of this rupture. The city’s local plan now warned of ‘the need for some caution. The Arndale and Market Place schemes are very large indeed, and the shockwaves associated with their development are likely to continue to be felt in the city centre for some considerable time to come’.

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89 Manchester City Council, *Manchester City Centre Local Plan*, pp.21-22.
Discourses of modernisation and consumer demand were central to the framing of large-scale commercial redevelopments. These languages and projections were, however, contentious and contested and served a political function in validating renewal projects which were opposed by many. As historians we need to ensure that we interrogate how teleological narratives of progress and demand functioned in local political conflicts over the uses and values of particular urban spaces. The ability to define ‘the modern’, or to draw on forms of expertise which claimed a privileged knowledge of ‘the consumer’, were useful tools in these political conflicts and, as has been shown, enabled developers and city governments to expel and displace undesirable groups and practices.
In a context of political conflict over the uses of the urban environment, it was the state, with its privileged control over space, which acted as the ultimate arbiter. While it is tempting to see shopping centres as inevitable manifestations of the post-war intensification of personal consumption, such facilities represented one among many spatial models of urban shopping. It was the local state which selected and installed this model through the compulsory reconfiguration of urban space and, in the process, the physical and commercial structure of cities was transformed. David Harvey’s suggestion that the fixity and the materiality of urban infrastructure shapes and constrains future forms of economic activity seems to be borne out by the manner in which urban shopping centres forcibly remodelled the shopping landscape and shaped subsequent patterns of development. The shopping centres which were imposed upon post-war cities and citizens not only shaped future patterns of retailing in cities, but, through demolition, also displaced and marginalised alternative functions and practices from the city centre.

The Politics of Commercial Redevelopment

This section uses the planning and development of post-war shopping centres to argue against the influential narrative within urban geography and contemporary urban studies which maintains that the 1980s witnessed a ‘turn’ towards a new form of entrepreneurial urban governance, characterised by proactive local economic development policies, partnerships between the public and private sector, and the reorientation of urban economies around commercial consumption. The ‘entrepreneurial turn’ thesis is described by David Harvey in these terms:

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90 Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism’, p. 3.
the grim history of deindustrialization and restructuring…left most major cities in the advanced capitalist world with few options except to compete with each other, mainly as financial, consumption and entertainment centres. Imaging a city through the organisation of spectacular urban spaces became a means to attract capital and people (of the right sort) in a period (since 1973) of intensified inter-urban competition and urban entrepreneurialism.\textsuperscript{91}

For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to reemphasise that the key features of urban entrepreneurialism, as identified by a wide range of scholars, are: intercity competition and ‘place-marketing’;\textsuperscript{92} the reinvention of cities as leisure and consumption centres;\textsuperscript{93} partnerships between the local state and the private sector;\textsuperscript{94} the outsourcing of formerly public functions of government to commercial actors;\textsuperscript{95} and regulatory innovations in which the financial risks of commercial redevelopment are absorbed by the public sector.\textsuperscript{96} Following Harvey’s thesis, a wide range of scholarship has identified entrepreneurial urban governance as a product of global economic restructuring in the 1970s, and ‘a rising tide of neoconservatism’ in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{97} Indeed, urban entrepreneurialism is often portrayed as a local response to ‘the ideological

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{91} Harvey, \textit{The Condition of Postmodernity}, pp. 91-92.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Jessop, ‘The Narrative of Enterprise’.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism’, p. 5.
\end{itemize}
hegemony of the supply-side, market-based strategies imposed by central government’ with the implication that a post-1970s, neoliberal political project is responsible for an epochal change in the nature and activities of urban governance.\textsuperscript{98}

The following discussion will show that many of the paradigmatic features of urban entrepreneurialism were central to the development of post-war shopping centres between the 1950s and the 1970s, and were key characteristics of the governance of British cities in a period which sociologist and political theorist Bob Jessop characterises as one of ‘municipal welfarism’.\textsuperscript{99} The intention here is not simply to prove that a swathe of non-historians are ‘wrong’, but rather to bridge disciplinary divides and demonstrate the value of empirical historical research in testing and revising theories developed in adjacent disciplines. The history of the post-war period has been mythologised within contemporary urban studies in order to critique present-day urban politics. Applying more rigorous historical approaches to the governance of post-war cities suggests, not an epochal political rupture, but a much more stable relationship between the state and organised commercial interests through which the physical fabric and social functions of cities have been governed. Crucially for the post-war period, this relationship worked to manage and respond to the cultural practices and economic activities associated with mass consumerism.

As indicated, many scholars of urban entrepreneurialism view city governments’ efforts to reinvent their cities as centres of consumption and leisure, and competition between cities to provide the best shopping ‘offer’ to consumers, as a key marker of the transformed character of post-1980s urban governance. Planning theorist Ron Griffiths


suggests that entrepreneurial city governments ‘seek to enhance their position in the competition for consumption expenditures. This might involve, for example, creating zones dedicated to upscale shopping, entertainment and cultural tourism’. Urban policy analyst Justin O’Connor also argues that post-1980s urban regeneration is distinctive in its ‘redrawing of the old historical industrial areas in terms of leisure and consumption’. Yet, as early as 1945, the city governments of Manchester and Leeds were deeply concerned with successfully positioning their cities as ‘destinations’ offering new types of shopping experiences, and they viewed the development of shopping centres as central to this objective. The 1945 City of Manchester Plan spoke in terms of protecting the city’s status as a regional shopping centre and envisaged the creation of new types of shopping space ‘using several floors for shopping purposes and capable of satisfying the consumer’s every need’. In 1955, the Leeds Chamber of Trade made representations to the city council regarding the need for proactive planning policies to expand and enhance the city’s shopping facilities. Representatives of the Chamber argued for council assistance to encourage ‘nationally known retailers…to enter the City’ in order to avoid ‘a weakening of the City’s pre- eminent position as the regional shopping centre’.

The sense that the city must compete in the provision of consumer spaces and experiences is clear in this 1964 Manchester Evening News report on the proposals for the Arndale shopping development:

\[\text{to compete with shopping centres like the Merseyway project at Stockport and the scores of new town centres planned in Lancashire and Cheshire, Manchester’s new centre must offer a huge variety of goods in surroundings where shopping will be an adventure and a recreation.}\]

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This report went on to add that ‘the corporation is determined that Manchester must retain its position as the premier shopping centre of the region’. Manchester’s 1967 city plan identified shopping as the primary function of the city centre, evidenced a deep concern with regional status and the quality of shopping on offer, and espoused ‘redevelopment and replacement…to maintain and improve [the city’s] position as a centre of attraction’. Leeds’s Merrion Centre was advertised in similarly competitive terms as ‘a place where you can enjoy the finest shopping facilities in the country’.

It may be the case that inter-urban competition has intensified in recent decades (although this would be difficult to assess), but it certainly is not the case that the competitive promotion of shopping facilities and consumer experiences is a novel feature of post-1970s urban governance. City governments, business leaders, and local newspapers placed supreme importance on the ‘competitiveness’ of their city’s shopping facilities as early as the mid-1950s, and post-war shopping centres were intended to offer the consumer a new type of shopping experience—‘where shopping will be an adventure and a recreation’ as the *Evening News* put it. Throughout the post-war period, city governments were preoccupied with the status of their cities as shopping destinations, and undertook proactive planning policies to enhance and improve shopping facilities. These post-war efforts to reinvent cities as consumer destinations cast serious doubt on Harvey’s analysis and the way it has been taken up by many urban scholars. It was the perceived imperatives of post-war consumerism, rather than neoliberal politics, which elevated shopping to a preeminent position in understandings of what a city was for, and which made the provision of shopping facilities a key political priority for urban governments.

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106 City and County Borough of Manchester, *City Centre Map 1967*, pp. 14-16. GMCRO
107 ‘Where’s Britain’s Most Modern Shopping Centre?’, promotional leaflet, N.d.[c.1963]. WYAS—LCC—LLD1/2/817111
Competition between cities to provide the best ‘offer’ for shoppers meant that city officials looked to new forms of commercial expertise, namely the large retailers and commercial property developers who claimed a privileged knowledge of the needs of consumers, and the ‘new style shopping’ they demanded.\(^{108}\) For local officials looking to establish their cities as forward-thinking, dynamic, and in tune with the demands of a consumer society, development companies such as Arndale Property Trust, Town Centre Securities, and Town and City, offered city governments access to a modish domain of new consumer cultures and desires. As a result, city officials were keen to align themselves with those who, as Town and City reminded them, had their ‘finger on the pulse of the market’.\(^{109}\)

For Harvey, and for many other urban theorists, partnerships between the public and private sectors are the preeminent feature of urban entrepreneurialism. Thus, Harvey writes that ‘the new urban entrepreneurialism has, as its centrepiece, the notion of a “public-private partnership”’.\(^{110}\) Political scientist Margit Mayer similarly argues that ‘post-Fordist city politics’ is characterised by ‘new forms of public-private collaboration, in which the role of the local authority in respect of business and real estate interests…is being redefined’.\(^{111}\) Yet urban redevelopment in the period from 1945 to the 1970s was centred on partnerships and collaboration between city governments, commercial developers and investors. City governments’ legal powers to acquire land, to destroy large portions of the urban fabric, to permit or reject proposed

\(^{108}\) Town & City Properties Limited, *Arndale Covered Centres*, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 2. GMCRO—Q21/1

\(^{109}\) Town & City Properties Limited, *Arndale Covered Centres*, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 4. GMCRO—Q21/1

\(^{110}\) Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism’, p. 7.

\(^{111}\) Mayer, ‘Post-Fordist City Politics’, p. 317.
developments, and to dictate acceptable patterns of use were instrumental in the commercial project of remaking the shopping landscape.

The Merrion Shopping Centre in Leeds, for example, was built on land acquired and cleared by the city council under slum clearance powers (see chapter four, pp. 235-237). Only one year after most of the site was cleared, it was the Chamber of Trade in Leeds which pressed the city council to remove the few remaining buildings (which were charitable almshouses), to prevent a new church being erected on the site, and to install a carpark to serve the new shopping centre. These demands were framed by the Chamber in terms of what ‘the shopping public need’. 112 Once the city government had complied with these demands, the land was leased to local entrepreneur and philanthropist Arnold Ziff who developed the Merrion Centre through his company Town Centre Securities. 113 This was not the only such case of land acquisition and supply by the city government. Council records indicate that by 1960, the city engineer had entered into numerous contractual agreements with development companies to provide land on favourable long leases for the purposes of shopping and office developments. 114

By the 1960s, central government granted local authorities new powers to designate Comprehensive Development Area (CDAs), and city governments began enthusiastically designating large portions of city centres in order to encourage and manage the renewal schemes put forward by commercial developers. 115 CDA status allowed councils to use powers of compulsory purchase to override any opposition to

115 The enthusiastic application of CDA powers in this period is noted in Pendlebury, ‘Alas Smith and Burns?’, p. 116.
redevelopment from existing property owners, and to assist developers in assembling large sites. Wilfred Burns (a key figure in the town planning profession nationally) explained in his 1963 manual for urban redevelopment that CDA powers ‘act as a lubricant to the negotiations, or, in other terminology, as a threat to the reluctant seller’. In Manchester, by 1967 the city government had prepared five CDA proposals ‘amounting to about 200 acres and representing most of the core of the Central Area’. The Arndale shopping centres in central Manchester and in Stretford, Greater Manchester, were both developed using the CDA procedure, as were many Arndale Centres across the country.

The successor company to the Arndale Property Trust, Town and City, claimed that it possessed ‘an unequalled record of co-operation with Local Authorities in the redevelopment of central areas’. For Town and City, ‘legislative changes [which introduced CDA powers] provided welcome alterations in procedure eliminating the earlier inhibitions’, and this ‘new and enlightened attitude [had] resulted in the recognition by many local authorities…of the value of partnership arrangements with reputable and experienced development organisations’. In an extensively researched book on the property development industry published in 1967, the financial editor of the *Sunday Times*, Oliver Marriott, pointed out that, across the country, new shopping developments were being facilitated by a ‘quaint combination of the entrepreneur and the town clerk’.

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118 City and County Borough of Manchester, *City Centre Map 1967*, p. 55. GMCRO
120 Town & City Properties Limited, *Arndale Covered Centres*, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 4. GMCRO—Q21/1
121 Marriott, *The Property Boom*, pp. 234-235. Marriott’s book was based on his wide-ranging investigations of the workings of the property development industry since the end of the war.
Partnerships between city governments and developers were central to post-war urban renewal, both practically and in terms of the way redevelopment was narrated and presented by contemporaries. The collaborative use of planning powers meant that development schemes were the product of close cooperation between city officials and commercial actors. In March 1967 when the central Manchester Arndale scheme was being considered by the city planning committee, *The Guardian* reported that the developer had ‘been discussing its proposals with the corporation for more than two years’.122 In Stretford it was an Arndale employee, rather than a public official, who drew up the formal CDA plans, ‘since the shopping precinct was going to form the basis of the Comprehensive Development Area’.123 Such outsourcing of planning functions was also evident in Leeds where, in the mid-1950s, ‘the broad plans for developing the new shopping area’ were formulated in conjunction with the Chamber of Trade, whose representatives informed the city government that they were ‘glad to tender practical advice’.124 Sociologist Bob Jessop suggests that, in the entrepreneurial city, the role of ‘developing specific strategies and initiatives’ is ‘increasingly devolved to individual firms, consultancies, private associations or public-private partnerships’, but, once again, such practices emerge as a key feature of post-war urban renewal.125

The concept of partnership was not simply a description of practice but functioned discursively as a signifier of good governance in the post-war redevelopment of cities. The Arndale company was prodigious in its use of the term to describe its relations with local authorities, and its role in the wider management of cities. Arndale shopping centres were, the company stated, ‘provided in partnership with Local Authorities and

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123 ‘Note of a Meeting held on Wednesday, 8th August, 1962, in the Borough Engineer’s Office, King Street Redevelopment, Comprehensive Development Area Map’, 10 September 1962, p. 3. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1404
from this co-operation between public body and private developer stems real
benefits.’\textsuperscript{126} The company stressed ‘the advantage in the welding of the powers of Local
Authorities and the commercial expertise of the property company’.\textsuperscript{127} The discourse of
partnership also entered into journalistic accounts of urban renewal. In 1968, in an
article entitled ‘The NEW Manchester’, \textit{Guardian} journalist, George Hawthorne,
described planning practices in the city as possessing ‘a great emphasis on round-table
talk, on give and take between the developers and the planners’.\textsuperscript{128} Regarding the
Manchester Arndale scheme specifically, Hawthorne wrote that:

\begin{quote}
It has been planned as an entity after scores of meetings between planners and architects
from the development group and the town hall. It is no longer just a commercial
planning application submitted for approval; it is, aesthetically and socially, a
submission by one partner to another.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

Clearly, the language of partnership was used to signify good governance, and dynamic
and forward-thinking planning, in the post-war period. Perhaps more significantly, in a
period in which urban governance has been described as possessing ‘a social welfarist
ideology…as distinct from the business values of wealth generation and competitive
success’, public-private partnerships were mobilised to pursue commercial
redevelopment projects aimed at recasting cities as shopping destinations and servicing
the desires of the affluent consumer.\textsuperscript{130}

Within urban geography and contemporary urban studies, the post-war period has been
lionised as one in which the local state served the collective interests of citizens by
focusing its resources on the provision of social housing and other welfare services.

Geographer Kevin Ward, for example, writes of a post-war ‘urban Keynesianism’ in

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{126} Town & City Properties Limited, \textit{Arndale Covered Centres}, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Town & City Properties Limited, \textit{Arndale Covered Centres}, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{128} George Hawthorne, \textit{The Guardian}, ‘The NEW Manchester’, 29 October 1968.
\item \textsuperscript{129} George Hawthorne, \textit{The Guardian}, ‘The NEW Manchester’, 29 October 1968.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Griffiths, ‘Making Sameness’, p. 42. See also Hubbard & Hall, ‘The Entrepreneurial City’, p. 2 on the
welfarist character of post-war urban government.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
which the city was viewed as a ‘means through which to redistribute resources and address inequalities’, and was governed by the local authority in a ‘collective’ mode.\textsuperscript{131} This portrayal of collectivist local government provides a useful mirror with which to critique contemporary ‘neoliberal’, competitive processes of urban redevelopment driven by consumer capital. Yet it is a mirror based on assumptions rather than empirical research into the governance and redevelopment of post-war cities. The transition to a mass consuming economy, organised around the shopping habits of the individual, which took place in the post-war period compelled city governments to reinvent their cities as shopping destinations. This project was undertaken in partnership with entrepreneurs and developers and required the deployment of the state’s powers over the form and function of urban space.

The planning process which produced the central Manchester Arndale shopping centre provides a good illustration of the extent to which city governments aligned themselves politically and financially with commercial developers. Council planners consulted extensively with the development company over a number of years and prepared a CDA proposal ‘in order to ensure that comprehensive development is not impeded by the problem of fragmented ownership’.\textsuperscript{132} Officials at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government were privately concerned that ‘Manchester, and no doubt the Planning Department, will be under extreme pressure from Arndales [sic]…to give an early decision’.\textsuperscript{133} The city government successfully petitioned the Ministry on behalf of Arndale’s directors to postpone the inquiry on two separate occasions in order to give

\textsuperscript{132} City and County Borough of Manchester, \textit{City Centre Map 1967}, pp. 58-59. GMCRO.
\textsuperscript{133} MHLG, ‘Manchester: Market Street C.D.A.’, internal note, 10 March 1967. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1184
company negotiators more time to buy off objectors.\textsuperscript{134} When the inquiry commenced in June 1968, council and developers presented a joint case. The city surveyor, chief planning officer, and other city officials gave evidence alongside private sector experts hired by the Arndale Property Trust and witnesses stressed the unity of civic and commercial interests. Arndale’s architect, Lewis Womersley, implored the inquiry to approve the shopping centre development, stating that ‘this scheme meets and coordinates the needs of both the developers and the city’.\textsuperscript{135}

Regulatory innovation and financial risk sharing are also identified as key elements of the post-1970s entrepreneurial turn in urban government. The geographers Helga Leitner and Eric Sheppard describe ‘property-led development projects subsidised by the public sector…oriented towards providing an attractive landscape of consumption for tourists and wealthier residents’ as typical of the new entrepreneurialism.\textsuperscript{136} Jessop and Harvey also cite ‘risk-bearing for private capital’ as a characteristic feature of present-day urban governments’ entrepreneurialism.\textsuperscript{137} Again though, the planning and financing of post-war shopping centres provides examples which undermine any sense that such practices should be viewed as novel, or as the product of post-1970s political change. Post-war city governments also subsidised and financed shopping developments. In Leeds, for example, a CDA approved in 1964 for the commercial redevelopment of the Greek Street area was reported as ‘a combined effort between the council and private owners [in which] basic development costs will be shared’.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{134} Letter from Arndale Managing Director to Manchester Town Clerk, 17 August 1967. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1187
\textsuperscript{135} Womersley’s statement to the inquiry was reported in Michael Morris, ‘Pavement Cafes in Plan for Manchester’, \textit{The Guardian}, 20 June 1968.
\textsuperscript{136} Leitner & Sheppard, ‘Economic Uncertainty’, p. 298.
In the case of the Manchester Arndale shopping centre, the city government not only deployed its legal powers to assist the project, but also acted as an investor in its own right. The city government invested £1.5 million of public funds into the Arndale development, acting alongside the Prudential Insurance Company which invested £26 million. This arrangement, and the future of the scheme as a whole, was jeopardised in 1971 when the Prudential reduced its contribution to £15 million. The Arndale Property Trust refused to absorb the extra financial risk of plugging the funding gap left by the Prudential’s reduced contribution and the response of the city government was to devise an experimental financial arrangement in order to provide more public finance for the shopping development. The essence of this scheme was the creation of a nominally separate company, the Manchester Mortgage Corporation Limited, which could borrow at preferential interest rates in order to ensure the development went ahead. For legal reasons the company operated as an independent entity, but its stock issue was unconditionally guaranteed by the council and a complicated contractual system ensured that its sole function was the financing of the shopping centre. The six company directors were all senior councillors and the company secretary was Manchester’s town clerk, George Ogden.\(^\text{139}\)

Joint public-private development companies of this nature are a relatively common aspect of urban development and regeneration in contemporary British cities.\(^\text{140}\) Yet Manchester’s experiments along these lines in the 1960s and 1970s (along with similar examples in other towns and cities) indicate that, for city governments, political and financial cooperation with commercial interests has a longer history.\(^\text{141}\) Furthermore,

\(^\text{139}\) ‘The Manchester Mortgage Corporation Limited’, incorporation documents, 23 March 1972. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1189
\(^\text{140}\) For details of present day practice see Phil Jones & James Evans, *Urban Regeneration in the UK: Theory and Practice* (London, 2008).
\(^\text{141}\) Examples of similar public-private development companies are mentioned briefly in Ambrose & Colenutt, *The Property Machine*, pp. 68-72, although further research in this area is needed.
This public absorption of private financial risk was not a response to neoliberal ideological impositions from the national state (Treasury officials were decidedly apprehensive about this venture), but instead reflected the long-standing role of the local state in promoting and servicing commercial ventures, and the perceived importance of commercial consumption to the city’s social and economic future.\(^{142}\)

This section has shown that many of the features and practices of urban governance which geographers, sociologists, and urban theorists have presented as emblematic of ‘the new urban entrepreneurialism’ were central to processes of urban redevelopment from the 1940s to the 1970s. Partnerships with the private sector, the competitive promotion of urban shopping facilities, and public absorption of financial risks are all facets of the governance of post-war cities and were fundamental to the creation of post-war shopping centres. Such findings demonstrate the need to interrogate assumptions about earlier forms of governance which guide urban theorists’ critiques of present-day urban politics. Indeed, the geographers Phil Hubbard and Tim Hall have recognised this need for historical rigour. They note that much contemporary urban scholarship lacks ‘any consensual understanding of how entrepreneurialism differs from previous forms of urban governance…or how it relates to the broader dynamics of advanced capitalism’.\(^{143}\) The discussion in this section has shown how empirical historical research can be used to respond to this identified problem within urban studies, and thus bridge divides between urban history and adjacent disciplines.

\(^{143}\) Hubbard & Hall, ‘The Entrepreneurial City’, pp. 2-3.
Public Cultures of Shopping

The final section of this chapter shows how the new urban spaces of the shopping centre transformed the public culture of cities. While we know that mass consumerism had far-reaching consequences for individuals’ cultural participation and experiences, we know little about how post-war consumerism affected the ‘public culture’ of cities, that is, how the enhanced significance of private consumption impacted upon projections of civic identity and the ways in which this was expressed through architecture, institutions, and ritual. Similarly, we know little about how consumerism offered new modes of participation in, and new exclusions from, urban public life. Urban historians have been much concerned with the changing nature of civic cultures in Britain across the twentieth century, and the field has traditionally been dominated by narratives of the decline of the distinctive civic cultures which characterised nineteenth century cities. This civic decline, it has been suggested, was particularly marked after 1945 due to the ‘centralising tendencies of the national state’. A revisionist perspective, however, has raised questions about this narrative. Richard Trainor argues that ‘an emphasis on adaptation and diversification is a more fruitful way of understanding changes in urban governance’. In this vein, Charlotte Wildman’s research into the civic cultures of Manchester and Liverpool in the interwar period draws attention to the impact of mass

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suffrage, and argues that ‘local government moved towards a more demotic and inclusive civic culture’. Wildman also highlights the growing importance of urban consumer cultures in the interwar period, centred on department stores and shopping streets, and suggests that ‘the display and practices of consumer culture became increasingly central to the city’s identity’.

Rather than focus on tracing the twentieth century decline of a ‘high’ municipal culture then, recent scholarship has shown how civic governance and culture evolved in concert with changing notions of citizenship and, crucially, in dialogue with urban consumer cultures. The historiography here is focused on the interwar period however, and, for the period after 1945, these issues remain largely unexplored. In the post-war period, notions of citizenship were radically reformulated by the dynamics of mass consumerism, and by perceptions of the arrival of ‘the affluent society’, but the impact of consumerist models of society and the citizen-subject on the public culture of post-war cities has not been addressed. This section of the chapter shows how shopping centres were simultaneously manifestations of, and vehicles for, a growing alignment between civic and commercial cultures. The celebration of new shopping facilities as ‘civic’ achievements blurred the boundaries between notions of public and private provision, and the spaces of the shopping centre introduced new forms of participation, and new modes of policing, into urban public life.

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Historian Peter Shapely has recently shown how large scale urban redevelopment projects, including shopping centres, served as sources of civic pride in the post-war period. Shapely situates developments like the Birmingham Bull Ring and Manchester’s Arndale shopping centre as part of a long history of inter-city competition and ‘boosterism’ in which civic officials, developers, and the local press, demonstrated local prestige through claiming to have the ‘first, biggest and best’. The language of boosterism certainly characterised the way the shopping centres in this study were presented. Leeds’s Merrion Centre, for example, was advertised as ‘a development that Leeds is proud of’. The developers of the Manchester Arndale boasted that the new shopping centre would be ‘a record breaker in terms of size and cost and in the facilities and range of shopping to be provided [and] it will compare favourably with similar developments throughout Europe’. Long-standing traditions of civic boosterism then, were important influences on the presentation and reception of new urban shopping centres. Yet rather than being a straightforward extension of the ways in which civic pride was expressed in earlier decades, the importance placed on new shopping centres demonstrated a cultural shift in which civic status and prestige was increasingly judged in terms of a city’s receptiveness to new modes of commercial consumption, and in which the public culture of cities was aligned with affluent consumerism.

The alignment of civic and commercial cultures was made material in the spaces and functions of the shopping centre. Through their design, and through the type of facilities offered, new shopping complexes blurred the boundaries between public and private provision. The inclusion of municipal facilities such as libraries and theatres within new

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151 ‘Where’s Britain’s Most Modern Shopping Centre?’, promotional leaflet, N.d.[c.1963]. WYAS—LCC—LLD1/2/817111
152 Town & City Properties Limited, Arndale Covered Centres, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 33. GMCRO—Q21/1
shopping complexes illustrated the way that these spaces simultaneously fulfilled civic and commercial functions. Town and City Properties, highlighted the fact that, ‘in many Centres libraries, civic theatres, clinics and other public and cultural facilities are provided as an integral part of the overall design’. City governments were also keen to integrate civic services into the commercial spaces of new shopping complexes. In 1974, Leeds City Council opened a ‘planning shop’ inside the Merrion Centre where residents whose houses were threatened by redevelopment schemes could seek advice whilst shopping. The desire to make council services ‘consumer-friendly’ was clear in the words of a council official who hoped that the facility would have ‘a very informal atmosphere more akin to a shop’.

The inclusion of municipal facilities in shopping complexes illustrates how ‘public’ and ‘private’ functions were mingled in these new urban spaces. Shopping centres were often presented as purpose-built ‘town centres’, or, as Town and City claimed, ‘a focal point of the town’s social and economic life’. Although malls as an architectural form were an American import, in the British context, centrally-located shopping centres were presented as an important means by which civic vitality could be protected from the decentralising tendencies of US-style, out-of-town shopping. Town and City Properties suggested that ‘the dramatic—often disastrous—effects of the major out-town [shopping centres] on central areas in American cities offer a harsh lesson to this country’.

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153 Town & City Properties Limited, *Arndale Covered Centres*, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 7. GMCRO—Q21/1
156 This view was offered by developers; Town & City Properties Limited, *Arndale Covered Centres*, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 3. GMCRO—Q21/1. It was also present in local press reporting: ‘New Market Street Will be a Shoppers’ Haven’, *Manchester Evening News*, 19 May 1964; Winn Walsh, ‘Bringing Back the Shoppers’, *Manchester Evening News*, 1 July 1976, p. 9.
157 Town & City Properties Limited, *Arndale Covered Centres*, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 3. GMCRO—Q21/1
point comprising attractive shopping, leisure facilities and public services…which forms the commercial heart of the community’.\textsuperscript{158} This ‘civic’ character of post-war British shopping centres illustrates the need to differentiate between the US and the UK experience of shopping centres, and the dangers of viewing the development of malls in Britain in terms of the Americanisation of British culture and the British shopping landscape.\textsuperscript{159} In British cities, shopping centres were seen as a means to reinvent cities as receptive hosts for new modes of retailing, and to reorient the public life of the city around cultures of consumerism.

The mingling of civic and commercial cultures was most evident in the fanfare and pageantry which accompanied the official openings of shopping centres. In his investigation of civic governance and culture in Victorian cities, Simon Gunn emphasises the central role that civic ritual and performance played in establishing, and reproducing, the ‘public culture’ of urban elites. Orchestrated civic spectacles such as public processions, royal visits, funerals, and the opening of public buildings, ‘represented the urban population to itself in a collective act of identification and celebration’.\textsuperscript{160} For Gunn, and for David Cannadine, civic rituals were not simply a reflection of existing social relations, but were a means by which the culture and authority of urban elites was actualised.\textsuperscript{161} As such, civic ceremonials simultaneously expressed and enacted the public culture of the industrial city. Cannadine has also stressed that the significance of civic performance was liable to change over time ‘because of developments which took place in the civic context from which it derived

\textsuperscript{158} Town & City Properties Limited, \textit{Arndale Covered Centres}, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 3. GMCRO—Q21/1
\textsuperscript{159} For an argument against ‘any simple appeal to the Americanisation of British economic or cultural life’ in the context of the post-war advertising industry see Mort, ‘The Commercial Domain’, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{160} Gunn, \textit{Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class}, p. 163.
its meaning’. In this context, the pageantry of shopping centres’ opening ceremonies can be viewed as a means through which a new civic culture of consumerism was expressed.

The Merrion Centre in Leeds witnessed a number of official opening ceremonies as various stages of the development were completed. The opening of the first stage of the development on 24 March 1964 was reported in The Guardian, and one onlooker described seeing the ‘civic dignitaries complete with top hats and bowlers’. On the completion of the final stage in 1973, the developer’s wife, Marjorie Ziff, ‘opened’ the centre in a ceremony in which the Lord Mayor of Leeds presented Mrs Ziff with a ceremonial key. The Yorkshire Evening Post reported that ‘the key opened a gilded cage containing a huge cake—a replica of the Merrion Centre. The opening was performed by Mrs Ziff cutting the cake’. Mr Ziff also distributed 1500 commemorative medals to ‘friends, business associates and those connected with the project’. These ritualised performances, conducted by public officials and commercial developers, associated civic progress and achievement in post-war cities with the provision of landmark shopping facilities.

The opening of the council-owned shopping centre at Seacroft, on the outskirts of Leeds, was an occasion for a particularly elaborate display of civic ceremony. As the focal point of Leeds city council’s ‘complete new suburban township’, the shopping centre at Seacroft was described by city officials as ‘the hub of the whole estate [which would] provide the cultural and social facilities necessary for such a large and thriving

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163 An image of the new centre was included in the paper on the day of its first opening ceremony; The Guardian, 24 March 1964, p. 3. The onlookers account was given in a reader’s letter; Arnold Dobson, ‘Willpower and the Citizens of Leeds’, The Guardian, 8 October 1964, p. 10
community’.\textsuperscript{166} The ‘Seacroft Civic Centre’ was officially opened by the Queen and Prince Philip on 22 October 1965 and the city council produced a commemorative pamphlet which documented the occasion. Upon arrival at a nearby station, the royals approached the new shopping complex as part of a motorcade procession of civic and royal dignitaries. A ceremonial royal dais, specially designed by the city architect, was erected next to the shopping precinct, and ticketing and proximity to the Queen and Prince Phillip was tightly guarded.

The opening ceremony commenced with the unfurling of the royal standard, as the Lord Mayor and local MP Dennis Healey escorted the royal couple to the dais. Next, Leeds City Police Band played the national anthem and the Lord Mayor introduced various councillors and officials to the Queen. A local school girl presented a bouquet, before the Queen spoke to declare the shopping centre open, cut a ribbon with the obligatory ceremonial scissors, and took a tour along the new shopping precinct. The whole party then returned to Leeds City Hall for further ceremonials and a banquet lunch.\textsuperscript{167} On a cold and foggy October day, many residents got as close as they could to the ceremony, and lined the processional route. Here then, the opening of a new shopping centre was a public achievement which merited not just a civic, but a royal, celebration.\textsuperscript{168}

The fanfare of these ceremonies shows that elaborate and choreographed civic performances continued into the post-war period, although they were now often focused on celebrating the provision of new consumer amenities. Shapely suggests that the

\textsuperscript{166} Leeds Housing Department, ‘Seacroft Town Centre’, promotional brochure, N.d.[c.1965?]. WYAS—LLD1/2/824956

\textsuperscript{167} These details of the ceremony are given in ‘Queen Opens Seacroft Town Centre’, press release, 1965. WYAS—LLD1/2/817111. The commemorative pamphlet is also contained within these files.

\textsuperscript{168} The official opening of Manchester’s Arndale shopping centre in 1979 was also a royal ceremony performed by Princess Anne; M&G Real Estate Ltd, ‘Manchester Arndale: A Shoppers’ Paradise’, p. 3. Available at: https://www.manchesterarndale.com/documents/manchester-arndale-history.pdf [Accessed 26 August 2015]
opening ceremonies of flagship developments in post-war cities show that ‘civic pride was no longer an expression of middle-class culture but the language of the technocrat, councillor and developer’. The restriction of active participation in formal ceremonies to a closed group of city officials, property entrepreneurs, and building contractors certainly underlines the privileged position of this grouping in post-war urban politics. And yet, in celebrating the provision of new facilities for the citizen-shopper, the opening ceremonies described here also reflect a wider shift in notions of civic culture and participation. As Charlotte Wildman has shown, interwar urban development projects such as Manchester’s Central Library were facilities for the mass citizen, and indicative of a more demotic civic culture. Post-war shopping centres were facilities for the citizen-shopper, and their celebration as civic achievements demonstrated the extent to which public life and public provision in cities was reoriented around cultures of shopping.

The function of shopping centres as venues for a new public culture of shopping extended beyond the ritualised performances of opening ceremonies to the organisation of new forms of participatory experiences aimed at the citizen-shopper. A range of orchestrated events and exhibitions were laid on in shopping centres and it was through these less grandiose performances that the general public was encouraged to engage with, and participate in, a public culture of shopping. Shopping centre operators organised activities such as carol concerts, fashion shows, and exhibitions in order to attract and entertain the shopping public (see figures twelve and thirteen). Such events were designed to increase footfall and ensure that visiting a centre was enjoyed as a leisure experience in its own right, but they also underlined operators’ ambition to cast the shopping centre as a ‘civic’ space. The developer Town and City Properties, for

169 Shapely, ‘Civic Pride and Redevelopment’, p. 311.
example, explained that organised entertainments in shopping centres served to ‘improve trading and increase the value of each Centre as a focal point for community activity’.  

Prior to the opening of the Manchester Arndale, a promotional pamphlet emphasised the public and participatory character which the new centre would foster, explaining that ‘squares of varying sizes will be created. It is anticipated that such areas will be used for Exhibitions, Fashion Parades, Dances, Concerts and an unlimited number of similar promotional activities’. Similar participatory events took place in Leeds’s Merrion Centre, such as a student art exhibition in 1967 in which three members of the shopping public were chosen at random to judge the competition and award cash prizes. Figure thirteen below shows a 1966 exhibition in the Merrion Centre as part of ‘National Library Week’. Once again, civic services were imported into the commercial space of a shopping centre and citizens were encouraged to view participation in the public life of the city in terms of engagement with the experiences offered within shopping centres.

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172 Manchester Market Street central area redevelopment scheme’, pamphlet, N.d.[c.1967?]. From private collection of Martin Dodge, University of Manchester.

Figure 12: Promotional shots of carol concerts in Arndale shopping centres at Stretford (Greater Manchester) and Doncaster. The text reads ‘Christmas is a time for shopping and a time for carols’. Through such participatory experiences, citizens were invited to engage in the public life of cities through the private spaces of shopping centres. Source: Town & City Properties Limited, Arndale Covered Centres, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 5. GMCRO—Q21/1
Commercial experts understood that encouraging individuals to engage with performances and participatory experiences was essential to the financial success of the new model of retailing which shopping centres offered. In a 1965 article in the *Estates Gazette* which was circulated to city governments, Mr H Newman, a London-based public relations expert, made clear the important role that promotion and performance played in what he called the ‘process of consumer re-education’.¹⁷⁴ Newman explained that:

The centre is “sold” to the public over a wide area as a merchandising unit under the shopping centre’s umbrella, with a series of constant events, “something doing” 12 months in the year, from cooking competitions to local art exhibitions, from children’s pet shows to square dancing, from bands and concerts to “do-it-yourself” displays, linked up with collective advertising and home-delivered flyer distribution…promotion must be on a continuing basis…year in and year out, month in month out, promotion (which includes advertising) is essential.

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¹⁷⁴ H Newman, ‘How to Promote a Shopping Centre’. This article was published in the *Estates Gazette* on 10 July 1965, but was subsequently circulated by Newman’s company to local authorities to advertise Newman’s services. WYAS—LLC—833129
Particularly must this be true in Britain, where shopping habits have to be changed.\footnote{H Newman, ‘How to Promote a Shopping Centre’, 10 July 1965. WYAS—LLC—833129}

Newman’s candid account makes clear that, from the operators’ and advertisers’ perspective, the orchestration of a public culture of mall shopping was a commercial project aimed at changing the shopping habits of the British public. Writing about nineteenth century department stores, Rudi Laermans has argued that the design and layout of these shopping spaces, which incorporated innovative forms of display and advertising, made department stores spaces in which individuals learned to shop in new ways.\footnote{Rudi Laermans, ‘Learning to Consume: Early Department Stores and the Shaping of the Modern Consumer Culture (1860-1914)’, \textit{Theory, Culture and Society} 10:4 (1993), pp. 79-102.} A similar transformation of shopping habits and cultures took place within post-war shopping centres. Simply entering and shopping in malls was presented as a new and exciting form of public experience, where ‘shopping can be rediscovered as a pleasure’ as Town and City claimed.\footnote{Town & City Properties Limited, \textit{Arndale Covered Centres}, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 7. GMCRO—Q21/1} Leeds City Council hoped that shopping in the Seacroft Centre would be ‘in a relaxed “resort” atmosphere…Paved courts will be laid out with seats, trees and flowers—an agreeable place to linger’.\footnote{Leeds City Council, ‘Seacroft Town Centre’, promotional brochure, N.d.[c.1965?]. WYAS—LCC—LLD1/2/824956} The internal spaces and features of shopping centres, which included fountains, statues, children’s play equipment, and even aviaries, were intended to create a space of spectacle and public enjoyment.\footnote{Town & City Properties Limited, \textit{Arndale Covered Centres}, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 7. GMCRO—Q21/1}

The transformation of shopping into a leisure activity, and the development of consuming spaces based on spectacle, novelty, and display, has been well-documented both by historians of arcades and department stores, and by post-modern theorists
writing about present-day shopping environments. What is significant about post-war shopping centres, however, is the active role played by city governments in endorsing and promoting the consumerist remodelling of the urban environment, and the way in which, through civic performance and participatory events, the public culture of the city was aligned with new types of shopping experience. This ‘civic’ shopping experience was expressed in a report of the *Manchester Evening News* which anticipated that the concourses of the Arndale shopping centre would be ‘the equivalent of medieval town squares where people can meet and talk, shop and take refreshment at the heart of the city’. While developers and entrepreneurs promoted the new experiences on offer in shopping centres as part of a commercial project of ‘consumer re-education’, city governments viewed shopping developments as a means of recasting the image and function of their cities as shopping destinations. In the process, the public culture of cities came to be expressed and experienced within the new spaces of the shopping centre.

As well as introducing new forms of public participation to post-war cities, the spaces of shopping centres introduced new behavioural codes and new modes of policing citizens’ conduct. In her study of the department stores and shopping districts of London in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Erika Diane Rappaport shows how new shopping spaces and habits reformulated models of acceptable public conduct, particularly for women, and thus introduced ‘new ideals of public and private and male and female’. Post-war shopping centres also involved the construction of new models of acceptable conduct and, crucially, transformed the ‘public’ character of

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182 Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, p. 3.
urban space by introducing highly ambiguous civic spaces which were privately-owned and privately-policed. Contests over access and conduct reveal that the consumerist remodelling of urban public culture, which was made material in the new spaces of shopping centres, entailed new forms of discipline as the boundaries and exclusions of the shopping city were delineated and enforced.

Certain types of citizen, and certain forms of behaviour, were discouraged in shopping centres. Leeds’s Merrion Centre seems to have provided particularly fertile ground for disputes over the regulation of, and access to, this new type of urban space. In 1966, a full time ‘town crier’ was employed to patrol the Merrion Centre. The crier’s job was, reportedly, to ‘shout out, every hour, snippets of local and national news and such shopping information as the price of Typhoo Tea at Tesco’. 183 Although this move seems intended to emphasise the ‘civic’ nature of the space of the shopping centre, the crier’s role also demonstrated the conditions of access to the shopping environment. The crier was instructed to hand out sweets to children, but only if they were accompanied by parents. Interviewed by a Guardian reporter, the General Manager of the Merrion Centre confirmed there would be no free sweets for ‘snotty-nosed little hooligans…We don’t want to encourage gangs of kids in the centre’. 184 Judging by the frequency of complaints about teenagers’ behaviour, vandalism, and other incidents involving private security guards as well as local police, it would seem that enforcing behavioural norms, and excluding certain groups, from shopping centres was a process that was continually tested. 185 As the earlier discussion of policing the patrons of Manchester’s beat clubs showed, regulating young peoples’ conduct in the city was a persistent concern for

185 For evidence of ‘public order’ incidents see ‘Court Clears Four PCs’, The Guardian, 19 April 1972, p. 8. Complaints about ‘vandalism’ in shopping centres are a recurrent feature in council records, for examples see Manchester City Council, Minutes of the Economic Planning Group Vol. 1, 21 January 1976, GMCRO; and Leeds City Council, ‘Merrion Centre’, Health Department memo, 19 December 1968. WYAS—LLD1/2/833178
urban elites. Within shopping centres, young people could be policed and excluded by private employees, in accordance with a set of commercial imperatives regarding the image and experience of the shopping environment.

Shopping centre operators sometimes requested assistance from public authorities to assist them in policing individuals’ conduct both within and around new shopping spaces. A request from the Merrion Centre management to Leeds City Council in 1968 asked for the (council-owned) subway and toilet facilities which linked to the shopping centre to be closed at night and permanently staffed during the day to prevent vandalism, and because of ‘present conditions at the subway, where, because of its location, undesirables including homo-sexuals [sic] associate’.\(^{186}\) The operators of the Merrion Centre also argued (unsuccessfully) that the city council should contribute to the costs of staffing, servicing and policing the internal concourses of the shopping centre.\(^{187}\) As with the exclusion of young people, new models of conduct which were enforced in shopping centres were centred on individuals’ status as shoppers and on whether their conduct impinged on the shopping experience of others. Shopping centres thus reflected a transition in which codes of acceptable public conduct became tied to the regulation of the urban shopping experience.

The contests over the status, and uses, of urban space in post-war shopping centres, prefigure concerns within contemporary urban studies over ‘the privatisation of public space and the curtailment of the public sphere’.\(^{188}\) Influenced by Henri Lefebvre’s notion of ‘the right to the city’ as both a spatial and a political entitlement, there is a significant body of studies which argue that public spaces in contemporary cities are

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\(^{186}\) Letter from Town Centre Securities to City Engineer, 6 June 1968; and ‘Merrion Centre’, Health Department memo, 19 December 1968. Both within WYAS—LLD1/2/833178

\(^{187}\) Letter from Town Centre Securities to City Engineer, 6 June 1968. WYAS—LLD1/2/833178

undergoing a radical process of privatisation, in which appropriation and exclusion are eroding civil liberties, reformulating established notions of citizenship, and threatening the basis of participatory democracy.\textsuperscript{189} Much, though by no means all, of this scholarship suffers from a largely ahistorical perspective in which the privatisation of urban space is understood as a new phenomenon, associated with the emergence of ‘neoliberal’ political forms and regulatory techniques. Geographer Neil Smith and anthropologist Setha Low, for example, frame the private appropriation of urban space in terms of ‘the neoliberalization of public space’.\textsuperscript{190} Yet the shopping centres developed in the 1960s and 1970s are clear examples of privately-owned urban spaces which emerged in a period which precludes viewing them as a by-product of ‘neoliberalism’. The previous section of this chapter showed that urbanists’ assumptions regarding the novelty of ‘entrepreneurial’ modes of urban governance are not supported by historical research into post-war cities. The privatization of public space was also a key feature of post-war consumerism, rather than a neoliberal political agenda, which emerges as the driving force.

Geographer Peter Jackson notes that ‘in lamenting the privatisation of public space in the modern city, some observers have tended to romanticise its history, celebrating the


\textsuperscript{190} Smith & Low, ‘The Imperative of Public Space’, p. 16.
openness and accessibility of the streets’. Numerous historical studies of the construction, experience, and regulation of urban public spaces have shown that access and behaviour in specific urban environments is consistently structured and negotiated in accordance with class, gender, and power relations. It is not the case that the emergence of privately-owned urban shopping spaces in the post-war period marked the beginnings of a linear process in which ‘democratic’ public space was replaced by ‘undemocratic’ private space. Rather, the new norms of conduct which were enforced in shopping centres reflect the extent to which the conditions of participation in urban public life became centred on individuals’ status and potential as consumers. The objections of shopping centre operators to the presence and activities of some teenagers and some gay men, are examples of hostility towards the use of the new urban spaces of the shopping centre for purposes other than purchasing goods.

Shopping centres were sites in and through which a new public culture of shopping was orchestrated, performed, and experienced in cities. City governments proactively aligned themselves with this transition in the civic culture of cities and redirected their ritualised expressions of civic identity towards celebrating facilities for the citizen-shopper. Rather than a decline of civic culture, the performances and participatory experiences of urban shopping show how the public life of post-war cities was remodelled around new modes of shopping. This remodelling entailed a greater role for private interests in the governance and regulation of urban space, and established new behavioural norms and conditions of access based on individuals’ ability and desire to

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shop. Attending to the spaces, practices, and policing of urban shopping environments provides a means of identifying how civic and commercial cultures were realigned, and points to some of the exclusions inherent within models of the citizen as shopper.

Conclusion

Geographer Mark Jayne writes that ‘cities, and places and spaces within them, are the sites in which consumerism has been spectacularly mediated’.\textsuperscript{193} In their investigations of present-day cities, urban geographers and sociologists have been intensely aware of the ways in which the built environment shapes urban consuming cultures, and provides a stage on which new models of urban participation, and new forms of exclusion, are enacted and experienced. Historical studies of the arcades, department stores, and shopping districts of nineteenth century cities have demonstrated that such spaces did indeed ‘spectacularly mediate’ urban consuming habits, and in the process transformed norms of urbanity and of the ‘public’ life of cities. Despite widespread agreement that the post-war period was one in which commercial consumption assumed an unprecedented importance in the organisation of social and cultural life, the period stands out as one where the urban context and settings of consumption have received little attention. This chapter has begun to address this absence by showing how urban shopping habits were organised and managed through the governance of urban space.

The spectacular consuming spaces of shopping centres radically transformed the possibilities and the experience of urban shopping, and provided a setting in which new modes of public participation were promoted and enacted. The chapter has foregrounded the role of the state, with its ultimate authority over the form and uses of

urban space, in this transformation in order to challenge the perception that new shopping environments represented an inevitable manifestation of the logics of consumerist modernity. Rather, the dramatic reshaping of the urban shopping landscape took place because city officials decided this should happen, and aligned themselves with new commercial sources of finance and expertise in order to pursue this project. It was the spatial powers of the state which were used to adjudicate between competing demands upon the urban fabric, and competing models of urban consumption.

The chapter has emphasised the public-private alliances which produced shopping centres because they demand a reassessment of the way post-war urban governance has been characterised, particularly by those in adjacent urban disciplines. I have argued that narratives of epochal rupture and ‘entrepreneurial’ reorientation in the governance of cities are in danger of misrepresenting the politics and experience of the post-war city. Finally the chapter has highlighted the transformation in the public culture of cities which shopping redevelopments brought about. New urban architectures of consumerism were used to express a reformulated model of urban purpose and identity, and provided new conditions of access and participation in the public life of the city. In place of narratives of the decline of civic cultures, the chapter has proposed that the cultures and practices of affluent consumerism reshaped publicly-defined models of what a city was for, and how its citizens should behave in shared civic spaces.
Chapter Two: Moving and Consuming in the Shopping City

The infrastructures of urban transport and personal mobility were radically reshaped in the post-war period. Urban tram networks were dismantled in a few short years after 1945, and the dramatic expansion of car ownership from the early-1950s offered individuals an unprecedented degree of personal mobility, and produced new ways of organising and experiencing the city.¹ The story of urban transport in this period has been told either in terms of the ascendancy of the motorist and of cultures of motoring, or in terms of the efforts of city planners to use traffic planning to establish systems of mobility and circulation which were orderly, rational, and efficient.² Yet neither of these approaches to urban transport sufficiently explains the objectives which city governments pursued in their governance of mobility, which, as this chapter will show, were centred on constructing new environments and infrastructures which remodelled the geography of cities around the movements and experiences of shoppers. This chapter argues that, through policing mobility and circulation in the city, the post-war

state played a critical role in the organisation and management of urban consumption, and in the elevation of shopping as the primary determinant of urban form and urban experience.

Historical assessments of the governance of post-war urban transport have identified that the private motor car was favoured over other forms of transport, and that extensive new road infrastructures transformed the environment of cities. Planning historian Alison Ravetz, for example, writes that in the post-war period, ‘transport planning became in effect planning for the motor car’.³ Similarly, in his account of state efforts to regulate urban traffic, Simon Gunn writes that ‘private motorization prevailed over other transport priorities’.⁴ Barbara Schmucki and Erika Hanna have argued that pedestrians and cyclists respectively were disadvantaged and endangered by the privileging of motorists in urban transport planning.⁵ While not disputing the privileged status of the motorist in decisions over urban mobility, this chapter will demonstrate that city officials discriminated between different types of motorist on the basis of the purpose of their journey, and that the shopping motorist was prioritised at the expense of other road users. It will also show that in central areas of cities motorists were expelled in favour of pedestrians and that, here again, the overriding concern was with the mobility and comfort of the shopper. Rather than viewing post-war transport planning in terms of the hegemony of the car, or the rationalist fantasies of traffic engineers, the first section of this chapter argues that traffic planning and transport

infrastructure was deployed as one element of the state’s remodelling of cities around new modes of commercial consumption.

The post-war governance of mobility was predicated on enhancing the quality of the urban environment as an ‘amenity’ for shoppers. Beautifying and pedestrianizing central areas was used to create networks of landscaped and leisurely shopping spaces, in which pedestrians could enjoy the display and novelty of the shopping environment. The second section of this chapter examines this post-war project of recasting the city centre as a consuming space and presents a challenge to the chronologies proposed by theorists of post-modern, neoliberal urban environments. Sociologists and cultural theorists have identified the transformation of urban public spaces into environments of consumerism as a product of post-1970s ‘neoliberal’ urban politics. Sharon Zukin, for example, writes that ‘since the 1970s…economic growth has been thematised and environment envisioned as an image of collective leisure and consumption. As part of this process, collective space—public space—has been represented as a consumable good’. Cultural theorist Frederic Jameson similarly argues that in ‘the postmodern city’, ‘the former streets…become so many aisles in a department store’. As will be seen, the familiar assumption amongst urban theorists that city governments became involved in this recasting of public space as shopping space in response to economic shocks in the 1970s and ideological impositions from central government in the 1980s is not borne out by empirical investigation of urban governance in the earlier post-war period.

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Attending to the management of transport and mobility then, allows us to model a highly interventionist local state which managed the urban environment in a manner designed to enhance cities’ qualities as shopping spaces and organised mobility around the infrastructural demands of affluent citizens. The final section of this chapter shows that, while the reorganisation of urban mobility could be an enabling project for shoppers, it also entailed varying degrees of compulsion and coercion. Planners sought to use the architecture of the street to channel individuals into shopping developments, and, in the process of constructing new road networks for the motorist-shopper, violently reshaped the environment and geography of cities. The discussion interprets the reorganisation of urban infrastructure around shopping with reference to Foucauldian histories of spatial planning as a technology of rule. It argues that, while the governors of nineteenth century cities use urban infrastructure to produce sanitary and orderly urban environments, post-war urban governments reshaped urban infrastructure to produce cities remade around shopping.

Servicing the Shopping City

In their assessments of post-war transport planning urban historians have focused on the privileging of the motorist and the motor car over other road users, public modes of transport, and the urban environment. John Armstrong, for example, talks of ‘the dominance of the motor vehicle’ over the urban environment in the 1950s and 1960s. Others, such as Barbara Schmucki, have focused on the rationalities and expertise of

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traffic planners and engineers as they sought to recreate cities as efficient ‘traffic machines’. I argue here that a focus on competing transport technologies, or on the rationalising projects of transport planners, has obscured the way in which a range of transport policies and technologies were used to reorganise the geography of cities around new shopping facilities and to prioritise the mobility and enjoyment of shoppers. This objective was pursued through discriminating between different types of motorists, and mundane forms of regulating vehicle use in the city centre such as parking meters, one-way systems, and the distribution of car parks were all deployed as a means of elevating the function of the city centre as a shopping space. As with the study of shopping centres in the previous chapter, the state emerges as a key actor in the organisation of urban consumption and this project was pursued through reconfiguring the material infrastructure of cities.

Compared with Britain, the history of urban transportation in the United States is a more established field, and here historians have emphasised the capacity of transport technologies to transform the geographies of cities in accordance with the interests of privileged social groupings. John H. Hepp, for example, argues that by facilitating new patterns of residence and mobility, the transport networks in nineteenth century Philadelphia allowed ‘middle class Philadelphians…to remake their city and its region’ resulting in a city reorganised around the social and spatial demands of this grouping. This section of the chapter argues that the reorganisation of transport networks in post-

war British cities demonstrated officials’ desire to prioritise the movements and demands of shoppers and to elevate new modes of shopping as the primary determinant of urban form. Lawrence Black, Matthew Hilton, and Peter Gurney have documented the growing responsiveness of national policy-makers to ‘the consumer interest’ in the post-war period. Yet we know little of how local government responded to, and shaped, private consuming practices. The discussion here shows how public officials at the local level managed the urban environment in accordance with the perceived imperatives of a society of shoppers.

The number of private cars licensed in Britain trebled between 1946 and 1960, and, as Simon Gunn, David Rooney and Shane Ewen have shown, the result of this dramatic increase was that from the late-1950s urban traffic congestion became an issue of major political concern. At the national level, the Minister of Transport, Ernest Marples, responded by commissioning the civil servant Colin Buchanan to investigate and report on the problem of congestion in cities. Buchanan’s well-publicised 1963 report, Traffic in Towns, has been widely viewed as a landmark planning document, which shifted the terms of debate around urban transport planning by advocating restricting motorists’ access to city centres and an increased emphasis on the environmental quality of urban areas. However, the focus of scholarship on Buchanan, and on policy responses to mass motorisation at the national level, has obscured the extent to which city governments had long been conscious of the need to restrict and regulate the use of cars

in urban centres.\footnote{16} As early as the 1940s, city governments were concerned that unfettered access for motorists was a threat to the safety and functionality of city centres, and their response was to discriminate between different types of motorist, prioritising the journeys of those entering the city to shop over other users.

The governments of Leeds and Manchester used a range of traffic policies and technologies in order to privilege accessibility for the shopping motorist. In 1948, the Chief Constable of Leeds introduced a one-way circulation system for the centre of the city, and imposed waiting restrictions for vehicles on central streets during trading hours. Although the \textit{Yorkshire Evening Post} anticipated opposition to the traffic plan, the Chief Constable was resolute that the scheme was necessary in order ‘to relieve congestion’, and justified it on the basis that ‘some provision must be made for the shopping motorist’.\footnote{17} Here then, managing the circulation of traffic in the city was aimed at ensuring that access and mobility for the shopping motorist was not impaired by congestion. In Manchester too, local officials accepted the need for restrictions on motorists’ access to central areas. Even the ‘SELNEC’ study group, which was formed in 1958 to develop a road-building programme for Manchester and its region, were clear that the city centre of Manchester could not, and should not, accommodate all those motorists who sought access.\footnote{18} Their initial report in 1962 was based on the elimination of through traffic from the city centre, and on discouraging as far as possible the car journeys of commuters into the city.\footnote{19} This plan prioritised the journeys of motorists who intended to shop in the city over other road users.

\footnotetext[16]{Although for a local perspective on traffic regulation in Leicester see Ewen, ‘Policing’.}
\footnotetext[18]{The acronym denotes ‘South-East Lancashire and North-East Cheshire’.}
New technologies and new policies were introduced to regulate parking in the city centre, and, again, these measures were designed to relieve congestion in the interests of shoppers. The 1956 Road Traffic Act expanded local powers to restrict parking and to experiment with new technologies such as parking meters. The first application of these new powers in London’s West End illustrated the intention to use parking powers to improve access and enjoyment for shoppers. The Transport Minister, Ernest Marples oversaw the first introduction of meters to the West End in 1959 which was reported as a measure designed ‘to prevent Christmas chaos’.

When questioned about the impact of the restrictions on commercial and trade vehicles, the Minister stated that, ‘it is my aim and object, and everybody’s at the Ministry, to help the shopper and the motorist’.

Manchester City Council was one of the first local authorities to apply for powers under the 1956 Act, and by 1961 had introduced its own parking meter scheme. The restrictions imposed in Manchester, as in London, led to criticisms from non-retail businesses that their activities were being hampered to allow shoppers easy access and parking. In 1961, a scheme to restrict parking in the north of Manchester’s city centre attracted over 100 objections from local businesses. A wholesale paper merchant, Abel Heywood & Sons Ltd., argued that ‘the proposed restrictions would seriously interfere with our business as it would prevent our customers calling to place orders, to pay accounts or to take away goods. The proposals would entail considerable loss of business to us’.

Another wholesaler in the area similarly argued that the restrictions ‘will interfere with our business and livelihood considerably, in fact’, he suggested, ‘I

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think it will stop business people coming into Manchester all together’. These complaints show that business owners felt that their activities and operations were being marginalised by regulations designed to ensure accessibility and mobility for the visiting motorist-shopper.

Terms such as ‘car-shoppers’, and ‘the motorist shopper’ entered into the lexicon of urban planners, and shopping motorists were constructed as a privileged constituency whose approval should be courted by city officials. In the mid-1960s, for example, Leeds City Council boasted that the planned ‘town centre’ complex for the Seacroft estate ‘caters for “car-shoppers” to a degree almost unprecedented—enough to attract them by the hundred even if other inducements were less compelling!’ In the city centres, car-shoppers were favoured by the distribution and charging structures of council-owned car parks, which were used to discourage all but the shopping motorist from entering central districts. As one of the case study cities considered in the Buchanan Report, Leeds’s planners considered themselves at the forefront of integrated transport and land use planning. In 1969, in conjunction with the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the city council produced the report Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach to publicise the city’s activities. The construction of a network of urban motorways was central to ‘the Leeds approach’, and as a result transport planning in the city was applauded by the umbrella organisation for the roads lobby, the British Road Federation.

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26 The term ‘car-shoppers’ appears in Leeds City Council, ‘Seacroft Town Centre’, promotional brochure, N.d.[c.1965?]. WYAS—LLD1/2/824956; ‘the motorist shopper’ is a term used by Manchester’s Chief Planner, J.S. Millar, in City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967, p. 16. GMCRO
27 Leeds City Council, ‘Seacroft Town Centre’, promotional brochure, N.d.[c.1965?]. WYAS—LLD1/2/824956
29 The British Road Federation produced the pamphlet, Look at Leeds, to celebrate the city council’s approach to transport planning, available at WYAS—LC/Planning/4095.
Simon Gunn suggests that the implementation of the Leeds approach showed how the
‘the priorities of private motorization prevailed over other transport priorities’, but here,
again, it was the shopping motorist who was favoured, at the expense of other road
users.\textsuperscript{30} While it was predicated on major expansions of the city’s road network, the
Leeds approach did not envisage access for all motorists. Instead the city’s planners
sought to distinguish between different types of motorist by identifying ‘essential’ and
‘non-essential’ journeys and shopping motorists were described as ‘essential traffic’
which the city government must accommodate.\textsuperscript{31} The Leeds Approach was clear that
commuters wishing to drive to work in the city should be prevented from doing so, and
directed to use improved bus routes instead, but ‘the use of the private car for shopping
and business journeys will be encouraged’.\textsuperscript{32} This elevation of shoppers’ mobility was
noted in the British Road Federation’s pamphlet, \textit{Look at Leeds}, which pointed out that
‘shoppers who need their cars close at hand to carry their purchases [were] being given
top priority’.\textsuperscript{33} The control of parking facilities was identified as the primary mechanism
by which Leeds’s planners could prioritise shopping journeys over others, and short-
stay shoppers’ carparks were distributed across the central district whilst long-stay,
commuter carparks were restricted to the fringes of the city centre (see figure 1).

\textsuperscript{31} HMSO, \textit{Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{32} HMSO, \textit{Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach}, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{33} British Road Federation, \textit{Look at Leeds}, pamphlet, N.d. [c.1971?]. WYAS—LC/Planning/4095
Figure 1: Plan showing the distribution of long- and short-stay car parks within the city centre of Leeds and the major road routes around the centre. This scheme was intended to promote full accessibility for the motorist-shopper whilst discouraging other car journeys into the centre of the city. Source: HMSO, *Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach* (London, 1969).

Manchester’s planners also used the siting and management of car parks to prioritise the mobility of the visiting shopper. The city’s 1967 Joint Report on Car Parking proposed a ‘locational policy’ which aimed ‘at providing the greatest possible accessibility and convenience for the short-term parker’ (who was generally a shopper). In the same year, the city’s chief planner wrote of the need ‘to provide good car parking facilities for the motorist shopper’, and, as in Leeds, the distribution of short- and long-stay car parks within the city was used to favour ‘essential traffic’, which was defined as ‘the shopper and business caller on whom the prosperity of the City depends’. In 1977 the city council introduced a system of gradated parking charges to penalise long stays in city

34 J.S. Millar, *City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967*, p. 35. GMCRO
35 J.S. Millar, *City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967*, p. 16 & p. 34. GMCRO
centre car parks. The enthusiastic reception of this ‘new cheap parking deal for shoppers’ in the Manchester Evening News illustrates how local newspapers, along with city officials, aligned themselves with the interests of shoppers and retailers.\(^36\) The same piece in the newspaper welcomed the ‘good news…for the city’s top retailers’ that over one thousand more parking spaces would be provided, and that a new multi-storey car park at the Arndale shopping centre would be ‘open in time for Christmas shopping’.\(^37\)

City governments used their powers to regulate access and mobility in the city centre to prioritise the needs of the shopping motorist over other citizens and other patterns of use. In doing so, officials subscribed to a model of the city centre as primarily a shopping space, which should be designed and policed to ensure the greatest ease and amenity for shoppers. Boosterist local newspapers such as the Manchester Evening News welcomed this elevation of shoppers’ infrastructural demands as part of their wider endorsement of populist cultures of urban shopping discussed in the previous chapter. Historical accounts of the dominance of the motorcar in urban transport planning, and of planners’ concerns with congestion and circulation, have overlooked the ways in which post-war traffic planning was predicated on the primacy of ‘the motorist shopper’ and their demands upon the urban fabric.\(^38\) Rather than seeking to ensure that all motorists could circulate freely in the city, transport planners viewed the satisfaction of the shopping motorist as an overriding objective.

Matthew Hilton’s research into the varying forms and organisations through which ‘the consumer interest’ was articulated in the twentieth century has shown that, at the level

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\(^{36}\) ‘Shoppers snap up city parking deal’, Manchester Evening News, 30 June 1977. GMCRO—M507/Box 1

\(^{37}\) ‘Shoppers snap up city parking deal’, Manchester Evening News, 30 June 1977. GMCRO—M507/Box 1

\(^{38}\) Armstrong, ‘From Shillibeer to Buchanan’; Schmucki, ‘Against “the Eviction of the Pedestrian”’; Hanna, ‘Seeing Like a Cyclist’; Gunn, ‘People and the Car’.
of national policy-making, appeals to the collective interests of consumers (understood primarily as individual shoppers) grew in importance as justifications for policy and regulation. National policy-makers in the 1950s and 1960s became increasingly responsive to the perceived interests and demands of the shopper, and ‘consumers’ came to stand in as a ‘substitute for the public’. While such work shows how the recasting of the post-war political subject as a citizen-shopper affected national politics, we know very little about how urban governments responded to the post-war recasting of citizens’ needs in terms of their shopping demands. In reorganising urban transport, city governments displayed a deep commitment to servicing the demands of the shopping public and, through designing this model of shoppers’ needs into the urban fabric, reshaped the geography of cities around particular modes of shopping.

Local officials’ selection and spatial prioritisation of particular modes of urban shopping was most obvious in their efforts to service the transport and access requirements of the new shopping centres examined in the previous chapter. The development of large city centre shopping complexes placed significant extra pressures on urban transport networks, and city governments accepted political and financial responsibility for reorganising transport systems around these new facilities. Shopping centres were designed primarily to attract and accommodate shopping motorists, and large multi-storey carparks were integral to their design and business model. The Merrion Centre’s 1100-capacity carpark was, when it opened in 1964, the largest in the country. Town and City Properties reported that ‘car parking is provided on a massive scale to serve all Arndale Centres’, and the central Manchester Arndale development

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39 Hilton, ‘Consumers and the State since the Second World War’, p. 79.
included an 1800-capacity multi-storey carpark.\textsuperscript{41} Extensive parking facilities were, as Town and City acknowledged, ‘essential to every successful Centre’ because a centre’s viability depended on attracting shoppers from a wide catchment area.\textsuperscript{42}

Shopping centres like the Arndale and the Merrion attracted hundreds of motorists into the city centre, exacerbating existing pressures and requiring vast new parking facilities and the reorganisation of local road networks. Although accommodating the motorist-shopper was critical to shopping centres’ commercial success, it was the state which bore the cost of providing this infrastructure. Under the procedures which were normally used to develop large shopping schemes, city governments and the Ministry of Transport financed the associated road building and extensions.\textsuperscript{43} In the case of the Manchester Arndale, the city government not only financed changes to local road layouts, but was also responsible for the costs of constructing the large multi-storey carpark.\textsuperscript{44} In Leeds the city council also financed new road access and expanded parking facilities for the Merrion shopping centre.\textsuperscript{45}

Public transport networks were also reorganised around new shopping facilities. Many shopping centres were provided with bus terminals, and operators’ promotional material stressed the ‘easy access’ to malls by public, as well as private, transport.\textsuperscript{46} Here again though, it was often the state which financed these facilities. The cost of constructing the bus station attached to the Manchester Arndale, for example, was entirely covered

\textsuperscript{41} Town & City Properties Limited, \textit{Arndale Covered Centres}, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 32. GMCRO—Q21/1. The details of schemes across the country in this brochure indicate that, on average, Arndale Centres included parking facilities for 1000 cars, though a number of centres were designed to accommodate substantially higher numbers than this.

\textsuperscript{42} Town & City Properties Limited, \textit{Arndale Covered Centres}, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 15. GMCRO—Q21/1

\textsuperscript{43} This was the case in Manchester and Stretford, and standard practice across the country, see T Hart, \textit{The Comprehensive Development Area} (Edinburgh, 1968).

\textsuperscript{44} Letter from District Valuer to City Estates Officer, 11 April 1972, p. 2. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1189

\textsuperscript{45} Letter from Town Centre Securities Limited to City Engineer, 6 June 1968. WYAS—LLD1/2/833178

\textsuperscript{46} Town & City Properties Limited, \textit{Arndale Covered Centres}, promotional brochure, 1973, p. 7. GMCRO—Q21/1
by the city council.\textsuperscript{47} Leeds City Council was less willing to bear the costs of servicing the Merrion shopping centre, which did not have a dedicated bus terminal. Nonetheless, in response to demands from the centre’s operators, the city did reorganise its bus routes around the shopping complex and passengers travelling on council-run buses in the mid-1960s would have found the words, ‘shop at the Merrion Centre for good value’, printed on the back of their bus ticket (see figure 2).\textsuperscript{48} In Manchester, the importance of the landmark Arndale shopping centre as a key node in the new urban geography of shopping was illustrated by the plans for a dedicated subway station for the shopping centre on the city’s proposed underground rail link. Although this project never materialised the shopping complex was designed with ‘entrances, a lift shaft and foundations for the station…in the hope that the scheme will go ahead’.\textsuperscript{49}

Figure 2: Advertisement for the Merrion Shopping Centre which appeared on the back of tickets on Leeds City Council’s bus services in the mid-1960s. 
Source: WYAS—LLD1/2/833178

\textsuperscript{47} Provisional Agreement relating to the Manchester Arndale Centre, Manchester’, 15 February 1972, p. 11. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1189
\textsuperscript{48} Letter from Town Centre Securities Limited to Deputy Town Clerk, 24 November 1966. WYAS—LLD1/2/833178
The reorganisation of public and private transport networks in post-war cities was predicated on the privileging of shopping journeys, and on servicing the new infrastructural demands placed upon cities by new shopping habits and new shopping facilities. Urban motorways, multi-storey car parks, and parking restrictions were all mechanisms through which the form and function of cities was reordered around shopping, and the mobility of the citizen-shopper was prioritised at the expense of other journeys, activities, and patterns of use. The terms of debate around transport planning reflected the ascendancy of the figure of ‘the shopper’ in contemporary discourse, and the extent to which the state’s responsibilities to its citizens were extended in the post-war period to cover their demands for new forms of commercial consumption. Histories of urban transport which have focused on the development of planning expertise, or on the ascendancy of the car over other transport technologies, are in danger of neglecting the wider objectives which drove state actors’ attempts to regulate urban mobility. Local planners were proactive in the production and policing of a system of urban mobility which was centrally-concerned with servicing cities’ shopping needs, and which, as a result, placed the activities and movements of the shopper as the primary determinant of the geography of cities.

**Making and Managing Urban Shopping Spaces**

The previous section showed how urban transport infrastructures were used to elevate shopping as the primary determinant of urban form. This section shows how the environment of the city centre was managed and regulated with a view to enhancing the experience and enjoyment of shoppers. Sociologists, cultural theorists, and urban geographers have associated the transformation of urban public space into a series of spectacular consuming spaces with a transition to neoliberal urban governance and post-
industrial urban economies.\textsuperscript{50} The result of this shift, it has been argued, is the active involvement of city governments in the production and promotion of ‘post-modern’ urban environments, designed to appeal to consumers and to maximise consumption. Urban sociologist Sharon Zukin suggests that ‘since the 1970s…public space has been joined with retail space…as part of this process, collective space—public space—has been represented as a consumable good’.\textsuperscript{51} David Harvey argues that post-modern urbanism is concerned with ‘the projection of a definite image of place blessed with certain qualities [and] the organisation of spectacle and theatricality’.\textsuperscript{52} The efforts of urban governments to remake the open, public spaces of cities as ‘a consumable good’ have been explained by many scholars in terms of the rise of neoliberal political rationalities and entrepreneurial urbanism. Sociologist Steven Miles, for example, writes that:

\begin{quote}
The emergence of spaces for consumption as a key marker of…the changing nature of consumer’s experience of the city can only be understood in the context of the broader economic processes that appear to be underpinning the emergence of what many commentators have called an “entrepreneurial” city.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

As with the state’s involvement in the development of shopping centres detailed in chapter one, this section uses empirical historical research to challenge dominant chronologies and narratives within related urban disciplines. City governments’ involvement in the re-imaging of the city around leisure and consumption has a longer history than most theorists of post-modern urbanism or neoliberal cities have suggested. The governments of post-war Manchester and Leeds managed urban mobility and restricted car use as part of a project of beautifying the city centre and recasting it as a

\textsuperscript{50} For examples Miles, \textit{Spaces for Consumption}; Clarke \textit{The Consumer Society and the Postmodern City}; Gottdeiner, ‘The Consumption of Space and the Spaces of Consumption’; Goss, ‘Modernity and Postmodernity in the Retail Landscape’; Hannigan, \textit{Fantasy City}.

\textsuperscript{51} Zukin, \textit{The Cultures of Cities}, p. 260.


\textsuperscript{53} Miles, \textit{Spaces for Consumption}, p. 35.
consumer amenity. Public officials looked beyond individual shopping centres and sought to recast entire central districts as spaces of leisure, consumption, novelty and display in which the consuming pedestrian could circulate and shop. City planners in both cities viewed the pedestrianisation of significant portions of the city centre as a key objective, and their efforts to restrict and redirect vehicle traffic were predicated on the need to provide a pleasant environment for the citizen-shopper.

From the early-1960s, the governments of Manchester and Leeds pursued expansive visions of an urban environment remodelled around the experience of the shopper. The SELNEC committee’s 1962 plan for Manchester argued that it was ‘essential to the future of the centre that traffic should be controlled…in order that parts of the centre, including the main shopping areas and the Civic Area, can in due time become pedestrian precincts’. Leeds’s 1969 traffic plan stated that the primary objective of traffic management in the city centre was ‘a major enhancement of the amenity, safety and freedom of movement of pedestrians’. The ideals of separating pedestrians from other traffic, and of creating pedestrian precincts, were not new in the post-war decades. Such principles were present in pre-war planning thought, and widely adopted in the wave of reconstruction plans produced in the 1940s. What is notable about the way these objectives were being deployed in Leeds and Manchester by the 1960s, however, is the explicit intention to protect and enhance the character of city centres as consuming environments.

Manchester City Council’s efforts to pedestrianise the centrally-located St Ann’s Square in the early 1960s shows how restricting vehicle access was bound up with the

55 HMSO, Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach, p. 23.
56 Peter Hall & Mark Tewdwr-Jones, Urban and Regional Planning (Abingdon, 2011), pp. 38-42.
projection of a model of environmental ‘amenity’ which was intended to appeal to the affluent, urbane consumer. The proposal to pedestrianise St Ann’s Square was promoted in the early-1960s by the newly-formed Civic Trust, champions of the amenity value of the urban environment.\textsuperscript{57} The Trust painted an image of the Square as a place ‘where one can sit and loiter for a moment with pleasure, and in safety and comfort’ and suggested floodlighting, an outdoor café, seating, and planting in the style of ‘many an Italian Square’.\textsuperscript{58} The guiding image was of a car-free environment in which urbane consumers could rest a while.

The proposal to pedestrianise St. Ann’s Square drew indignant objections from some significant business interests in the area, showing that elevating the function of particular districts as consuming spaces disrupted and impeded alternative patterns of use. In addition to shops, St Ann’s Square contained offices which housed prestigious business interests. Directors of the Manchester Royal Exchange, an insurance brokers, and a major shipping company operating from Manchester’s docks, all voiced their opposition to remaking the Square as a consumer amenity. The protests of company directors against the pedestrianisation scheme demonstrate a clear sense that their own activities were being marginalised in the interests of reorganising urban space around the shopping experience. The Secretary of the Exchange argued that ‘while a square free of traffic may be of advantage to shoppers…it would certainly be detrimental to the business interests of the tenants of this building’.\textsuperscript{59} The directors of all three companies felt that prohibiting vehicle access to their buildings would damage their commercial operations. The insurance brokerage informed the town clerk that the company would

\textsuperscript{57} The Civic Trust was founded in 1956 by Duncan Sandys, whilst he was Minister for Housing and Local Government, and the Trust was successful at promoting a conservationist agenda in individual cities and through national legislation. See Peter J. Larkham & Andrew Jones, ‘Conservation and Conservation Areas in the UK: A Growing Problem’, \textit{Planning Practice & Research} 8 (1993), pp. 19-29.

\textsuperscript{58} Letter from the Civic Trust to Highways Committee, 12 January 1962. GMCRO—HC Vol. 106

\textsuperscript{59} Letter from the Manchester Royal Exchange to the town clerk, 22 February 1962. GMCRO—HC Vol. 106
be leaving Manchester if the change went ahead.\textsuperscript{60} In contrast, the vast majority of the retail businesses on the Square were in favour of the pedestrianisation scheme, seeing it as a way to increase trade.\textsuperscript{61} This dispute over the regulation of traffic in St. Ann’s Square illustrates in microcosm how transport policies were instrumental to the remaking of central areas of the city as a consumer amenity, and how this entailed not only the restriction of motorists, but also the marginalisation of other forms of activity in the city.

In addition to pedestrianising single streets or districts, local officials aimed to create city-wide networks of pedestrian routes which would link shopping developments and public open spaces together, providing consuming pedestrians with a means of traversing, and enjoying, the city centre as a whole. Leeds’s ‘pedestrian circulation’ plan is shown in figure 3. In Manchester, the 1967 city centre plan envisaged ‘a system of connected pedestrian routes’ at ground and upper levels.\textsuperscript{62} The plan made clear that the intention was to create a pleasant environment for the consuming pedestrian: ‘pedestrian ways, whether at natural ground level or at the upper level, can be treated to provide incidental open spaces and the whole system designed to provide safe and civilised conditions for shoppers’.\textsuperscript{63} Many of the more elaborate proposals for networks of elevated walkways were representative of a particularly ambitious moment in British planning practice in the 1960s and ultimately were not realised.\textsuperscript{64} Nonetheless the broader aims of these pedestrian networks, which were to establish protected and segregated circulation through beautified shopping spaces, were influential in reshaping the form and functions of urban centres.

\textsuperscript{60} Letter from Scott, North & Co. Ltd. to town clerk, 27 February 1962. GMCRO—HC Vol. 106
\textsuperscript{61} City Engineer, survey report, February 1962. GMCRO—HC Vol. 106
\textsuperscript{62} J.S. Millar, \textit{City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967}, p. 32. GMCRO
\textsuperscript{63} J.S. Millar, \textit{City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967}, p. 32. GMCRO
Extensive pedestrianisation of the central shopping area was a key aspect of ‘the Leeds approach’ to traffic planning. By 1970, one and a half miles of shopping streets had been given over to the consuming pedestrian, with plans to double the size of this area by 1978. The city’s ‘pedestrian precinct’ was formally opened by the first secretary of the newly-created Department of the Environment, Peter Walker, in November 1970. Walker stated that ‘to turn an existing shopping street into a pedestrian precinct as Leeds have done is to create at one stroke an environment of high standard at little cost and little upset’. Although pedestrianisation was framed by the Secretary of State and

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the city council in terms of ‘environmental improvement’, it was clear that the intention was to enhance the quality of the centre as a shopping space.\textsuperscript{68} The Conservative leader of the city council, Frank Marshall, explained in a letter to \textit{The Times} that the objective behind pedestrianisation and traffic planning in Leeds was ‘to improve the environment of the central area as an attractive place for shoppers’.\textsuperscript{69}

The British Road Federation’s account of Leeds’s traffic plans also made clear that the city’s policies were tied to the enhancement of the shopping environment and experience, with the aim of boosting trade. The BRF pamphlet, \textit{Look at Leeds}, reported that ‘conditions for shopping are greatly improved by the emphasis on walking: in the first year of operation traders agree that business has increased by about twenty per cent since the traffic was removed’.\textsuperscript{70} The view of pedestrianisation as an important stimulus to city shopping was supported in \textit{Guardian} reporter Michael Wand’s account, which described how ‘a half mile square of traffic-free streets has been turned into the most attractive and lucrative shopping centre in Britain, with more pedestrianisation coming soon’.\textsuperscript{71} Wand also reported that ‘traders who at first opposed banning the car from central Leeds are now among the vanguard of traffic-free supporters’.\textsuperscript{72}

The accounts of politicians, journalists, and road campaigners all agree that the city governments’ regulation of mobility in Leeds was centred on improving the experience of shoppers and on managing the urban environment in ways which elevated the city’s status as a shopping destination.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} HMSO, \textit{Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach}, p. 23.
\item \textsuperscript{70} BRF, \textit{Look at Leeds}, pamphlet, N.d. [c.1971?]. WYAS—LC/Planning/4095
\item \textsuperscript{71} Michael Wand, ‘Where the Motorway Leads’, \textit{The Guardian}, 3 August 1972, p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{72} Michael Wand, ‘Where the Motorway Leads’, \textit{The Guardian}, 3 August 1972, p. 17.
\end{itemize}
In Manchester too, pedestrianisation and beautification of the central district was understood as critical to successfully positioning the city as a consuming space. The city’s chief planner wrote in 1967 that, ‘to be competitive, there is no doubt that Manchester’s shopping centre will require to be not only convenient and efficient, but also outstandingly inviting and attractive’. This competitiveness was to be achieved by providing ‘safe and inviting conditions for the pedestrian’. By the mid-1960s, Manchester’s plans for the city centre aimed to apply the model of the shopping mall to the city centre as a whole, and envisaged the city remade as a space of leisure, consumption, novelty and display (see figures four and five). City planners hoped that through coordinating individual shopping developments and connecting them with beautified and pedestrianised open spaces ‘the City’s central shopping area could be transformed to take on something of the quality of a well set out and continuously changing permanent exhibition’.

This notion of the city as exhibition, as a space of consumption, spectacle, and display, echoes the way in which the spaces of the shopping mall, and the spaces of earlier urban shopping environments, such as arcades, were designed and interpreted. The efforts of city planners in Leeds and Manchester to recreate the city centre as a consuming space in the 1960s are strikingly similar to the ‘imaging a city through the organisation of spectacular urban spaces’ which Harvey, and many others, have suggested is a key marker of the paradigmatic shift in urban politics dated to the 1970s and 1980s.

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73 J.S. Millar, *City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967*, p. 16. GMCRO
74 J.S. Millar, *City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967*, p. 16. GMCRO
75 J.S. Millar, *City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967*, p. 59. GMCRO
77 Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 91-92.
Leeds is the extent to which they embraced and promoted visions of the city remade as a consuming space at the height of a period in which town planning and urban governance has conventionally been understood as concerned primarily with the delivery of the social provisions of the national welfare state.

Figure 4: Architectural sketch which illustrated city planners’ vision for the redeveloped shopping area of Manchester. The sketch was captioned ‘Market Street of the future – free of vehicles with arcades, urban landscaping and the character of a permanent exhibition’. The image and accompanying language were reproduced in a number of contemporary press reports. Source: City and County Borough of Manchester, *City Centre Map 1967*, p.57. Available at GMCRO
Figure 5: Architectural sketch of the Market Place development scheme in Manchester. The sketch was captioned, ‘pedestrian square in the Market Place area from which radiate upper level links to other development’. This image, produced by city planners, illustrates the ambition to connect developments with raised pedestrian walkways. More significantly, it shows how planners’ envisioned the remaking of urban space as a consumer amenity. Market Place as pictured here is pedestrianised, landscaped, decorative and stimulating, and it is populated and enjoyed by leisured and affluent consumers. Source: City and County Borough of Manchester, *City Centre Map 1967*, p.62. Available at GMCRO

Reorganising the urban environment around consumption, and producing spaces which both encourage consumption, and are designed to be consumed, is a key feature in accounts of the emergence of postmodern, post-industrial cities. Such accounts associate this consumerist remaking of the city with neoliberal political rationalities and with competitive, entrepreneurial urban governance. Sociologist Steven Miles writes that ‘the re-envisioning of the city as a site of consumption is directly related to the need for an economic reinvention in light of the collapse of the industrial city’. Bound up with this analysis is an assumption that the transformation of cities into ‘postmodern’

78 Miles, *Spaces for Consumption*, p. 36.
consuming environments is a phenomenon of post-1970s urbanism. For Miles and Ronan Paddison, ‘it has been the rise of neoliberalism, and the accompanying processes of privatisation and individuation, which has helped to set the scene within which consumption more generally became a defining feature of urban social life’. The degree of consensus amongst cultural theorists, geographers and sociologists that designing cities around consumerism is a recent phenomenon, characteristic of ‘the post-industrial, entrepreneurial city’, makes the efforts of city planners in Manchester and Leeds to create environments of consumer amenity in the 1960s all the more striking. The governments of British cities were conscious of the economic imperative to compete to attract retailers and shoppers to their central areas, and pursued this through the creation of ‘spectacular urban spaces’, outside of the conventional chronologies of urban entrepreneurialism.

The function of Leeds’s pedestrianised shopping precinct as an asset for inter-urban competition and place promotion was recognised by the journalist Michael Wand in 1972 when he wrote that, ‘it is the shopping area of Leeds which distinguishes the city from the rest of Britain, demonstrates the civic will and energy, and gives visual proof to the property men who believe that the city has a healthy future’. Wand went on to describe ‘the revival of confidence in Leeds’ evidenced by a buoyant market in city centre land and property. Manchester’s 1967 city centre plan advocated the need for the city’s shopping district ‘to be competitive’. It was clear that contemporaries understood the two cities’ promotion of the image and environment of a shopping city as essential to their economic survival, and to their successful positioning in a

80 Miles, Spaces for Consumption, p. 35.
83 J.S. Millar, City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967, p. 16. GMCRO
consumer-focused culture and economy. In Manchester, city officials recognised the economic imperative to beautify the city centre, and the growing importance which environmental quality and ‘amenity’ would have in the context of inter-urban competition in a society and economy increasingly organised around consumer experience:

Landscaping and open space, good civic design and fine buildings, freedom to walk about in safety, all that is meant by the word “amenity” are becoming increasingly recognised as essential ingredients to the success and survival of a metropolitan centre and are by no means just “frills” to be added to the most economic and functional solutions.\textsuperscript{84}

This quotation shows that local officials in Manchester understood clearly what urban scholars began to identify in the 1990s which was namely that cities’ economic future depended on their reinvention as centres for new modes of consumption, and that spatial regulation and urban design could be used to maximise the appeal and the potential value of urban shopping spaces. The city governments of both Manchester and Leeds displayed responsiveness to shifts in modes of economic activity associated with mass consumerism, and sought to use their control over the urban environment to attract high value retailing and to align their cities’ image with commercial cultures of consumption. I have argued here against the suggestion that urban governments’ embrace of a consumerist remodelling of the urban fabric should be viewed as a recent phenomenon produced by neoconservative ideological impositions from the centre. Rather, the evidence suggests a much more stable process in which those responsible for the organisation of the urban environment consistently used space to organise and facilitate economic activities which they understood as critical to the future of cities.

\textsuperscript{84} J.S. Millar, \textit{City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967}, p. 39. GMCRO
Freedom and Compulsion in the Shopping City

Having identified city governments’ efforts to construct a shopping-centred urban geography, and to enhance the mobility and experience of the shopping citizen, the final section of this chapter returns to the central argument of this thesis. This is that state actors persistently used space in order to govern the activities of individuals and manage social change, and that attending to the objectives of such interventions poses questions about how historians have conceived of the role of the state in post-war society. The following discussion will show that state actors sought to use space to compel citizens to patronise shopping developments, and that new road infrastructures which serviced the mobility of shoppers were created through the compulsory displacement of the urban poor. The post-war remodelling of urban infrastructure was a project which aimed at channelling affluent citizens into shopping centres, and which destroyed working class housing in the interests of the ‘car-shopper’. The use of planning and environmental powers to enforce new geographies of consumption onto cities and citizens does not sit easily alongside familiar narratives of the ‘benign’ post-war state. Nor does the use of state power to reorganise the geographies of urban shopping sit comfortably within histories of post-war consumerism where the management of a consuming society is largely understood to have been conducted by commercial actors beyond the domain of public government. Making and managing the urban infrastructures of post-war consumerism was a task performed by the state.

Beyond post-war historiography, Patrick Joyce, Chris Otter, and others have emphasised that urban infrastructures shape the possibilities for conduct and represent a

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projection of elite models of what a city is for.\textsuperscript{87} Joyce and Tony Bennett write that infrastructural systems ‘involve the “engineering in” of different capacities and possibilities for agency’.\textsuperscript{88} The following discussion argues that the governance of post-war transport networks should be seen as a re-engineering of the city which was intended to shape and direct the private consuming habits of individuals. It shows that the ‘freedom’ to circulate in the city was designed to secure increased footfall and profitability for shopping developments. The discussion also considers the spatial violence which urban road building entailed and suggests that, just as with the construction of urban shopping centres, modernising rhetoric was used to present sectional and arbitrary projects as inevitable and progressive. The state that emerges from these examples is one committed to the use of space to manage the individual, and which reconstructed urban infrastructures in ways which privileged the affluent citizen-shopper.

The pedestrian routes which were created to facilitate the mobility of the strolling shopper in post-war cities were framed in terms of the freedoms which they engendered. Leeds’s 1969 traffic plan was, it was claimed, predicated on promoting the ‘freedom of movement of pedestrians’.\textsuperscript{89} Manchester’s ambition to establish a network of pedestrian ways was based on the ideal of free movement around ‘an independent pedestrian circulation system’.\textsuperscript{90} As Patrick Joyce’s study of nineteenth-century cities has argued, the notion of free circulation was itself ‘central to liberal governance’, as it encapsulated


\textsuperscript{89} HMSO, \textit{Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach}, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{90} J.S. Millar, \textit{City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967}, p. 58. GMCRO
elite ideals of a healthy, self-regulating city. And yet, as Joyce has shown, control over the physical infrastructures and environment of the city was a critical mechanism by which circulation and mobility, the ‘free’ flows and movements within the city, were regulated, managed and channelled. Michel Foucault has also suggested that architecture functions ‘to ensure a certain allocation of people in space, a canalization of their circulation’. There is thus a clear tension between the discourse of free circulation through which the planning of mobility was framed, and the way in which urban space was used in attempts to compel specific behaviours and patterns of movement. Indeed, for Joyce and Foucault, this process of compelling individuals to be ‘free’ in circumscribed ways is central to the operation of modern governance, and it is a process in which the organisation of the urban environment plays a critical role.

The creation of city-wide networks of pedestrian squares, concourses, and walkways in part reflected an impulse to improve accessibility and mobility for walkers in the city, and to protect them from the dangers of vehicle traffic. As such, the notion of free (as in unhindered) circulation is an understandable lens through which city planners viewed this project. And yet, there were also processes of compulsion at work in this model of urban mobility. In the first instance, the channelling of pedestrians between and through shopping developments made clear that circulation systems were intended to convey citizens to new shopping spaces and as an encouragement to patronise the city centre’s shops. Such channelling was evident in the routes chosen for pedestrian ways, which passed through malls and shopping developments, but also extended to the erection of physical obstacles to prevent deviation from intended routes.

91 Joyce, Rule of Freedom, p. 65.
A 1977 column in the *Manchester Evening News* commented on the erection of a barrier of stone pillars which prevented walkers continuing along an established route to one of the city’s main stations and diverted them instead onto ‘an overhead shopping gallery’ which was part of the Market Place shopping development.\(^{93}\) The columnist wrote of his desire to walk ‘unimpeded by architectural gimmickry and eccentrically-placed obstacles’.\(^{94}\) This report also quoted a council spokesperson’s explanation that the barriers were intended ‘to encourage [pedestrians] to go up the gentle ramp that leads to the Market Place developments’ and that, if they did not, walkers would ‘ruin their shoes on the cobbles in which the pillars have been set’.\(^{95}\) Here then, one public official acknowledged that walking spaces in the city were designed to steer citizens into shopping facilities.

The newspaper columnist’s observation that ‘most pedestrians ignore the big blue and white signs urging them to use [the shopping walkway] and blithely carry on as before’ resonates with Michel de Certeau’s distinction between the disciplinary intentions of spatial planners, and the diverse and often non-conforming practices which individual users of particular spaces display.\(^{96}\) Detailed evidence of how individuals used the urban spaces which planners created generally does not feature in the available historical record, and, in the case of the *MEN* columnist, is necessarily impressionistic. Nonetheless, this report does suggest at least some level of resistance to the model of consuming circulation on which urban pedestrian routes were based. More significantly, the report includes the explicit confirmation from a local official that city planners’ intention was to use the architecture of the street to direct citizens into newly-developed shopping sites. The design and infrastructure of the nineteenth century cities which

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Joyce describes was intended to produce cities which were sanitary, ordered, and moral, and an ideal citizen-subject who was healthy, self-conscious, and respectable. In post-war cities, similar strategies of rule were deployed by urban elites to produce shopping cities, in which the urban environment was reorganised around an imagined ideal of the affluent citizen-shopper.

Although there is little evidence of how individual pedestrians responded to state actors’ efforts to direct their movements and activities, some evidence is available of how public officials hoped that consuming environments would affect the behaviour of citizens. Whilst publicly-available planning documents used the language of free movement to describe pedestrian circulation, in private documents officials wrote more openly about the ways in which specific spaces were intended to influence behaviours in the interests of retail capital. As spaces of spectacle and display, mall concourses were intended to entertain but also to captivate the wandering shopper and, ultimately of course, to encourage purchases. Sociologist Mark Gottdiener describes shopping centres as ‘spaces…expressly designed to make money as a place of consumption’, and suggests that the design and environment of shopping centres serves an ‘instrumental function…for realising capital’. The political and financial investment which state actors made in post-war shopping developments appears to have encouraged public officials to hope that this ‘instrumental function’ would be effective in seducing citizens to make purchases.

In correspondence between the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and Manchester City Council over the Market Street shopping development, officials acknowledged the intention to use design to create a captive audience of circulating

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shoppers. One Ministry official, Tom Clarke, envisaged ‘the almost involuntary circulation of shoppers around attractive display frontages’. In order to ensure the hoped-for success of the Arndale shopping centre, Clarke asserted that the ‘new centre must achieve an intensely busy exhibition-like atmosphere in an exceedingly gay and entertaining setting where pedestrian flows are almost compelled to circulate and re-circulate along display frontages’. Here then, compulsion and suggestion, rather than freedom, was acknowledged as a guiding principle behind the design of urban space. In Clarke’s account, it was the ‘intensity and brilliance’ of shopping spaces which would secure the circulating pedestrian flows which ‘seem to be important sources of retail trade’.

Clarke’s candid discussion of the suggestive effects of shopping environments shows that local and central planners sought to use urban design to manage pedestrian movements in the interests of inducing citizens to shop in new retail developments. The objectives discussed in Clarke’s letter correspond with the emergence of a whole field of commercial design expertise centred on using the internal and external arrangements of shopping environments to maximise purchasing. This overlap between the environmental objectives and expertise of state planners and commercial actors shows that organising commercial consumption was viewed as an important activity for post-war city governments, but it is an area of urban governance which has been obscured by the scholarly focus on ‘town planning’ as a facet of the post-war welfare state. In re-planning two of the country’s most important urban centres, state planners sought to

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99 MHLG, letter from Ministry official to John Millar (City Planning Officer, Manchester), 2 August 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1188
100 MHLG, letter from Ministry official to John Millar (City Planning Officer, Manchester), 2 August 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1188
101 MHLG, letter from Ministry official to John Millar (City Planning Officer, Manchester), 2 August 1966. TNA—HLG—HLG 79/1188
create environments in which citizens were channelled into commercial shopping spaces and induced to buy things. Through manipulating the physical fabric of the city, public officials sought to compel citizens to shop.

Historical treatments of post-war consumerism often construct the state as a relatively passive agent in the management of commercial consumption. Matthew Hilton portrays the British state as a reluctant regulator of consumption, loath to interfere with the workings of the market and the rational calculations of individual consumers. For Hilton, ‘liberal notions about the consuming individual restrained the intervention of the state in the sphere of consumption’. 103 For Frank Trentmann and Frank Mort, the post-war period was one in which the state retreated from the organisation of consumption, as political and cultural authority passed from public government to the commercial domain. 104 These assessments do not generally encompass state activities at the local level, where the extensive powers of city governments over the post-war urban environment necessarily entailed a high degree of intervention in the everyday lives, and consuming habits, of citizens. At the level of the city, the state was far from passive in the organisation of consumerism. State actors attempted to engineer the urban environment in ways which enforced specific consuming practices and made new forms of urban shopping not only possible but difficult to avoid. In the post-war city, citizens were forced, quite literally, to jump over barriers if they sought to resist elite attempts to remodel the form and function of the city around high value retailing.

Some pedestrians may have been able to use, in de Certeau’s terms, spatial tactics to resist conforming to the ideals of an urban landscape remodelled around shopping. And, as Kevin Hetherington has argued, despite the intentions of designers, the individual in a spectacular consuming space was ‘not necessarily a manipulated subjectivity’. In some cases, however, the consumerist reorganisation of the geography of cities had irresistible material consequences. The creation of the new urban motorways and expanded roads which conveyed motorist-shoppers into central Manchester and Leeds entailed demolitions and displacement which were non-negotiable, and the impact of these violent disruptions fell disproportionately on poorer sections of urban society and on those least likely to actually own a car. The following discussion uses some images of road-building to illustrate the scale of destruction and transformation of the urban environment which such projects entailed, before presenting some documentary evidence from individuals whose homes were demolished which demonstrates their sense of grievance at this application of state power.

Hetherington, Capitalism’s Eye, p. x.
Figure 6: Photograph of Leeds’s inner ring road under construction in 1968 which shows the scale of clearance necessary to undertake such vast road schemes. The high tower in the left of frame is Tower House, an office block developed as part of the Merrion shopping centre complex. The Merrion Centre’s multi-storey car park can be seen next to the tower. Part of the function of the inner ring road was to provide the shopping motorist with convenient access to shopping developments such as the Merrion.
Figure 7: Photograph of Leeds’s inner ring under construction in 1968, showing extent of redevelopment works. Source: [http://www.leodis.net/](http://www.leodis.net/) [Accessed 2 July 2015]

Figure 8: Image from the 1969 report on ‘the Leeds Approach’ to traffic planning which shows the intensive use of urban space of the city’s elaborate road junctions and landscaping. Source: HMSO, *Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach*, p. 14.
Figure 9: Image from Manchester City Council’s 1967 City Centre Map showing the scale of the city’s elevated section of inner ring road, the Mancunian Way. Cleared land formerly occupied by housing can be seen along the route of the new road. Source: City and County Borough of Manchester, City Centre Map 1967, p.26. Available at GMCRO.
The demolition of significant portions of inner city districts, and the dislocation of the lives and habits of those who resided there, represented a compulsory and violent material interruption of the everyday lives of many citizens. As an indication of the scale of this disruption, one slum clearance area in the Bradford district of Manchester which was designated for ‘major highway improvements’ including a ‘multi-level road junction’ housed 1,916 individuals. A compulsory purchase order was drawn up in 1967, but, despite the massive upheaval of residents’ lives, no work was scheduled to begin on the road works until the 1980s.\textsuperscript{106} In Leeds too, where a more extensive programme of road-building was undertaken, road schemes entailed dramatic and disruptive reworkings of the urban environment. The scale of construction works required to build Leeds’s motorway network, with roads seventy feet wide, multi-level junctions, tunnels, and elevated sections, required the compulsory purchase and destruction of significant portions of surrounding land which ‘would later be used for landscaping.’\textsuperscript{107} Here then, homes were demolished in order to ensure that, once roads were completed, the view from the motorists’ car window would be an attractive one.

The city archives of Manchester and Leeds contain only a selection of compulsory purchase and clearance records. Most have unfortunately been destroyed. In those that remain, however, there are occasionally letters of complaint from individual householders in which the voices and grievances of those who were violently displaced by road-building can be heard. Residents were particularly aggrieved by attempts to use slum clearance powers—which reduced the compensation payable to householders—to

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\textsuperscript{106} Galston Street, Bradford Clearance Area, report, 1967. GMCRO—Minutes of Slum Clearance and Rehousing Progress Sub-Committee, Vol. 1.
\textsuperscript{107} Letter from the Ministry of Transport to Leeds Town Clerk, 25 January 1967. TNA—MT—MT 152/137
\end{flushright}
obtain land for road-building. In Manchester, the widening of one of the major routes into the city centre, Rochdale Road, produced objections from forty eight of the fifty eight households affected, and some of their complaints survive in the archive. One resident wrote to the city government:

I wish to object to my house being classed unfit. We have had new windows…plus inside toilet…walls painted plus damp course. We have had one visit from health department whom [sic] stated that the house was fit and would only come down for road widening [sic] (which it seems is the case) although we’re being told it’s because it’s unfit.\(^{108}\)

Another resident in the area complained that ‘I don’t think my house should be classed as slum clearance as I think it is coming down for the widening of Rochdale Road’.\(^{109}\) Yet another wrote to ‘object most strongly’ stating that their home had been bought after assurances from the city government that it would not be demolished and ‘consequently hundreds off £s has been spent on putting the house in good repair’.\(^{110}\)

In the inner city district of Armley in Leeds, a resident affected by a road redevelopment scheme wrote to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to ‘protest and strongly condemn the artificial tricks of the Leeds City Planning Departments for the bag of tricks they play’.\(^{111}\) As in Manchester, the householder cited his investment in improving his home and wrote, ‘I feel disillusioned by so called freedom from unscrupulous people’.\(^{112}\) This individual’s home was part of a clearance area of sixty seven properties housing one hundred and fifty seven people.\(^{113}\) Such examples are few and far between in the city archives, but they illustrate that for those facing the

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\(^{108}\) Letter from resident of 34 Ada Street to town clerk, 23 July 1973. GMCRO—M646/1—Box 26

\(^{109}\) Letter from resident of 30 Ada Street to town clerk, 13 November 1973. GMCRO—M646/1—Box 26

\(^{110}\) Letter from resident of 890 Rochdale Road to town clerk, 13 August 1973. GMCRO—M646/1—Box 26

\(^{111}\) Letter from resident of 7 Artist Street to MHLG, 26 January 1959. WYAS—LCC—LC/HE—Box 11

\(^{112}\) Letter from resident of 7 Artist Street to MHLG, 26 January 1959. WYAS—LCC—LC/HE—Box 11

\(^{113}\) Leeds City Council, ‘Brancepeth Place Clearance Areas’, 1960. WYAS—LCC—LC/HE—Box 11
demolition of their homes, remodelling urban infrastructure could be seen as a deeply unfair imposition on the part of the state.

Those individuals living in the inner city districts where extensive road-building took place were least likely to own a car themselves. Despite the rhetoric of a ‘motor revolution’ in the 1960s, levels of car ownership remained structured by gender, class and locality.114 Cities in the industrial north had particularly low levels of car ownership, and within cities there were marked variations between inner city and outer suburb. Census figures for Leeds, for example, show that as late as 1971 over 80% of households in Leeds’s inner city did not own a car. By contrast, almost half of all households in the outer suburbs possessed at least one car.115 Manchester’s 1971 census returns show a similar picture with the lowest levels of car ownership (between 20 and 31% of households) concentrated in the inner city wards.116 The creation of new road infrastructures which serviced the journeys of shoppers involved compulsory expulsions and displacements which fell heaviest on those least likely to benefit from, or participate in, new patterns of urban mobility.

Studies of road-building in earlier periods have also highlighted class and power dynamics at work in projects of urban improvement. David Harvey’s work on Haussmann’s rebuilding of Second Empire Paris in the mid-nineteenth century shows how the ‘improvement’ of the city’s major thoroughfares entailed the widespread demolition of working class districts and the displacement of the urban poor from central areas.117 John Armstrong cites H.J. Dyos’s work on Victorian London and notes that in London too the choices about where and how to meet the spatial demands of

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road building reflected the unequal power relations within the city. Armstrong writes that ‘to minimise cost and objections it made sense to drive such “improvements” through low quality housing where it could be claimed that the road was sweeping away unhygienic slums containing criminals and beggars’.\footnote{Armstrong, ‘From Shillibeer to Buchanan’, p. 246.} Dirk Schubert and Anthony Sutcliffe’s research into the creation of Kingsway and Aldwych in central London at the end of the nineteenth century shows that, as in Haussmann’s Paris, the construction of monumental civic streets entailed the destruction and displacement of working class dwellings and was made possible through area slum clearance schemes.\footnote{Dirk Schubert & Anthony Sutcliffe, ‘The “Haussmannization” of London?: the Planning and Construction of Kingsway-Aldwych, 1889–1935’, Planning Perspectives 11:2 (1996), pp. 115-144.} In the post-1945 period, the discourse of ‘improvement’ had been replaced by ‘modernisation’, but the construction of new urban infrastructures continued to be a process which reflected and reinforced imbalances of power and authority within the city.

As in nineteenth century London and Paris, the demolitions necessary to create new roads were constructed as uncontroversial in official discourse because the buildings being demolished were problematised and devalued as obsolete slums. Indeed, the existence of large areas of working class housing around the periphery of the city centre was framed by highway planners in terms of an ‘opportunity’. The report, the Leeds Approach, stated that the:

needs and opportunities for renewal occur within a radius of two miles from the city centre. This in turn is the area within which the ever increasing pressures of modern traffic are most acutely felt…The need for extensive renewal at the heart of the city and in the area immediately surrounding it thus offers a two-fold opportunity—for building anew in a newly-created environment…and for using some of the cleared land to satisfy the extensive demand on land of an up-to-date system of highways.\footnote{HMSO, Planning & Transport—the Leeds Approach, p. 6.}

Manchester’s 1960s planning documents also presented road building and slum clearance as presenting a fortuitous coincidence of objectives. The 1967 city plan stated
that ‘in areas where comprehensive development is planned, the opportunity will be taken to modify the [road] network’. Such perspectives were echoed in journalistic accounts. A 1970 report in The Times on Leeds’s road building stated that the city was ‘lucky’ because ‘it had a decayed fabric in those parts of the city where new roads and associated development were needed’. In Manchester, local press reporting was also enthusiastic about the destruction of inner city housing in the interests of the speed, comfort, and mobility of wealthier citizens. A 1958 report in the Manchester Evening News, for example, welcomed the proposal to create a ‘fast motorway’ linking the airport to the city centre by ‘driving a main road through [the working class district of] Hulme’.

Simon Gunn has noted that Leeds’s urban motorway network was ‘seen not only as the key to Leeds’ economic rejuvenation as an industrial and business centre but as a visual index of its reincarnation as a thrusting, modern city’. The same association between spectacular new road projects and civic status as a modern, affluent and enterprising city was evident in Manchester. The city’s elevated urban motorway, the Mancunian Way, was described in a commemorative booklet as ‘an outstanding example of the type of road required by modern urban traffic planning’. The new motorway was officially opened by the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, on 5 May 1967, in the midst of his first government’s ‘white heat’ campaign of technological modernisation. The discourse of modernisation in the post-war period was suggestive of universal benefit and unproblematic progress. The British Road Federation’s account of Leeds’s urban

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121 J.S. Millar, City and County Borough of Manchester: City Centre Map 1967, p. 31. GMCRO
125 ‘Mancunian Way’, commemorative booklet, May 1967. Lancashire County Record Office [LCRO]—DDX2286/9339/1/4
motorway network, for example, accepted that ‘new roads causes disturbance’, and that ‘individual householders may suffer’, but argued that ‘the loss to a minority of people cannot be good reason to deprive the broad majority of a plan from which everyone will benefit’. The language of progress, modernisation, and of ‘an up-to-date system of highways’ often masked the manner in which specific modernising projects both reflected and deepened structural imbalances of wealth, and resources within British society.

Figure 10: Front cover from a commemorative booklet produced in May 1967 to mark the official opening of the Mancunian Way, a short section of urban motorway in the south of the city centre. The brochure included structural specifications alongside impressionistic images like this one which emphasised the project’s modernistic aesthetic and form. Source: Lancashire Motorway Archive, LCRO—DDX2286/9339/1/4

Sociologist Michael Mann suggests that modern states possess an expansive ‘infrastructural power’ which enables state actors to organise society and ‘to implement

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127 BRF, Look at Leeds, pamphlet, N.d. [c.1971?]. WYAS—LC/Planning/4095
logistically political decisions’. Foucauldian histories of the governance of nineteenth-century cities have also emphasised the capacity to organise the urban environment as a central mechanism through which specific models of the city and the citizen are engineered into the physical fabric of everyday life. This section has shown that, in post-war cities, the infrastructural capacities of the state were deployed to install models of mobility and urban function which were organised around new modes of shopping. The design of central shopping spaces was intended to compel citizens to circulate and shop, and the remodelling of transport infrastructures was centred on prioritising the mobility of the shopping motorist.

This role for the state in the creation and enforcement of consumerist urban geographies is largely absent from histories of post-war consumerism, which have generally located the governance of a consumer society in new commercial forms of expertise, or in national regulations and consumer protection regimes. I have argued here that the local state encouraged and enforced favoured patterns of consumption and that this aspect of consumer governance was undertaken through the management of urban space. I have also suggested that there was a material politics to the consumerist re-working of urban infrastructure, in which the socio-spatial demands of shoppers were accommodated through destroying spaces which serviced less favoured groups in urban society. The work of Harvey, Dyos, and Sutcliffe into earlier rounds of urban infrastructural improvement suggests a persistent pattern of favouring privileged social groupings through environmental change. In post-war cities, ‘modernising’ urban transport systems favoured the mobility of the shopping motorist while materially disadvantaging those living in the poorest districts of cities.

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129 Joyce & Bennett, ‘Material Powers’.
Conclusion

This chapter has shown how state actors reorganised the infrastructure and environment of cities around new modes of shopping. Conditions of access, patterns of mobility, and circulation were all regulated in the interests of the citizen-shopper. The concern with the ‘amenity’ value of city centres as shopping spaces, with their function as spaces of pleasure and display, prefigures the identification of the state’s role in producing ‘postmodern’ consuming environments in the work of key urbanists such as Sharon Zukin and David Harvey. As with the development of post-war shopping centres, the state’s engagement with a consumerist remaking of the urban landscape has a longer history than urban scholars have allowed for. In elevating the infrastructural and spatial demands of the shopping citizen, city governments constructed this figure as a favoured type of subject which must be accommodated through material reorganisations of the geography of cities.

While cities were remade in order to service ‘the shopper’s’ needs, public officials also sought to use the urban environment to manage and influence this figure. The consuming environments of post-war cities were expressly intended to steer, channel, and encourage the affluent citizen to move and consume in the city in prescribed ways. The chapter has also shown that remaking the geography of cities could be a violent and coercive project. The objections of those whose homes stood in the way of new urban infrastructures were not permitted to halt the process of enabling and prioritising the mobility of the affluent citizen. Again, parallels with the development of shopping centres emerge as languages of progressive modernisation masked the class- and power-inflected character of urban development projects. Rather than a benign state, the experience of replanning urban mobility points to an interventionist, organising state,
which deployed its infrastructural power to select and install favoured models of the city and citizen in the face of hostility and opposition.
Chapter Three: Homes for Consuming Heroes

This chapter shows how state actors reimagined the post-war citizen-subject as a consuming individual and reinserts the state into histories of affluent domesticity. The chapter argues that this consumerist remodelling of the citizen-subject can be observed in debates about the function and provision of housing and that, in their efforts to regulate the internal spaces of the home, public officials mapped consumerist and individualistic models of the citizen onto the spaces and technologies of the home. One important consequence of this consumerist recasting of the citizen-subject was a greater voice for commercial experts within the institutions of public governance. The chapter also demonstrates how consumerist models of the home and the individual intersected with council housing programmes. While the post-war state was evidently committed to ensuring that citizens were housed in safe and sanitary environments, politicians and officials displayed anxiety and uncertainty over the extent to which council tenants should be allowed to enjoy the material benefits of affluence and to use their homes as sites of self-expression. The chapter contributes to debates about the relationship between notions of citizenship and consumerism by showing what consequences the recasting of the post-war citizen-subject as a domestic consumer had for the practices of public governance and, crucially, how this established new lines of social difference based on individuals’ consuming status. 1 In line with the central argument of this thesis,

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the chapter shows that attending to state efforts to reorganise space reveals a political commitment to fostering models of society and the individual which presents a challenge to collectivist narratives of the post-war state.

The spaces and practices of the home are central to individuals’ social experience, familial relations, and sense of self. In the post-war period both the supply of housing and the experience of domesticity underwent significant transformation. The state’s role in the dramatic expansion of social housing provision is relatively well-rehearsed. Yet there is another history of the post-war home which is a story of affluent domesticity, of home-ownership and ‘home-centeredness’, the nuclear family, television, refrigerators, and record players. The state is largely absent from this story of leisure, consumption, privatism, and the individual, and yet, as this chapter will show, state actors subsidised the expansion of home-ownership, constructed ‘the home-owner’ as a privileged type of citizen, and sought to reorganise the internal spaces of the home in accordance with a consumerist and highly-individualistic model of the domestic subject.

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman argues that consumerism has eroded and replaced citizenship, in a process which marks the end of ‘real politics’ and ‘the citizen’s

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For historians, such strident claims can be unhelpful, and rest on ideal-types of
the socially-engaged ‘public’ citizen and the self-interested ‘private’ consumer. As a
result, the response of recent historiography has been to eschew generalised critiques
and turn instead to examine the ways in which normative models of democratic subjects
and consuming subjects are constructed and inform each other. The first part of this
chapter is concerned with the way state actors reimaged the citizen-subject as a
consuming individual, and how this affected understandings of citizens’ needs and
demands in the domestic setting. It uses the papers of the Parker Morris committee on
housing standards to show that public officials in the late-1950s began to concern
themselves with the home as a site of personal fulfilment and self-expression, and
constructed different ‘types’ of consuming domestic subject—such as the teenager and
the housewife—with individualised psychological and spatial needs.

Within post-war historiography, the story of state intervention in housing has generally
been told through what Alison Ravetz calls the ‘social experiment’ of council housing. Ravetz, Mark Clapson, Patrick Dunleavy, and others, have examined the histories of the
council estates, tower blocks, and mass housing projects which, whether judged
positively or negatively, are viewed as monuments to the collectivist social provisions
of the welfare state, and the utopian impulses of planners and architects. These are the

5 Zygmunt Bauman, ‘Exit Homo Politicus, Enter Homo Consumens’, in Soper & Trentmann (eds.)
Citizenship and Consumption, pp. 139-153, p. 145. And, for an interpretation of Bauman’s argument, see
Tony Blackshaw, ‘Bauman on Consumerism: Living the Market-Mediated Life’ in Michael Hviid
Jacobsen & Poul Poder (eds.), The Sociology of Zygmunt Bauman: Challenges and Critique (Aldershot,
6 See, for example, Trentmann, ‘Bread, Milk and Democracy’; Mort, ‘Competing Domains’.
7 Ravetz, Council Housing and Culture, p. 1.
8 Ravetz, Council Housing and Culture; Clapson, Invincible Green Suburbs; Clapson, Working-Class
Suburb: Social Change on an English Council Estate, 1930-2010 (Manchester, 2012); Dunleavy, The
Politics of Mass Housing in Britain. The study of council housing programmes is a fairly expansive field,
further examples include: Matthew Hollow, ‘Governmentality on the Park Hill Estate: the Rationality of
Consumers and Urban Culture (Manchester, 2007); Andrzej Olechnowicz, ‘Civic Leadership and
Education for Democracy: The Simons and the Wythenshawe Estate’, Contemporary British History 14:1
spaces and experiences which are most commonly referred to in accounts of post-war ‘housing policy’, and thus the state’s objectives and interventions in the provision of homes are understood to be one element of a story of ameliorative social reform under the aegis of the welfare state. The second part of this chapter highlights an alternative aspect of state intervention in housing which is the state’s subsidisation of home-ownership and promotion of individualistic cultures of owner-occupation. The section argues that subsidising home-ownership was tied to the construction of the home-owning subject as a favoured type of citizen and bolstered an ongoing commercial project which centred on cultivating and monetising individuals’ relationship with their own home.

The third part of the chapter considers the ambiguous position of the council tenant in a culture in which home-ownership and domestic self-expression were valorised within the public and commercial sphere as markers of full participation in society. The discussion shows that, while public officials accepted the need for tenants to engage in domestic self-expression, there were uncertainties about how far the material and psychological benefits of an affluent home life could or should be extended to those renting their houses from the state. The impulses of officials to police and regulate tenants’ consuming habits and environment came into conflict with the belief that individuals must be able to express their selfhoods in their home. Differential levels of access to the offerings of affluent domesticity, based on wealth and status, were designed into the fabric of homes, marking out the council tenant as a ‘flawed consumer’ of housing.9 This discussion is intended to show that state actors’ reimagining of the

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domestic subject as a consuming individual led to the production of new geographies of cultural and political exclusion based on one’s consuming status.

**Housing the Consuming Subject**

The figure of the consumer looms large over post-war historiography, and yet this figure is mostly placed outside of their home. By determining the way in which the consuming citizen and various state actors created ‘homes’, this chapter shows that the home was a crucial site for the establishment and production of consumerist models of the individual. Peter Gurney suggests that, from the 1950s, ‘the atomized figure of the individual consumer began to exert a hegemonic influence across both polity and civil society, shaping the epistemologies and languages through which the political and economic domains were thought and represented’. A range of recent studies, most notably by Frank Trentmann, have foregrounded the dynamic and symbiotic relationship between notions of citizenship and consumerism, and identified the post-war period as one in which mass consumption and expanding knowledges of ‘the consumer’ transformed models of the citizen-subject. And yet we know relatively little of the historical processes through which citizens might be said to have ‘become’ consumers, how (or where) such a recasting of the individual subject took place, and what the implications of this were for modes of governance and for the relationship between the state and the individual. Indeed, as Trentmann notes, ‘the expanding

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12 See the contributions to Soper & Trentmann (eds.), *Citizenship and Consumption*; Trentmann (ed.), *The Making of the Consumer*; Daunton & Hilton (eds.), *The Politics of Consumption*. 
literature on consumption...has offered surprisingly little in the way of explaining the evolution of the consumer into a master category of collective and individual identity'.

The first part of this chapter addresses the lack of specificity and process to accounts of the overlapping categories of citizen and consumer. It does so by showing how, in their management of domestic space and experience, public officials recast the domestic subject as a consuming individual, and the home as a space in which this figure’s desires for self-expression and self-fulfilment must be accommodated. By the 1950s, state actors had come to view the home as the locus of the consuming individual, reformulated citizens’ needs in terms of their consuming desires, and mapped consumerist models of the home and the individual onto the spaces and technologies of British houses. Remodelling the citizen-subject as a consuming individual prompted public officials to assume a heightened responsibility for individuals’ psychological needs, expanded the role of commercial experts in public governance, and introduced new forms of regulating and classifying the individual in their home.

Historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and cultural geographers have produced rich studies of the social, cultural, and psychological significance of ‘the home’. The home emerges from these studies as a site in which the material and the symbolic are brought together as individuals invest meaning in the spaces and belongings of their homes, and domestic consumption is used to foster and maintain interpersonal relationships, and to engage in creative processes of self-construction and expression. There was nothing novel about the identification of home with individual selfhood in post-war Britain, but,

as historian Clare Langhamer has shown, ‘a trend towards a more home-based leisure and increasingly more home-centred patterns of consumption did deepen in the postwar years’. The affluent worker studies of the 1960s were predicated on exploring the wider social significance of this growing ‘home-centredness’ which was firmly linked with privatism and domestic consumption. The post-war home was the preeminent site for what Frank Mort calls ‘the cultivation of the secular self’, and the story of post-war domesticity has been told as one of socio-cultural change centred on the private individual and their relationship to the commercial domain of affluent consumerism.

The post-war state features little in such accounts and yet, as the following discussion will show, public officials were highly responsive to consumerist notions of the home and the domestic subject, and used their powers over the material arrangement of housing to construct specific models of the individualised consumer.

In order to examine how state actors governed domesticity I draw on the extensive papers of the Parker Morris committee held at the National Archives. In 1959 the Ministry of Housing commissioned Sir Parker Morris ‘to consider the standards of design and equipment applicable to family dwellings…whether provided by public authorities or by private enterprise’. The Parker Morris committee undertook two years of information gathering and analysis, and collected evidence from a prodigious array of individuals and institutions. Public sector experts such as planners, health professionals, and local housing authorities were represented, but so too were house-

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18 Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Homes for Today and Tomorrow (London, 1961), p. iv. [Hereafter Homes for Today and Tomorrow] Before his appointment to the housing standards committee, Sir Parker Morris had been town clerk of Westminster between 1929 and 1956, and, from 1956, was Chairman of the National Federation of Housing Societies. These details are given in: ‘To Review Housing Standards’, The Times, 11 March 1959, p. 15.
builders, building societies, women’s groups and a plethora of commercial and trade bodies such as the British Refrigeration Association and the Institute of British Launderers. The committee’s papers thus provide the historian with a rich source of evidence for how a range of state and non-state actors conceived of the home. As a national survey, the Parker Morris enquiries extend beyond the two case study cities of Manchester and Leeds which this thesis focuses on (although officials in the two cities did give evidence which is included where appropriate). The nationwide coverage, however, shows that the consumerist reimagining of the home and the domestic subject was not restricted to individual cities and reinforces the methodology of this thesis which uses Manchester and Leeds as examples to make claims about post-war British society and politics more generally.

Parker Morris’s report, *Homes for Today and Tomorrow*, which was published in 1961, is remembered by historians and journalists for producing a set of generous minimum space standards for public housing, and thus seen as emblematic of post-war collectivism. This view of the report is offered by Mark Clapson when he describes the abandonment of Parker Morris design standards in 1980 as ‘the end of an era of collective housing’. A similar view is offered in Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture*, pp. 97-98. For a journalistic account of the collectivism of Parker Morris see Owen Hatherley, ‘If We Don’t Want to Live in Shoeboxes, We Need to Bring Back Housing Standards’, *The Guardian*, 7 January 2014.

Alison Ravetz and, most recently, Matthew Hollow have read the report as an indication of the impact which rising affluence was having on working-class domestic lifestyles. The committee certainly did view their task as one of responding to material changes in standards of living, and their report updated the

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19 The full list of those who gave evidence is given in *Homes for Today and Tomorrow*, Appendix 9, pp. 90-91.


previous public housing standards laid down in 1942 by the Dudley Committee. On its opening page, the report’s authors stated that:

Since the end of the war, the country has undergone a social and economic revolution...One household in three has a car; the same proportion have a washing machine. Television sets are owned by two households in three; so are vacuum cleaners; and one household in five has a refrigerator. These possessions are spreading fast through all income groups, fastest of all in the lower brackets.  

The significance of the Parker Morris report, however, went well beyond washing machines for the working classes. The committee was concerned with understanding individuals’ relationship to their homes across both the public and the private sector and its papers reveal the adoption of an individualised and person-centred model of the citizen-subject in which domestic space and domestic consumption came to be viewed as essential to self-actualisation. Thus, while the committee was centrally concerned with the impact of home-based leisure and consumption, their response was not simply to recommend more space to house the paraphernalia of affluence. Rather, the authors argued that the post-war home must now fulfil a psychological function for the individualised consumer:

There was a time when for a great majority of the population the major significance of the structure in which they made their home was to provide shelter and a roof over their head. This is no longer so. An increasing proportion of people are coming to expect their home to do more than fulfil the basic requirements. It must be something of which they can be proud; and in which they must be able to express the fullness of their lives.  

This model of the home as a site in which individuals could ‘express the fullness of their lives’ reflects state actors’ acceptance of responsibility for the personal and psychological fulfilment of individuals. Indeed, this new emphasis on the personal needs of the consuming individual conflicted with, and reformulated, established notions of domestic privacy and the family. The growth of a family-centred lifestyle was a key component of contemporary social investigators’ understandings of changes

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22 Homes for Today and Tomorrow, pp. 1-2.
23 Homes for Today and Tomorrow, p. 3.
that were taking place in post-war society, and designing ‘homes for family needs’ was
central to the way the Parker Morris committee understood their task.24 Yet the
committee’s papers reveal that in the late-1950s tensions emerged between the notion of
the family as a cohesive unit, which required privacy from the ‘public’ world beyond
the front door, and a model of the family as an assemblage of individuals, who required
space in which to enjoy privacy from each other. The Housing Centre Trust, for
example, reported to the Parker Morris committee that it was ‘concerned at the lack of
privacy in modern small houses for individuals in the household… Parents should…be
able to have some privacy from younger children, men from women, and so on’.25
Manchester’s Housing Department framed ‘privacy’ in terms of individuals’ need for
space to engage in personalised consumption: ‘increased leisure time must be catered
for [and] the increased cultivation of hobbies may demand the provision of additional
space’.26 The city’s housing officials felt that these individualised habits of leisure
meant that ‘the demands for privacy may increase’.27

An emphasis on the privacy of the individual was also evident in reactions to Parker
Morris’s inquiry into open plan house designs. Open plan arrangements were
considered because the committee viewed them as an example of modern house design
which might become more popular in the future. However, despite this voguish appeal,
almost all respondents opposed open plan layouts on the basis of the infringement of
individual privacy that would occur. The Institute of Municipal Engineers—whose
members were responsible for local authority house designs—felt that open plan
designs were ‘generally…unsatisfactory owning to lack of privacy [and] not adaptable

24 Homes for Today and Tomorrow, p. 7.
25 Evidence of the Housing Centre Trust, N.d. [1959?], p. 2. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/138
26 Evidence of City of Manchester Housing Department, 5 October 1959, p. 1. TNA—HLG—HLG37/127
27 Evidence of City of Manchester Housing Department, 5 October 1959, p. 1. TNA—HLG—HLG37/127
to modern family life’. The evidence submitted on behalf of readers of the newspaper Woman’s Mirror agreed that “open planning” in a small dwelling does not allow for much privacy for individual members, for homework and study, courting, entertaining guests or pursuing hobbies. The reactions against open planning illustrated the preeminent importance placed upon individual privacy in considerations of housing design. Whereas domestic privacy in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was understood in terms of separation and seclusion from ‘the public sphere’, by the post-war period privacy in the home was increasingly understood as personal space for each individual member of the family.

The tension between notions of the family as an integrated unit, or as a collection of private individuals, manifested itself in debates about the technologies of heating the home. If the home was the spiritual site of the family, the hearth was its symbolic centre. Thus in 1950, at a conference on local government house design organised by the National Women’s Citizen Association, one delegate claimed that the living room fireplace was ‘the soul of the British home’. A number of the respondents to the Parker Morris committee shared this view of the hearth as the focal point of familial sociability. Yet in homes without central heating (which did not reach a majority of households until 1977), gathering around the fireplace was also the only means of keeping warm. The Society of Medical Officers of Health—whose members were

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28 Evidence of the Institute of Municipal Engineers, N.d.[c.1959], p. 1. TNA—HLG—HLG37/127
29 Evidence from Woman’s Mirror readers, 15 October 1959, p. 7. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/149
32 This view is presented in Building Societies Association, ‘Evidence for Sub-Committee on Housing Standards’, 2 October 1959, p. 3. TNA—HLG—HLG37/154; and in Evidence from City of Leeds Housing Committee, January 1960, p. 1. TNA—HLG—HLG37/127
33 On the spread of central heating in homes see Obelkevich, ‘Consumption’, p. 147.
responsible for designating slum housing and for health standards in houses generally—felt that ‘house heating has played a major part in the ineffective utilisation of space [and that] where reliance is placed solely on the open fire a major portion of the house is thrown out of general use for about two thirds of the year’. Without new technologies of heating the home then, individuals would not be able to enjoy the personal space and personalised leisure which was seen as so important to the nourishment of their interior lives and to a healthy selfhood.

The Parker Morris committee concluded that houses needed to be bigger, but that new heating technologies were required in order that individuals could make use of extra space to engage in fulfilling personal activities:

A desire to live their own lives for an increasing part of the time they spend at home is spreading through the family as a whole…teenagers wanting to listen to records; someone else wanting to watch the television; someone going in for do-it-yourself; all these and homework too mean that the individual members of the family are more and more wanting to be free to move away from the fireside to somewhere else in the home.

This passage illustrates clearly how the committee reimagined the family as a collection of individualised consuming subjects, with their own needs, habits and spaces within the home. The growth of the market in machines which could heat all or part of a house was, according to the committee, a reflection of these more individualised domestic habits (see figure 1). The open fire and the central heating system then, were tied to two competing models of what a family was, and how its members would behave in the domestic setting. Understandings of a shift from familial to individual needs were driven by a new emphasis on the consuming habits and desires of the citizen-subject and state actors viewed alterations to the spaces and technologies of the home as a way of servicing the requirements of a society of individualised consumers.

34 Evidence of the Society of Medical Officers of Health, September 1959, p. 4. TNA—HLG—37/148
35 Homes for Today and Tomorrow, p. 2.
36 Homes for Today and Tomorrow, p. 3.
One family member who the report presented as particularly in need of the extra physical and psychological space which improved heating would provide was the teenager. There was a remarkable degree of consensus amongst public and private sector experts that the desires of teenagers for more space and privacy should be met. The Building Societies Association reported that ‘adolescents appear to wish to lead a more independent life and it is desirable therefore that their bedrooms should be large enough to permit their use as bed-sitting rooms’.\textsuperscript{37} The view that a teenager’s bedroom must be large enough to allow for study, and for the development and nourishment of an interior life, was shared by many respondents.\textsuperscript{38} The Society of Medical Officers of Health felt that ‘the adolescent needs space to carry out his hobbies, to undertake his

\textsuperscript{37} Building Societies Association, ‘Evidence for Sub-Committee on Housing Standards’, 2 October 1959, p. 1. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/154

\textsuperscript{38} See for example Evidence of the Housing Centre Trust, N.d. [1959?], p. 10. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/138
studies, enjoy his personal treasures and to entertain his friends elsewhere than in a room shared with his parents and younger siblings’. 39 This space would, the medical officers hoped, ‘help in the psychological development of the adolescent by giving him scope to develop his personal aptitudes and to express his desires and ambitions’. 40

There was also an element of pre-emptive social and moral policing at work here. One ‘housecraft’ body warned the Parker Morris committee that ‘in localities where there was generally inadequate house-room for young people to entertain themselves and their friends, street life ensued, leading to gangs and an increase in delinquency’. 41

The post-war establishment of ‘the teenager’ as an individual member of the person-centred society, and a consuming subject in her or his own right, entitled young people to domestic space in which to explore and express their own selfhoods. 42 The Parker Morris committee observed in its report that:

Through collections, hobbies and perhaps more homework; through bigger beds and the stage of clumsiness, the children will evolve into young adults, most with incomes of their own; with greater needs of privacy, a larger accumulation of possessions, often noisy ways of passing the time, and for an increasing number a real need for somewhere quiet to work at their further education. 43

It is clear that the post-war expansion of secondary and further education added to young adults’ claims on domestic space, but also that education was only one aspect of teenagers’ self-development and self-expression which the designers of British homes

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39 Evidence of the Society of Medical Officers of Health, September 1959, p. 4. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/148
40 Evidence of the Society of Medical Officers of Health, September 1959, p. 3. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/148
41 Evidence of the Association of Electrical Housecraft Advisors, N.d. [c.1960?], p. 2. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/183
43 Homes for Today and Tomorrow, p. 9.
sought to accommodate. Space and privacy were the right of the teenager in order that they could develop their personality and tastes, enjoy and engage with their material possessions, and gain a sense of self-knowledge and self-actualisation. These efforts to accommodate the teenager in the post-war home show how far public officials had come to view personal expression and consumption as central to health and happiness, and also how consumerist models of the individual produced new modes of classifying and differentiating subjects. Within the commercial domain, expanding knowledge of consumers led to the classification and segmentation of different ‘types’ of consumer. Within the home, state actors’ remodelling of citizen-subjects as consuming individuals led them to identify different types of individual, such as the teenager, with their own personalised needs and spatial requirements.

Along with the teenager, the Parker Morris papers reveal the construction of another new type of domestic subject: the consumer housewife. The one room which received the most scrutiny from the Parker Morris committee was the kitchen, and the discussion here will demonstrate that debates about the design and functions of kitchens reveal that public officials’ conceptions of the female domestic subject were in the process of being transformed by consumerist models of the individual. The committee’s deliberations show a heightened emphasis on women’s fulfilment in their home. Domestic satisfaction was understood in terms of the housewife’s ability to express her selfhood through personalising her home and exercising choice over consumable domestic goods such as ovens and refrigerators. The proliferation of white goods and ‘labour saving devices’ by no means represented a ‘liberation’ of women from housework of course. Feminist historians have repeatedly stressed ‘women’s continued responsibility for

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44 On post-war education and its impact on young adults see Stephanie Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950s* (Basingstoke, 2005).
domestic labour and the failure of technology to eradicate it’.\textsuperscript{46} Normative models of the woman at home were laden with the power dynamics of a patriarchal society and centred on organising women’s unpaid domestic labour. However, what I am interested in here is the way in which consumerist notions of the housewife conflicted with established models of the female domestic subject, producing a shift in publicly-defined notions of the housewife’s ‘needs’ and introducing a new range of commercial bodies into the regulation of women’s domestic space.

Evidence from a range of respondents to Parker Morris suggests widespread dissatisfaction with kitchens in post-war Britain. The committee’s report complained that ‘the kitchen is the most intensively used room in the house and yet it is also the room which in many recent homes retains some of the character of the nineteenth-century scullery’.\textsuperscript{47} Manufacturers, builders, women’s groups, housing trusts and medical experts all agreed that the size and design of kitchens was generally unsatisfactory. One in three of the \textit{Woman’s Mirror} respondents, for example, ‘had severe criticisms of the design of the kitchen’\textsuperscript{.48} The Building Societies Association offered the view that, ‘the first priority [in housing generally] is the larger kitchen’.\textsuperscript{49} A senior public housing official from the United States, Abner Silverman, told Parker Morris that kitchen design was the primary ‘shortcoming of British practice’.\textsuperscript{50} Yet, despite this consensus around the inadequacies of British kitchens, the committee’s papers reveal some uncertainty around how kitchens should be improved. This

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Homes for Today and Tomorrow}, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{48} Letter from May Abbott, \textit{Woman’s Mirror}, N.d. [c.1959?]. TNA—HLG—HLG37/149
\textsuperscript{49} Building Societies Association, ‘Evidence for Sub-Committee on Housing Standards’, 2 October 1959, p. 11. TNA—HLG—HLG37/154
\textsuperscript{50} Evidence of Abner Silverman to CHAC Sub-committee, 6 January 1960, p. 1. TNA—HLG—HLG37/138
uncertainty reflected a tension between two opposing models of the housewife, the one as a productive worker whose labour in the kitchen required careful and prescriptive planning, and the other as a consuming individual whose domestic happiness depended on the exercise of personal choice.

Leif Jerram has shown how, in Weimar Germany, planners’ competing views of womanhood were translated into different designs for kitchens.\textsuperscript{51} City planners in 1920s Frankfurt and Munich sought to use the space of the kitchen to enforce particular notions of the woman’s place in the home and in society. Jerram highlights the disagreements between those experts who ‘characterized the woman at home as worker, a productive citizen of the social state [and] other experts [who] plotted her life as maternal and social.’\textsuperscript{52} A similar tension between ideas of the woman as worker or as mother is evident in the Parker Morris papers. It coalesced around exactly the same question of the extent to which the kitchen should be integrated into, or separated from, the rest of the home.\textsuperscript{53} However, the Parker Morris papers also reveal other influences and conflicts over kitchen design, as new organisations and experts claiming to represent ‘the consumer’ asserted their right to define the form and function of the kitchen, and to determine the practices which took place there.

Jerram notes the influence of American ‘scientific management’ principles on Frankfurt’s kitchen designers.\textsuperscript{54} This type of view was represented in the Parker Morris discussions by the US official, Abner Silverman, who felt that ‘kitchen planning and

\textsuperscript{52} Jerram, ‘Kitchen Sink Dramas’, p. 539.
\textsuperscript{53} This was one of the first questions asked by the committee’s standardised questionnaire, which is included in the file TNA—HLG—HLG37/154
fitting was quite inadequate to allow a woman to do her work properly’. 55 The ‘scientific’ perspective was supported by many public health professionals and local government officers who gave evidence. Manchester’s Housing Department felt that ‘the sequence of equipment should be the subject of the most careful planning designed to ease the housewife’s work and to minimise the danger of accidents’. 56

In opposition to the prescriptive, scientific approach to kitchen design, an alternative, consumerist perspective was also offered. Langhamer notes that, in the post-war home, ‘it was women who were deemed responsible for orchestrating domestic consumption’, and the Parker Morris papers reveal a range of organisations which claimed to speak on behalf of the consumer-housewife. 57 Unsurprisingly, bodies like the Association of Electrical Housecraft Advisors, the Women’s Gas Federation, and the British Refrigeration Association, argued that bigger kitchens were essential in order ‘to take major additions to their equipment’. 58 The British Refrigeration Association felt that not only did the modern kitchen require space for ‘a reasonable selection of electrical appliances’, but that space should also be factored in to accommodate any ‘new appliances that are likely to be introduced to the market in the future’. 59 Yet whereas the scientific approach held that rational, expert analysis could best determine the layout of the kitchen, other groups stressed that the consumer-housewife must have the freedom to personalise her kitchen, to endorse her favoured brands, and perhaps remodel her kitchen at a later date. The British Refrigeration Association was strongly opposed to prescriptive designs and ‘recommend[ed] that householders should have as much

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55 Evidence of Abner Silverman to CHAC Sub-committee, 6 January 1960, p. 1. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/138
56 Evidence of City of Manchester Housing Department to CHAC Sub-committee, 5 October 1959, p. 4. TNA—HLG—HLG37/127
58 Evidence of the Association of Electrical Housecraft Advisors to CHAC Sub-committee, N.d. [c.1960?], p. 4. TNA—HLG—HLG37/183
59 Evidence of the British Refrigeration Association to CHAC Sub-committee, 30 June 1959, p.5. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/134
freedom as possible in choosing their kitchen equipment [because] tastes differ and so
do the designs of different brands'. The Society of Medical Officers felt that, aside
from installing cupboards and a sink, ‘otherwise only space should be provided to
enable the housewife to make her own choice’. In this formulation of the female
domestic subject, standardisation and prescriptive planning would constrain the
consumer-housewife’s ability to use her kitchen as a site of personal choice and self-
expression.

Figure 2: Advertisement for an ‘exciting new cooker’, available in a choice of ‘attractive
colours’. Included in the Parker Morris papers, N.d. [c.1959?]. TNA – HLG – HLG37/206

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60 Evidence of the British Refrigeration Association to CHAC Sub-committee, 30 June 1959, p.6. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/134
61 Evidence of the Society of Medical Officers of Health, September 1959, p. 8. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/148
Recasting the housewife as a consuming individual led to a heightened concern with women’s consuming choices and ability to personalise her kitchen through purchases. The adverts in figures two and three were included within the Parker Morris papers along with a number of other adverts for domestic appliances and furnishings aimed at the female consumer. The ability to purchase an ‘exciting new cooker’, or the kitchen surfaces which would ‘make a dream home complete’, came to be seen by state actors not as a ‘private’ luxury, but as part of publicly-defined norms of domesticity and womanhood. Crucially, this remodelling of the needs of the female domestic subject meant that commercial organisations claiming to speak for the consumer-housewife were able to stake a claim to authority over the governance of domestic space and domestic experience.
This section has shown that the deliberations of state actors over the design and functions of the home evidence an ongoing reformulation of the post-war citizen-subject as a consuming individual, and an assumption of public responsibility for servicing private consuming demands and desires. Indeed, public officials’ acknowledgement of the personal and psychological function of consumption in the home—as a means of constructing meaning and expressing selfhood—prefigures the academic identification of ‘active consumption’ from the 1990s onwards. Public housing officials in the late-1950s modelled an individual subject whose selfhood depended on material culture. Consumerist models of the individual led to the reformulation of established notions of family, the individual, and the housewife, which were mapped onto the physical spaces and practices of the home.

An ‘Experiment towards Liberty’

The story of the post-war state’s intervention in ‘housing’ is most often told solely in terms of what Alison Ravetz calls the ‘social experiment’ of council housing. Thus historians such as Ravetz, Mark Clapson, and Selina Todd have taken up the concerns of post-war social investigators with tenants’ experiences of local authority rehousing programmes, and the effects of new planned environments on sociability and models of ‘community’. Other accounts have focused on the genesis and experience of specific housing estates, or on highly-visible examples of modernist housing projects, or the

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62 Housing Minister Harold Macmillan used this phrase to describe his Party’s new direction in housing policy in 1953.
63 Ravetz, Council Housing and Culture: The History of a Social Experiment.
social housing programmes of particular cities. After 1951, however, the state embarked upon another ‘social experiment’ in housing which was statistically and culturally more significant than council house-building, but which has received far less historical attention. This experiment was suggestive not of post-war collectivism, but rather demonstrated the state’s commitment to promoting and subsidising individualistic models of the citizen-subject, and commercial cultures of the home and the self.

After 1951, central government deployed its financial and political powers to subsidise private house-building and home-ownership, and to bolster highly individualistic cultures of domestic consumption. This political project established ‘the home-owner’ as a privileged political subject in Britain, dramatically expanded the system of mortgage finance overseen by building societies, and intersected with on-going commercial projects in which the consumption of homes and consumption in the home was promoted as a means for individuals to engage in practices of self-construction. This state-endorsed model of domesticity and tenure was highly successful and became so well-established that concurrent governments proceeded to promote the culture of home-ownership right up to the present day. After 1951 then, state intervention in housing provision worked in concert with commercial actors to construct home-ownership as a marker of full participation in a post-war society of privatised and individualistic consumers.

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67 On the present day dynamics of home-ownership in Britain see Danny Dorling, All That is Solid: How the Great Housing Disaster Defines our Times (London, 2015).
From 1951 the government pursued a markedly different approach to housing policy than that of the post-war Labour administration. The system of building licensing was rebalanced in favour of private enterprise, before being abolished entirely in 1954. The profitability of private building was restored by abandoning the 100% tax on development values and subsidised local authority house-building was restricted. These changes fundamentally rebalanced the nature of housing provision by prioritising the construction of houses for private sale and curtailing the housing programmes of local authorities. The shift in policy was not accepted throughout the political sphere. In December 1953 Labour MP Aneurin Bevan criticised ‘a tragic situation [in which] the Government were pretending to make a great attack on the slums problems while making it easier for private persons to build larger houses’. Some local authorities criticised the government’s housing policy in similar terms. A few days after Bevan’s attack, city councillors and officials at the Association of Municipal Corporations conference complained that, ‘in freeing more private “luxury” and “frivolous” building from control while restricting municipal house-building the Minister was making it impossible for local authorities to get enough labour and materials to replace their slums as well as house the people on their waiting list’.

The Conservative’s radical reorientation of housing policy has been used by political historians Harriet Jones and Peter Weiler to critique the notion of ‘consensual’ post-war politics. Through close analysis of policy changes and internal debates within the Conservative Party, Weiler and Jones have shown that ‘there was no “post-war

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69 ‘Mr. Bevan’s Attack: “Humbug Behind the Bill”’, The Times, 1 December 1953, p. 3.
71 Harriet Jones, “‘This is magnificent!’: 300,000 houses a year and the Tory revival after 1945’, Contemporary British History 14:1 (2000), pp. 99-121; Weiler, ‘The Rise and Fall’.
consensus” between Labour and the Conservatives on housing’. 72 These political histories have usefully challenged the narratives of consensus which continue to dominate many historical surveys of post-war Britain, but by restricting the focus of study to debates around the character of party politics, are more limited in their assessment of the wider social and cultural implications of the state-led return to private housing provision. 73 This chapter will now contextualise the reorientation of central government housing policy by using government records to show how the state inflated the system of mortgage finance through credit guarantees to building societies, and, crucially, what models of society and the citizen-subject drove this intervention. The section also uses material from newspapers, house-builders, and retailers to show that state resources were redirected to support an on-going commercial and cultural project aimed at the individual consumer and their relationship with their home.

The deregulation of house-building reflected Conservatives’ belief in the greater efficiency of private enterprise to provide homes, and was a response to calls from the organised sections of the building industry for the removal of restrictive legislation. 74 As housing minister in the early 1950s, Harold Macmillan justified his proposals in terms of ‘freeing development’, and spoke of removing the ‘rigid limitation hitherto put upon the national housing programme’. 75 Although the promotion of home-ownership was presented in the language of free enterprise, the government worked with, and subsidised, building societies in order to achieve its objectives. The building society movement in Britain emerged out of working-class traditions of mutualism and self-

72 Weiler, ‘The Rise and Fall’, pp. 143-144.
74 This is evident in the discussions between the Ministry of Housing and the Federation of Registered House Builders contained in TNA—HLG—HLG117/4.
75 From a speech given by Macmillan in London on 24th March 1954, reported in ‘The Housing Programme’, Medical Officer, 9 April 1954, Vol. 91; and a letter from Macmillan to all local authorities in 1952, reported in Medical Officer, 1 March 1952, Vol. 87.
help in the nineteenth century and expanded rapidly in the housing boom of the 1930s, during which period the societies became professionalised and began to cater largely for middle-class home-buyers. In the post-war period, Macmillan saw building societies as institutions which the government could use to expand private home-ownership and to reverse the previous administration’s moves towards collectivist, local authority-provided housing.

The Conservative administrations of 1951-1964 pursued a number of initiatives which aimed to encourage mortgage lending to a wider section of the population by subsidising building societies. In 1954, for example, Macmillan arranged a mortgage guarantee scheme in which the state absorbed some of the financial risk of providing mortgages to individuals who could not afford an initial cash deposit. Introducing these proposals at a press conference in May 1954, Macmillan described this as ‘a scheme to bring house ownership within the means of the Ordinary Family Man of limited resources’. This initiative was justified in terms of the prudence and aspirations of families. Macmillan’s speech argued that ‘there is hardly a better form of saving for the whole family than by investing in the home which the whole family uses. The Minister believes that there is little doubt that many more families will buy homes of their own if the financial side is made easier’. Any signs of slowing in the housing market brought further incentives and subsidies from the government. In 1958, in response to high interest rates and a credit squeeze, the government made loans available to building societies in order that they would keep lending. The terms of these loans were so

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\(^{77}\) ‘Press Conference on Tuesday, 4\(^{\text{th}}\) May’, Minister’s notes, 30 April 1954 [Emphasis in original]. TNA—HLG—HLG117/140

\(^{78}\) ‘Press Conference on Tuesday, 4\(^{\text{th}}\) May’, Minister’s notes, 30 April 1954. TNA—HLG—HLG117/140
generous that the finance was provided at less than the cost to the government itself.

Objections from the Treasury to this ‘breach of our normal principles’, were rebuffed by the Ministry of Housing which argued that ‘the justification for this must be that the Government attach such high social importance to the encouragement of home ownership throughout the country, particularly on the part of the little man’. 79

Political historian Matthew Francis has highlighted the Conservative Party’s commitment to the notion of a ‘property-owning democracy’ across the twentieth century as an important continuity in Conservative thought, and one which prefigured later policies towards housing and tenure under Margaret Thatcher’s leadership. 80 This view is borne out by the way in which Macmillan’s ‘experiment towards liberty’ was framed in terms of the benefits that home-ownership offered to citizens, families, and the country. 81 A cabinet briefing paper in 1958 explained that the government’s position was that ‘there is a big unsatisfied demand for home ownership in many parts of the country. As a Party we believe firmly in a property-owning democracy. Undoubtedly, progress towards this can be most readily encouraged by a spread of home-ownership’. 82 The figure of the home-owner was cultivated as a privileged political subject in post-war Britain whose unique qualities deserved support from the state.

Whilst the Conservatives’ housing policies caused conflict with Labour-led city governments, in Leeds the Conservative-controlled council of the early-1950s subscribed to the view of the home-owner as a privileged type of citizen. In 1953, the city council voted to approve the sale of council houses to tenants, prefiguring the

79 Treasury note, 11 September 1958, and Minister’s notes, 15 September 1958. TNA—HLG—HLG117/142
81 Macmillan used this phrase in a New Year address to the Federation of Registered House Builders at the start of 1953, ‘Luncheon: Brief for the Minister’, N.d. [January 1953?]. TNA—HLG—HLG117/4
82 Cabinet Memo, ‘Home Ownership’, September 1958. TNA—HLG—HLG117/142
Thatcher governments’ ‘right to buy’ policy by three decades. The chairman of Leeds’s housing committee, A. E. Baker, justified this policy in terms of the qualities of the home-owner as citizen. Baker claimed that ‘an owner-occupier was a more independent and responsible person, who should be helped. An individual purchaser in the middle of an estate might well be an encouraging example in self-help’.

Scholarship on ‘housing’ in post-war Britain is dominated by accounts of state-provided housing. Local authority housing estates, modernist mass housing schemes, and the New Towns programme dominate the literature. By contrast, the literature on home-ownership is scant. This focus on state housing reinforces familiar perceptions of the role of the post-war welfare state, in which commitment to subsidised council housing formed a central part of the post-war social contract. And yet, for central government, and for Conservative councillors at the local level, the key constituent of state housing policy was the aspirational home-buyer, rather than the council tenant, and the resources of the post-war state were used to privilege and subsidise the owner-occupier. Pro-ownership policies had a dramatic effect on patterns of tenure. The resumption of private house-building prompted a sharp rise in owner occupation which went from 32% of households in England and Wales in 1953, to 43% by 1961. By contrast, the proportion of households in public rented housing rose from 18% to 23% in the same

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83 On the Thatcher governments’ housing policies see Peter King, Housing Policy Transformed: The Right to Buy and the Desire to Own (Bristol, 2010).
period. Under the Conservatives, the proportion of new houses built for owner-occupancy increased from 12% of total output in 1951, to 56% in 1959. By 1961, three years before the Conservatives left office, owner-occupation had become the dominant form of tenure in England and Wales, and this was the result of the state’s commitment to an individualistic and privatised model of the ideal citizen-subject.

The government’s political project of expanding home-ownership intersected with an on-going commercial and cultural project in which owning and furnishing one’s own home was presented as essential to individuals’ sense of self and to personal fulfilment. Government policies to extend access to mortgages were warmly welcomed by sections of the British press which presented home-ownership as simultaneously a major benefit to democracy and public values, and a means of self-actualisation for the individual. The Daily Mail called Macmillan’s mortgage guarantee scheme ‘a fine thing’, and ‘a great step…towards the “property-owning democracy” which is the aim of progressive Conservatism’. The Recorder called Macmillan’s scheme ‘one of the finest developments there could be, both from the standpoint of individual families and the nation as a whole, for a nation of land and property owners is an ideal conception of democracy as a wise man sees it’. The Daily Express agreed that ‘democracy has no surer foundation than a people with its own stakes in the land’. Home-ownership was narrated as a buttress to democratic values, but also as central to selfhood. The Express, for example, reported that Macmillan’s mortgage scheme meant that, for those who could not afford a mortgage, ‘now their dreams too advance closer towards fulfilment’.

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91 ‘Home and Ownership Within Everyone’s Grasp’, The Recorder, 16 March 1954. TNA—HLG—HLG 117/140
92 ‘More than 4,000,000 sale every day’, Daily Express, 16 March 1954. TNA—HLG—HLG 117/140
and wrote of ‘a hunger in every man’s heart to own a home of his own’. The Recorder reported that the prospect of home-ownership meant that ‘exciting new vistas appear before [prospective purchasers]’, and offered advice on choosing a home, budgeting, and furnishing to guide its readers through ‘Operation House Purchase’.

The Mail had of course vigorously supported home-ownership for many decades by the 1950s—the paper began sponsoring the Ideal Home Exhibition in London in 1908. In the 1950s the paper regularly ran pieces informing its readers ‘what’s new in houses’ and offering suggestions and guidance on decoration, design, and furnishings.

Advertisements and marketing material from post-war house-builders also presented home-ownership as central to personal satisfaction and evoked fantasies of domestic pleasure and comfort. A late-1950s brochure advertising houses for sale in Leicester promised buyers ‘the ease with which to enjoy one’s home’, and invited them to ‘open the door and come in—come into an excitingly new way of life. Come into a home of unlimited tomorrow, unlimited horizons in gracious living, for you and yours, 24 hours a day.’ The inclusion in such brochures of mocked-up images of inhabitants enjoying fully furnished show homes, and of advertisements for various furnishings and fittings, encouraged consumers to picture the transformation of their own daily lives which buying a home could bring (see figures 4 & 5). House-builders’ marketing material also included helpful tables showing available mortgage deals, broken down according to

93 ‘More than 4,000,000 sale every day’, Daily Express, 16 March 1954. TNA—HLG—HLG117/140
94 ‘Home and Ownership Within Everyone’s Grasp’, The Recorder, 16 March 1954. TNA—HLG—HLG 117/140
97 ‘Calverley Presents the Ideal Home’, promotional brochure, N.d. [c.1959]. This brochure was included with the Parker Morris papers, presumably due to the membership of Douglas Calverley on the committee. TNA—HLG—HLG37/206
prospective buyers’ weekly earnings, to show consumers just how close they were to ‘this totally new conception of living’.98

Figure 4: Image from house marketing brochure showing a housewife enjoying a mocked-up living room. Taken from ‘Calverley Presents the Ideal Home’, promotional brochure, N.d. [c.1959]. TNA—HLG—HLG37/206

98 See for example ‘Ufton Court Estate’, pamphlet for Morrell houses, 1960; and ‘Bants Lane’, pamphlet for Wilson builders, 1959, both in TNA—HLG—HLG37/206
Historians, sociologists, and anthropologists have shown how exhibitions, show homes, and press coverage of trends in interior design, offered consumers ‘prescribed images of the ideal home’. Individuals did not consume such images passively of course, and academic accounts of domestic consumption have been at pains to emphasise ‘the active appropriation of consumer goods in everyday contexts and the construction of places called home’. Sean Nixon and Frank Mort have argued that, in the post-war period, commercial experts developed increasingly sophisticated techniques of engaging with individuals’ impulses to use their consuming practices to construct meaning and identity and this view seems to be borne out by developments in house marketing. Brochures offered a range of different house types to choose from, with names intended to suggest

prestige such as ‘the Lincoln’, ‘the Balmoral’, or ‘the Renown’. Different house designs were offered to suit different family ‘types’, or ‘to appeal to the contemporary or traditionally minded purchaser’, encouraging individuals to identify themselves as a particular type of buyer. Purchasers were given further opportunities for personalisation by picking from a range of alternative internal layouts for their home ‘to suit individual requirements’. Builders also offered buyers the option, before purchase, of choosing from a whole range of possible extra fittings and features such as oak thresholds, French doors and Formica kitchen surfaces. Through deliberating over, and choosing their own desired house type, room layout, design features and modifications, buyers were encouraged to view their new home as a highly personalised expression of their own needs and desires.

Post-war house-builders, manufacturers, and newspapers were engaged in a commercial project which centred on appealing to the desires and cultural practices of the individual subject, and which encouraged consumers to see commercial consumption as an important means of domestic self-expression. This project was by no means new to the post-war period, although it appears to have become more responsive and sophisticated through techniques such as market segmentation. For the purposes of this thesis what is significant about this culture of home-ownership and domestic consumption in the post-war period is the role played by the state. In the interwar period, Peter Scott has shown how the building industry and the building society movement ‘substantially

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103 ‘Bants Lane’, pamphlet for Wilson builders, 1959. TNA—HLG—HLG37/206
104 ‘Bants Lane’, pamphlet for Wilson builders, 1959. TNA—HLG—HLG37/206
105 ‘Bants Lane’, pamphlet for Wilson builders, 1959. TNA—HLG—HLG37/206
broadened the market for new owner-occupied homes’. After 1951, it was state policy and state finance which broadened this market further and facilitated a dramatic expansion of home-ownership, and of the associated commercial cultures of home-based consumption. Through legislation and through subsidising private financial institutions, the government opened up home-ownership to a wider segment of the British population than ever before, and cultivated the home-owner as a privileged type of citizen. The resources of the state underwrote the intensification of commercially-organised cultures of domesticity, as well as the profits of volume house-builders.

The focus of much existing scholarship on the state’s provision of social housing in the post-war period underpins a collectivist portrayal of state policies and objectives, and yet, as this section has shown, state resources were directed towards the promotion and financing of highly-individualistic cultures of domesticity, and at subsidising the private home-owner. As the final section of this chapter will argue, the state’s endorsement of a consumerist, home-owning domestic ideal worked to stigmatise the council tenant. This section has shown how, in managing the spaces and practices of domesticity, the state was an agent in socio-cultural change in ways which demonstrate that the political objectives of the post-war state were closely related to and informed by the cultural changes associated with home-centredness and affluent domesticity.

**Flawed Consumers of Housing**

The previous sections of this chapter have shown how state actors came to view the home as a key site for the production and fulfilment of individualised consuming subjects. The discussion has shown how this model of the individual was mapped onto

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the physical spaces and technologies of the home, and how the subsidisation of owner-
occupation was used as a means of promoting individualistic cultures of domesticity.
The final part of the chapter turns to consider how normative models of the consuming
domestic subject intersected with public housing programmes, and shows that public
officials evidenced ambivalence and a diversity of views over how far the material and
psychological benefits of affluent domesticity should be extended to those renting their
homes from the state. Many state actors voiced anxieties about the constraints placed
upon the healthy development of tenants’ personalities by their perceived inability to
use their homes to ‘express the fullness of their lives’. Such views, however, conflicted
with long-established paternalistic and disciplinar ian tendencies in British social
housing provision, and officials were uncertain whether to coax and train tenants into
prescribed models of domestic consumption, or to segregate the tenant and inscribe
exclusion from the affluent society into the fabric of council-owned homes.

While triumphantist histories of post-war Britain have applauded the provision of council
housing as emblematic of the state’s collectivist commitment to servicing the needs of
all its citizens, more nuanced readings emphasise that the management and design of
council estates has been used consistently to regulate and police tenants as part of elite
efforts to impose specific models of conduct and ‘community’. Planning historian
Alison Ravetz, has suggested that the unique nature of social housing provision in
Britain—in which tenants rent directly from the state rather than third parties—
produced a ‘distinctive power relationship of the British system [which] infused its
whole operation’. 108  Andrew Homer, Mark Clapson, and James Greenhalgh have all
shown how post-war estates were intended to encourage the development of specific

108 Ravetz, Council Housing and Culture, p. 4.
models of community and sociability (and that these efforts were often unsuccessful). The purpose of the discussion here is to explore the impact which the post-war reformulation of the citizen-subject as a consuming individual had upon the objectives state actors’ pursued in the design and governance of public housing. Using debates about what sort of provisions should be made for tenants’ domestic consuming practices, this section argues that housing officials constructed the council tenant as a problematic figure and were unclear whether tenants should be incorporated into, or excluded from, normative models of domesticity and self-expression.

The consumerist remodelling of the domestic subject provoked concerns amongst public officials with individuals’ needs for self-expression, and housing officials came to view consumption and personalisation of the home as essential to the construction of healthy personalities. Yet this new formulation of the individuals’ needs served to problematise certain forms of council housing as a danger to tenants’ personal development. Housing tenants in flats was a particular source of anxiety because these regimented environments were understood to offer fewer opportunities for the cultivation and display of tenants’ personality and identity. In its evidence to Parker Morris, the Society of Medical Officers voiced concerns that:

in flats the external decorations are not usually under the control of the occupants, they are generally quite uniform and the only variation is the curtains. There is thus a tendency to know nothing of the personality of ones neighbours except those things which cause irritation, such as excessive noise, bad behaviour of children etc.\footnote{Homer, ‘Planned Communities’; Clapson,Invincible Green Suburbs; James Greenhalgh, ‘Consuming Communities: the Neighbourhood Unit and the Role of Retail Spaces on British Housing Estates, 1944-58’, Urban History (2015, forthcoming).}

In this account, not only was housing people in flats understood to limit a tenant’s ability to express their selfhood, but the absence of material displays of personality was
perceived as a threat to neighbourly relations. The Society also felt that flats were problematic because they lacked private gardens which could be used to ‘express the personality of the occupants’.111 Similar fears about the effect of flats on tenants’ personalities were present also in a sociological report produced for the Department of the Environment in 1975. The author of this document argued that ‘living in a block of flats necessitates some curtailment of choice, self-expression and personal freedom…There is usually little scope for tenants to alter their home…These restrictions may produce a feeling of impersonality and a loss of a sense of identity, which may also lead to other undesirable results’.112 Housing officials in the post-war period had come to view an inability to customise one’s home as a potential danger to the citizen and to society.

Although a consumerist model of the home produced fears about tenants’ opportunities for self-expression, there were also debates and disagreements about how far tenants’ should be permitted to enjoy the benefits of affluent domesticity. One such area of debate centred on the provision of garages for council homes. The Building Societies Association, in its evidence to the Parker Morris committee argued that ‘a garage…for each unit of accommodation is essential in modern conditions’.113 The Association went further and added that ‘the occupier of each house [should have] an indefeasible right to a particular garage’.114 The market researcher Mark Abrams offered a similar view in a speech to a Town and Country Planning Association conference in 1968. Abrams asserted that ‘mass ownership of private cars would mean that any house without a

111 Evidence of the Society of Medical Officers of Health, September 1959, p. 12. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/148
113 Building Societies Association, ‘Evidence for Sub-Committee on Housing Standards’, 2 October 1959, p. 9. TNA—HLG—HLG37/154
114 Building Societies Association, ‘Evidence for Sub-Committee on Housing Standards’, 2 October 1959, p. 9. TNA—HLG—HLG37/154
garage would be seriously defective in the eyes of its occupants’. For consumer experts and building societies involved in the design of privately-owned homes then, a garage was every citizen’s ‘indefeasible right’. Amongst politicians and officials, however, there was uncertainty as to whether this right should be extended to council tenants. Although the Parker Morris committee concluded that ‘car ownership will spread to everybody everywhere’, many public officials baulked at the suggestion that council housing should accommodate a vehicle.

The members of the Royal Society of Health told Parker Morris that providing a garage for all council homes was unnecessary, but felt that ‘for the higher income group each house should be provided with its own garage’. In 1966, when discussing Parker Morris’s recommendations, Housing Minister Richard Crossman called garages for council homes ‘extravagant’, and told local authorities ‘to cut out a great many of the unnecessary frills’ in house design. What was an indefeasible right for the homeowner was, in Crossman’s view, an ‘unnecessary frill’ for the council tenant. Evidence from Manchester and Leeds to the Parker Morris committee suggests that many council tenants owned cars and wanted garages. In Leeds, for example, the housing committee reported that ‘standards applied…on this subject are now very much outdated with the result that waiting lists for garages are now common’. By denying council tenants the right to a garage, the state policed the boundaries of affluent domesticity and tenants’ exclusion from full social participation was built into the fabric of their homes.

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116 Homes for Today and Tomorrow, p. 44. For objections to garages in council homes see Evidence of the Housing Centre Trust, N.d. [1959?], p. 7. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/138; and Evidence of the Royal Society for the Protection of Public Health, 1 September 1959. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/145
117 Evidence of the Royal Society for the Protection of Public Health, 1 September 1959. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/145
119 Evidence from City of Leeds Housing Committee, January 1960, p. 30. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/127 For similar views from Manchester’s officials see Evidence of City of Manchester Housing Department, 5 October 1959, p. 11. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/127
The ambiguous status of the council tenant as a consumer was also evident in elite concerns regarding televisions in council homes. Like the motor car, the television was another emblematic feature of post-war affluence, and a technology which was widely understood as a key driver of growing privatism and home-based lifestyles. Rates of television ownership rose dramatically in a short period from the mid-1950s, expanding from one in three households in 1955, to three quarters of households by 1960. Yet, as both Sean Nixon and Lawrence Black have highlighted, mass television ownership was greeted ambivalently by political and cultural elites. The hostility of some politicians and commentators to television was bound up with wider unease about the social consequences of mass consumerism, and a perceived threat of ‘Americanisation’ of British values and culture. The establishment of the new Independent Television (ITV) channel in 1955, which carried commercial advertising, heightened such anxieties. The attitudes of housing officials towards the television reflected these fears of cultural ‘dilution’ and a loss of authenticity, and the television was constructed as an intrusive presence in the tenants’ home and a threat to family life. Manchester’s Housing Department complained that ‘television and radio have largely destroyed privacy’, and argued that a second living room was now needed to escape this intrusion. Similar views were expressed by the Institute of Housing, and by the Institute of Municipal Engineers, which argued that ‘the popularity of television emphasises the need for a second living room where children can study or into which

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121 Obelkevich, ‘Consumption’, p. 146.
124 Evidence of City of Manchester Housing Department, 5 October 1959, p. 2. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/127
parents can retreat’. The Housing Centre Trust did not feel that ‘too much should be conceded to television in the consideration of housing standards’.

The television brought a public culture of consumerism, entertainment, and advertising into direct contact with the ‘private’ world of domesticity in ways which clearly unsettled some of those responsible for the management of council housing. Housing officials evidenced a paternalistic desire to police domestic environments in ways which protected their charges from the excesses of consumer culture. This paternalism was evident in a 1956 speech by Manchester’s chief planner in which he stated that ‘it should be emphasised over and over again that family life can only hope to survive in these distracting times when the dwelling accommodation available is as near perfect for this purpose as can possibly be provided’. Tenants’ engagement with the world of television sat uneasily with some officials’ desire to provide regimented and improving domestic environments. Television was viewed by some housing officials as a physical and psychological intrusion into the homes of council tenants, and a threat to the project of improving individuals by placing them in suitably-planned environments. Here again, the council tenant emerges as a figure whose relationship to new modes of domestic consumption was viewed as problematic and in need of careful management by housing officials.

While debates over televisions in council homes evidenced a desire to shield tenants from cultures of consumerism, public officials also sought to school tenants in appropriate forms of domestic consumption and household spending. In Leeds, for example, the city government ran a ‘scheme for supplying essential furniture and soft

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 evidences of the Institute for Housing, 30 September 1959, p. 2. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/151; and Evidence of the Institute of Municipal Engineers, N.d.[c.1959], p. 1. TNA—HLG—HLG37/127
 126 Evidence of the Housing Centre Trust, N.d. [1959?], p. 2. TNA—HLG—HLG 37/138
furnishings on hire purchase where tenants from slum areas had not sufficient for a modern home’. Here then, the city government encouraged tenants to participate in practices of home-making, decoration, and personalisation by providing credit facilities. Indeed, in moving households into new council homes, public officials hoped to encourage greater spending on the home itself than households were accustomed to. Rents on council estates were significantly higher than in older, private rented housing and consequently moving to a council home necessitated change in household spending patterns. In 1958 Manchester’s City Surveyor, Rowland Nicholas, reported in a local newspaper that families who moved to a council estate at Langley had ‘strained their finances considerably’. Yet Nicholas reported to the Parker Morris committee that families should be spending more money on housing, arguing that ‘every means should be adopted of encouraging tenants to revert to the old conception that one of the first demands upon the family purse should be the rent and rates’.

It seems that housing officials sought to encourage spending on housing over other, less desirable, expenditures. One architect who worked on the New Towns programme, a Mr Grenfell Baines, told a conference in 1950 that ‘people must be prepared to give higher priority to house rents [and that] if we had better housing we should not have three times as much money going on cigarettes and beer as on house rents’. Rowland Nicholas complained in 1956 that ‘crowded residential city development does not provide conditions where physical recreation, clean habits and individual thinking are encouraged’, and worried that this left ‘the local public house and the cinemas as

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128 "Privacy First” in Housing When Slum Areas Go’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 8 December 1953, p. 3.
130 Evidence of City of Manchester Housing Department, 5 October 1959, p. 14. TNA—HLG—HLG37/127
virtually the only recreational and social outlet’. Historian Ben Jones has suggested that the shift in council housing provision from general needs (which catered for more affluent working class households) to slum clearance which took place in the mid-twentieth century affected both the socio-economic profile of tenants, and the way tenants were perceived by local authorities. For Jones, ‘the myths of slum clearance informed official and popular discourses’, and led to the growing stigmatization of council housing and the council tenant. The close scrutiny and prescription of tenants’ spending and consuming habits evidenced by some housing officials appears to bear out Jones’s suggestion. Officials such as Nicholas constructed tenants as figures in need of guidance and improvement, and this extended to the policing of their consuming habits in the home.

Within the field of contemporary housing studies, John Flint has argued that when ‘owner-occupation is constructed as the officially-sanctioned social norm of housing consumption…those who cannot attain this norm become implicitly problematized and targeted for intervention’ In a similar vein, Lynda Cheshire, Peter Walters and Ted Rosenblatt suggest that ‘housing consumption choices become bound up with prescriptions about appropriate ways of living and consuming’, and that consequently those in social rented properties emerge as ‘flawed consumers’ of housing. The discussion here has suggested that similar processes of problematisation and exclusion can be observed in debates about the design and provision of council housing in post-war Britain. The promotion of owner-occupation as the normative model of tenure, and

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the elevation of domestic consuming habits as central to a healthy personality, served to construct the council tenant as a problematic figure. The post-war tenant emerged as a ‘flawed consumer’ of housing in two respects. In the first instance, officials worried about the development of a healthy personality if tenants were unable to choose their own curtains or decorate their homes, illustrating the extent to which participation in commercial cultures of home-making had come to be seen as essential to full membership of post-war society. Secondly however, officials evidenced a persistent desire to police tenants in their home and, in some cases, to actively exclude the council tenant from the cultures and practices of affluent domesticity. These confused and conflicting approaches to the council tenant are suggestive of tenants’ problematic status in a society in which prescriptive models of domesticity, tenure, consumption, and the individual were promoted through official discourse and state policies.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how, in addition to remodelling cities around new forms of consumption, state actors were also using space to remodel the citizen themselves as a consuming individual. Debates about housing design reflected a new public commitment to servicing the personal and psychological needs of individuals, which were understood to be centred on engagement in practices of domestic consumption and self-expression in the home. The purpose here has not been to suggest that post-war housing officials ‘produced’ the consuming domestic subject. Individuals’ personal investment in the spaces and possessions of their home cannot be viewed as a product of post-war consumerism. The discussion has shown, however, that specific models of the consuming individual and their relationship to their home were identified in official
discourse, and that attempts were made to design such normative models into the fabric of British homes. Once again, space emerges as a key interface between state and citizen, and one which public officials sought to manipulate and regulate in order to respond to shifting understandings of needs and rights of the citizen-subject. The chapter has also shown that a heightened emphasis on individuals’ consuming needs led to the incorporation of commercial actors into the structures of public governance and elevated the regulatory role of experts and organisations claiming to speak on behalf of ‘the consumer’.

The discussion of the state’s involvement in the promotion and subsidisation of home-ownership has countered the focus of much existing scholarship on the local authority homes which were provided directly from the state. By attending to the state’s wider role in the provision and regulation of housing we can see how officials intervened not just in the lives of council tenants, but also those of home-owning consumer citizens. Indeed, the regulation of the post-war home shows that the state intervened in shifting notions of selfhood in the period, and reconstructed the citizen-subject as a consuming individual. Central government housing policies demonstrated the post-war state’s commitment to a model of the privatised, property-owning individual, and aimed at providing the right type of domestic spaces to satisfy the perceived needs of this figure. Finally the chapter has suggested that publicly-defined norms of domesticity stigmatised council tenants as flawed consumers of, and in, the home. Recasting the citizen-subject as a consuming individual led to the production of new lines of social difference and exclusion which were reflected and expressed in the domestic setting. Here long-standing disciplinarian tendencies came into play as the tenant was marked out as a problematic individual whose consuming habits were in need of careful policing.
Deindustrialisation and the effects of structural economic change are central to any attempt to understand the organisation and experience of British cities in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in the North of England. In the decades after 1945, despite initial optimism about the nation’s prospects of an industrial revival, the long-term decline of industrial employment had dramatic consequences for cities. ‘The inner cities’ emerged as simultaneously an economic, social, and political problem in the national consciousness, depopulated and under-funded districts which lacked employment and in which high concentrations of the poorest in society resided.¹ By the 1980s, the inner areas of British cities were firmly problematised in the political and popular imagination as sites of crime, decay, and racial strife.² Whatever the accuracy of these images, concern over the socio-spatial consequences of deindustrialisation and disinvestment led to a new era of urban policy discourse based on the ‘regeneration’ of cities in response to the damaging effects of economic change.³ Deindustrialisation then, is understood to have had far-reaching consequences for British cities, and prompted new political responses on the part of the state, and yet we know very little about how the state managed urban industry in the period between 1945 and the 1970s.

This chapter examines the activities and agency of city governments, effected through the management of urban space, in processes of urban economic change. It presents a proactive, interventionist, urban governance, in which local officials transformed the environment of cities in their efforts to adapt to, and to shape, shifting patterns of employment and wealth-creation. Drawing out this economic dimension of post-war urban governance challenges conventional characterisations of city governments’ objectives in this period, which are broadly understood in terms of local welfare provision. More generally, the experience of re-planning the spaces of economic activity demonstrates the often overlooked role of the state, through its control of space and infrastructure, in structural economic change. This chapter addresses scholarship from a number of different fields and so begins by briefly situating the work in relation to urban geography, urban historiography, and economic history.

Amongst urban geographers and those in related urban disciplines, it is often assumed that urban governments were relatively inactive with regard to economic development in the period from 1945 to the 1970s. Proactive economic development on the part of the local state is widely associated with the 1980s ‘turn’ to growth-oriented, entrepreneurialism, and seen as a departure from earlier, welfarist, models of urban government. Geographers Phil Hubbard and Tim Hall, for example, define this turn to entrepreneurialism as a ‘reorientation of urban government…characterised by a shift from the local provision of welfare and services to more outward-orientated policies designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development’.\(^4\) Within

\(^4\) Phil Hubbard & Tim Hall, ‘The Entrepreneurial City and the “New Urban Politics”’, in Tim Hall & Phil Hubbard (eds.), The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime and Representation
urban historiography, characterisations of post-war urban planning and government are
broadly similar to those of geographers and sociologists, and the concerns of city
governments are understood in terms of post-war reconstruction, slum clearance, and
social housing provision. The focus of historical scholarship on the visions of
reconstruction laid out in the wave of post-war city plans, and on the objectives and
experience of state housing projects, has underpinned a welfarist portrayal of post-war urban governance and precluded a closer examination of the place which ‘economic’
concerns occupied within post-war planning practices. And yet, as Simon Gunn’s
investigation of Bradford’s post-war redevelopment has indicated, ‘urban renewal’ in
the traditional industrial cities was as much about economic revitalisation as the
provision of social welfare. The absence of an economic dimension from conventional
histories of the governance of post-war cities then, is a surprising omission which
restricts our understanding of the character and scope of state intervention in the
organisation of urban life in this period. Historians need to interrogate the nature of
‘renewal’ in the post-war city to identify what role the state played in urban economic
change in the three decades after 1945.

Whilst urban scholarship has tended to overlook considerations of economic
development in post-war cities, economic histories of the period have not generally

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incorporated the urban context—that is, the socio-spatial dynamics of the city and the state’s role in its organisation—into their analyses of structural and sectoral shifts in economic activity. In part this omission reflects what Matthew Hilton calls the ‘long-acknowledged problem of contemporary British history’, in which analyses are generally conducted within relatively insular sub-disciplinary boundaries. Yet the silence of economic histories on the urban dimension of structural economic change is also indicative of a wider problem within the field, namely, a failure to relate the classic concerns of macroeconomic policy—concerns of productivity, employment figures, and sectoral change—to the geographies and spatialities of social experience. There is a tendency to treat ‘the economy’ as if it happened everywhere and nowhere at once, governed by abstract market logics, and somewhat divorced from the spaces and experiences of everyday life. Thus, whilst histories of economic change in post-war Britain have focused on describing and explaining national trends in economic performance, far less attention has been paid to the localised consequences of economic change. With regard to the role of the state, the historiography is centred on macroeconomic policy-making and, to a lesser extent, the operation of regional industrial policy. The spaces of economic activity, and the state’s role in their

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management, are not generally an object of concern within economic historiography. This absence is all the more striking given the emergence and burgeoning influence outside economic history of ‘the new economic geography’, a field of research which has, since the 1980s, foregrounded spatial and geographical factors in accounts of economic growth and development.  

This chapter represents a methodological exercise in bridging the gap between post-war urban and economic historiographies by attending to the changing spaces of economic activity in British cities.

The chapter is divided into two sections, each of which explores a different aspect of city governments’ use of space to govern urban economic activity. The first section examines the importance of concerns about industrial decline in determining the objectives and interventions of city planners and officials in Manchester and Leeds. It highlights attempts to stimulate local economic development through the creation of new planned industrial estates, and the way these initiatives were harnessed to projects of population dispersal and new housing provision. The purpose here is to show that proactive local economic development policies were a feature of post-war urban governance before the suggested ‘turn’ to entrepreneurialism in the 1980s, but that attempts at industrial rejuvenation were often hindered by the divergent objectives of local and central government. In contrast to accounts of post-war regional and industrial policies as indicative of the redistributive impulses of the Keynesian welfare state, I suggest that central government officials were simply not willing to commit substantial

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10 For an account of this field from one of its key instigators see Paul Krugman, ‘What’s New About the New Economic Geography?’, *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 14:2 (1998), pp. 7-17.
resources to local attempts to challenge the shifting geographies of production in Britain.\textsuperscript{11}

The second section considers the effects of widespread demolition and redevelopment on economic activity in the inner areas of cities. It shows how local projects to ‘modernise’ industry and remove ‘obsolescence’ disrupted and destroyed many businesses, particularly small firms. The complaints of affected businesses, along with press and government reports, demonstrate that many forms of urban economic activity were dependent on existing networks and infrastructures, on the spatial arrangement of the city, in ways which city planners failed to grasp. This evidence is interpreted with reference to ideas about the relationship between social practices and material technologies drawn from science and technology studies.\textsuperscript{12} The discussion shows that state spatial interventions represented a destabilising and destructive influence on existing patterns and practices of economic activity and contributed to the set of ‘urban problems’ which emerged as a key political concern by the 1970s.

**Battling Industrial Decline**

The prevailing characterisation of post-war urban government and planning, amongst historians and non-historians alike, is that this was an area of state activity focused on social housing provision, and on the renewal of the urban environment according to the ideals of professional town planners. Recent historiography has sought to challenge


dramatic accounts of post-war reconstruction as a radical and planner-led exercise by emphasising the more modest and pragmatic nature of post-war planning practices, but has had little to say about the economic objectives behind reconstruction and renewal. Urban geographers have also tended to assume that economic considerations were not a significant feature of post-war planning. Phil Jones and James Evans, for example, differentiate post-war ‘reconstruction’ from post-1980s ‘regeneration’ on the basis of the relative absence of economic concerns. For Jones and Evans, post-war reconstruction centred on ‘addressing areas which had suffered the destruction of wartime bombing [and] demolishing large areas of slum housing’. Post-1980s regeneration, by contrast, ‘began as an attempt to ameliorate the negative effects of deindustrialisation and enable cities to attract new investment’, and was focused on ‘interventions in the built form to stimulate economic growth’. Closer scrutiny of post-war city plans and planning practices, however, reveals that city officials were deeply concerned with local economic prospects, and produced an array of development projects designed to stimulate new economic growth.

The post-war city plans produced by the governments of Manchester and Leeds both evidenced an overriding concern with the two cities’ economic prospects. The opening statements of both documents made clear the paramount importance of the industrial and commercial bases of the cities. The 1945 City of Manchester Plan stated that, in producing the city’s plan:

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14 Jones & Evans, Urban Regeneration in the UK, p. 2.
15 Jones & Evans, Urban Regeneration in the UK, pp. 3-4.
one supremely important fact has been kept constantly in mind. Manchester is first and foremost the core and pivot of one of the most highly industrialised regions in the world. An overriding purpose of any Plan for Manchester, therefore, must be by all possible means to promote, and to avoid impairing, the full and prosperous employment of the population engaged in the manufacturing and commercial activities to which the city and its environs owe their wealth.  

Leeds’s post-war city plan was a more modest undertaking than Manchester’s. The 1951 planning document, *City and County Borough of Leeds*, was drawn up in response to the requirements of national planning legislation, rather than as part of the wave of locally-initiated city plans in the 1940s. Nonetheless, Leeds’s planners also placed supreme importance on the city’s economic outlook. The preamble to Leeds’s plan stated that:

> the economic life and well being of the city is founded on its varied cultural, commercial and many sided industrial interests, with clothing and textiles predominating, and the Development Plan must have regard to the preservation and improvement of these varied interests.

Both city plans included extensive statistical data on local industry and employment, detailed information gathered from surveys of local manufacturers, and programmes of action designed to bolster and diversify economic activity within the cities.

City officials’ post-war plans for industry reflected a continuity of concerns and approach with the pre-war period. As cities which experienced dramatic growth in the nineteenth century, both Manchester and Leeds remained dependent on traditional industries, particularly textiles and engineering, in the twentieth century. Although their position as regional commercial centres insulated the two cities from the worst

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17 D. Currie, *City and County Borough of Leeds*, March 1951, p. 2. Available at Leeds Central Library [Hereafter LCL]
18 Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, chapter 8 & appendices; D. Currie, *City and County Borough of Leeds*, March 1951, pp. 28-34 & appendices. LCL
effects of interwar depression, local officials both before and after the war were intensely aware of the dangerous decline of traditional industries and the drift of economic activity to the south of the country. The newer, light industries which experienced growth in the interwar period, such as electrical engineering, food processing, motor vehicles, and pharmaceuticals, were generally located on newly-developed industrial estates in the South East and the Midlands, particularly in the rapidly expanding outskirts of London. Business historian Peter Scott’s research indicates that, in 1939, there were 65 industrial estates in Britain, employing over a quarter of a million workers, and 70% of this employment was in the South East. Planners in Manchester and Leeds were conscious of these trends and pursued economic plans which were designed to address the shift of economic activity to southern industrial estates.

In 1938, in its evidence to the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population (the Barlow Commission), Leeds’s Development Committee bemoaned the fact that ‘the development of Leeds…has been retarded by the concentration of industry in the South’. The 1945 City of Manchester Plan noted that between 1934 and 1938, over half of all new factories established in the country were located in and around London and stated that, ‘it is vitally important, alike on social, strategic and economic grounds, that this disastrous drift away from the basic industrial regions should be arrested and reversed. That will not happen unless the location of industry is

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23 Leeds Development Committee, ‘Location of Industry: Memorandum of Evidence submitted to the Royal Commission on behalf of the Corporation of the City of Leeds’, 1938, pp. 4-5. WYAS—LLD1/2/811390
deliberately planned in the public interest. Ofﬁcials in both cities were acutely aware of the dangers of shifting geographies of production and, as the stark statement from Manchester’s plan makes clear, believed that regional trends could be countered through proactive economic planning and development.

The desire to rejuvenate flagging local industries, and challenge the southwards drift of economic activity, was a key component of post-war urban planners’ ambitions for urban renewal, and their approach was based on ‘interventions in the built form to stimulate economic growth’ which, for Jones and Evans, are paradigmatic of post-1980s urban governance. Ofﬁcials in Manchester and Leeds observed the economic successes of large industrial estates at Slough, Park Royal, Welwyn Garden City, and Letchworth, and understood the development of industrial estates as a means by which new growth industries could be attracted to their cities. Closer to home, the vast industrial estate of Trafford Park, developed from 1896 adjacent to Manchester Docks, had been buoyed by wartime production demands and remained an important centre of industry into the 1960s. Council-led development of new industrial estates was seen by city ofﬁcials as a key mechanism with which to support and expand local industry and employment in Manchester and Leeds, and this view was supported by economists and town planning professionals.

24 Nicholas, City of Manchester Plan, p. 83.
25 Jones & Evans, Urban Regeneration in the UK, p. 3.
26 Some of these southern industrial estates are referred to explicitly in Nicholas, City of Manchester Plan, p. 98.
27 Scott, ‘Industrial Estates and British Industrial Development’, p. 74. According to Scott’s figures, in 1939, Trafford Park employed 50,000 and alone accounted for the majority of jobs on industrial estates which were not located in the South East. See also Robert Nicholls, Trafford Park: the First Hundred Years (Chichester, 1996).
Manchester’s 1945 plan called for ‘the provision of larger and better equipped trading estates [in order to] secure that infusion of new industries on which, combined with the reinvigoration of old staples, the future prosperity of Manchester depends’. The 1945 plan proposed that the city government itself should develop new industrial sites, and construct and lease factories which had been ‘pre-developed by the Corporation’. In Leeds, despite the city’s different planning culture, the same approach was adopted. In 1945, the city’s Development Committee argued that ‘Leeds must provide an incentive to potential industrialists’, and that this could be achieved through the provision of planned industrial estates ‘with all essential services laid on’. By May 1946 the City Engineer was already in the process of laying out ‘several industrial redevelopment areas’ in Leeds. The state-led development of industrial sites was a well-established strategy before the war. Central government had, since 1936, sponsored the development of industrial estates in the most heavily depressed regions of the country, and such practices were advocated by many town planning professionals in the 1930s. As early as 1935, Manchester’s Development Committee discussed the important role which pre-developed industrial estates could play in ‘its endeavours to attract firms to Manchester’. From the mid-1930s onwards the governments of Manchester and

29 Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, p. 83. The term ‘trading estate’ was used interchangeably with ‘industrial estate’.
30 Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, p. 98.
31 Leeds City Council, Development Department, ‘Distribution of Industry Bill’, 2 March 1945, p. 3. WYAS—LLD1/2/811390
Liverpool both sponsored light industrial development at the satellite settlements of Wythenshawe and Speke respectively.³⁵

Rather than ushering in an era in which city governments’ planning activities were reorganised around local welfare provision, which was superseded in the 1980s by a growth-oriented approach, it is clear that urban governance in the post-1945 period was deeply concerned with proactive economic development, and that this represented a continuity of approach with the pre-war period. For both historians and non-historians, this continuous desire on the part of the local state to use redevelopment activities to encourage and subsidise private economic activities suggests a much more stable relationship between the state and private enterprise than is suggested in accounts of a post-war ‘golden age’ of collectivist welfare provision. The impulse to periodise British history in the twentieth century, and the suggestion of epochal transformations in the role of the state which this implies, risks obscuring the continuous efforts of state actors to reorganise space in the interests of stimulating and shaping new forms of economic development and accumulation.

The ambitions of city governors to use environmental reordering as a means of boosting local economies were a persistent feature of urban governance across the twentieth century, but the post-1945 period did represent a significant moment in as much as the powers granted to city governments to manage, purchase, and redevelop urban space were substantially expanded. Urban planners sought to integrate their efforts to reorganise local industry with wider projects to rationalise the urban environment.

through functional segregation, and to decant urban populations to new planned
settlements on the urban periphery. Separating industrial areas from housing and other
land uses was a guiding principle behind these efforts to rationalise the form and
functions of cities, and both Manchester and Leeds developed zoning plans aimed at
achieving such functional segregation (see figure one). Zoning was prompted by the
dual concerns of public health risks caused by living alongside heavy or noxious
industries, and the professional objectives of city planners to create, in the words of the
*City of Manchester Plan*, ‘a well-arranged city’. On the urban periphery, city
governments envisaged the development of new, landscaped, industrial estates designed
to attract light industry and provide employment for residents of peripheral housing
estates. In the existing industrial districts of the inner city, land use plans created
designated industrial zones from which housing was removed, and into which industry
in residential zones was encouraged to move (see figure two). These inner city industrial
zones were designed to accommodate, and segregate, existing heavy industries, and the
violent and disruptive spatial upheaval that this zoning entailed will be dealt with in the
second section of this chapter.

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36 Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, p. 34.
Figure 1: Manchester’s 1945 zoning plan which demonstrates the ambition to separate industry from other land uses and concentrate existing industrial activities into designated zones. The pink sections of the plan indicate residential zones. The industrial zones are indicated in purple and are concentrated in the districts which already accommodated most of the city’s industry to the East and North of the city centre. Source: Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, plate 13.
Figure 2: Plans detailing the proposed redevelopment of an industrial area in the Bradford district of Manchester. The admixture of industry, housing, and other uses shown in the first plate was, through forced removals and demolitions, to be transformed into the more orderly arrangement shown in the ‘final stage’ image. Source: Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, plates 26 & 27.
Post-war city governments developed expansive plans for the reorganisation of industry which were guided by the technocratic impulse to ‘rationalise’ the urban environment.\(^{37}\)

For industrial cities like Manchester and Leeds, the legacy of rapid and relatively unplanned urbanisation in the nineteenth century was an urban environment which was viewed as disorderly, unhealthy, and inefficient, and the visions of reordered industrial spaces which appeared in post-war planning documents were formulated in reaction to the existing spatial arrangement of cities. This passage from the 1945 
*City of Manchester Plan* illustrates officials’ anxieties about existing industrial environments:

> Industry and housing are jumbled together in many districts on the fringe of the central area of the city and among the inner wards. Narrow streets lined with terraced houses lead up to the very gates of old, unsightly, cramped, and ill-planned factories…In some areas industries still carry on in rows of houses hurriedly converted into workshops a century ago. Amid these disordered industrial slums are more recent factories rising above their outworn neighbours, but often occupying every available square inch of ground and thus adding to the general congestion.\(^{38}\)

Leeds’s 1951 plan voiced similar anxieties about the ‘admixture of industries and houses’, and such concerns continued to drive local planning decisions into the 1960s.\(^{39}\)

Leeds’s 1968 Development Plan, for example, complained that:

> in the South and West of the city in particular there are many scattered factories and workshops, mostly small businesses employing comparatively few people, which constitute non-conforming uses in predominantly residential areas. Some are noxious industries and some cause nuisance in other ways.\(^{40}\)

These accounts of ‘disordered industrial slums’ were contrasted with alluring visions of new, planned industrial estates (see figures 3 and 4).

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38 Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, p. 87.
39 D. Currie, *City and County Borough of Leeds*, March 1951, p. 28. LCL
40 Leeds City Council, ‘First Review of City Development Plan’, July 1968, pp. 73-74. WYAS—LLD1/2/817155
UNPLANNED INDUSTRY

1. Mixture of heavy industry and congested housing in Collyhurst.

2. The banks of the River Irwell in the centre of the city.

3. An unplanned industrial estate.

Much of our waking life is spent at work. Let us make our workplaces pleasant. Our industry will be more efficient, our lives happier.

Plate 28

Figure 3: Plate from the 1945 City of Manchester Plan which shows images of ‘unplanned industry’. Here the emphasis is on disorder, environmental degradation, and congestion. The accompanying text includes the call: ‘Let us make our workplaces pleasant. Our industry will be more efficient, our lives happier.’ This statement demonstrates officials’ faith in a holistic reorganisation of urban space, in which environmental reordering would simultaneously benefit the individual and improve industrial performance. Source: Nicholas, City of Manchester Plan, plate 28.
Figure 4: Plate which was juxtaposed with figure 3 in the *City of Manchester Plan*. In this plate, images of ‘well-designed’, modernist, industrial environments are included to illustrate city officials’ contention that ‘industry can be orderly, clean and attractive’. Source: Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, plate 29.

The juxtaposed images of planned and unplanned industry in figures 3 and 4 illustrate the environmental ambitions behind urban planners’ proposals for reorganised industrial spaces. The ‘orderly, clean and attractive’ industry depicted in figure 4 is housed on
well-serviced and landscaped industrial estates, designed according to a modernist aesthetic, and clearly intended to be read against the images of dangerous and disordered environments in figure 3. With regard to the environmental ambitions, modernist imagery, and language of order and efficiency, these projects of industrial reordering are representative of the ‘British urban modernism’ which guided the planning and redevelopment of cities in the three decades after 1945. As characterised by Simon Gunn, urban modernism in this period centred on ‘the partition of the city into distinct functional zones [and] the conception of planning as an objective, neutral, and rational exercise’. The contours of these expert-led projects of urban modernisation have been sketched out by studies of a number of British cities, as well as in an international context, but the relationship between environmental reordering and economic objectives is often ignored. Planners in both Leeds and Manchester were explicit in their contention that physical reorganisation would simultaneously improve individual well-being and enhance industrial performance, and sought to link their spatial projects with regional and national economic goals.

City planners framed their local industrial development schemes as contributors to centrally-orchestrated projects to ‘modernise’ British industry and increase productivity. Economic historian Jim Tomlinson notes that ‘the 1940s inaugurated a public policy concern with productivity that was to become a constant feature of Britain in the second half of the century’. Nick Tiratsoo has written of the attempts under the Marshall Plan

and the Anglo-American Council on Productivity (later the British Productivity Council) to introduce ‘American versions of economic modernity’ to British industrial practices. Within government, the National Production Advisory Council and the Committee on Industrial Productivity similarly promoted the incorporation of new technologies into production processes, and industrial rationalisation. Productivity also re-emerged as a major policy concern under Harold Wilson’s first government of 1964-1970. In this context planners in Manchester and Leeds were able to link their efforts to national economic objectives.

The 1945 City of Manchester Plan claimed that the spatial reordering of industry would put:

    Manchester’s industries in a favourable position to begin that “battle of production” to which Mr. Herbert Morrison has referred as “the battle of the next four years – to see that we produce the right goods in ample quantities and in the most efficient way”…in an effort to recover those export markets on which our prosperity so largely depends.

Urban planners argued that industrial performance was being held back by inadequate and obsolete physical infrastructures. The City of Manchester Plan stated that ‘no longer can industry afford to be encumbered by dilapidated premises’. In 1968, Leeds City Council argued explicitly that the spatial organisation of industry was damaging productivity:

    Although some industries in Leeds are in modern buildings on spacious sites a large number of firms operate in very old and obsolete premises on sites which are confined and irregular in shape, where street access is limited and facilities of loading and unloading unsatisfactory for present day vehicles…It is suggested that low productivity, lower wages and migration may all be linked with this obsolete industrial fabric.

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47 Nicholas, City of Manchester Plan, p. 98.  
48 Nicholas, City of Manchester Plan, p. 97.  
Through reconfiguring the spaces of industrial activity, planning professionals promised to unite the needs of the nation, the city, and the individual industrialist. In a 1955 paper on ‘Planning for Industry’, Hampshire’s County Planning Officer, T.F. Thomson, wrote of the ‘particular contribution to industrial productivity’ that town planners could make and argued that ‘only by understanding agreed national production objectives and the practical needs of the individual industrialist, can planning, in the local authority sense, contribute positively to the industrial scene’. 50

The evidence from Manchester and Leeds’s post-war planning documents, and from members of the town planning profession nationally, shows that concerns with industrial performance and structural economic change were a major factor which shaped the production of urban plans. Indeed, through spatial reorganisation, city planners understood their efforts as part of national projects of economic modernisation. Plans for the reordering of urban industry were founded on an appealing spatial and technological logic that the right form of industrial spaces and infrastructures would rejuvenate, expand, and diversify local industrial activity, and thus contribute to regional and national economic competitiveness. The common conception that post-war urban planning practices were relatively unconcerned with economic activity is not borne out by investigation of the aims and approaches which city planners laid out for industrial reorganisation. By providing planned industrial estates and facilities, the city governments of Manchester and Leeds sought to redress localised imbalances in economic structure and to counteract shifts in the national distribution of economic activity.

These post-war attempts to manage industrial development and promote economic growth present a real challenge to the assumption that urban governance underwent an ‘entrepreneurial turn’ towards ‘policies designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development’ as part of a centrally-orchestrated realignment of the role of the state in the 1970 and 1980s.\textsuperscript{51} Rather, the story that emerges from cities’ post-war industrial plans is one of proactive and growth-oriented urban governance which, across the twentieth century, was deeply concerned to use its powers over the urban environment to support and shape industrial production and economic activity. The closing discussion in this section highlights the opposition to local industrial plans from central government and does so in order to illustrate that local and national branches of the British state held differing conceptions of the prospects and possibilities of governmental intervention in the geographic distribution of industry. Whilst scholars have imagined the post-war ‘Fordist Keynesian welfare state’ as a polity characterised by a willingness to engage in large scale projects of regional redistribution, in practice central government actors were ambivalent about any concerted attempt to challenge the shifting geographies of capitalist organisation, and were unwilling to allow city governments to proceed with their expansive industrial plans.\textsuperscript{52}

Amongst geographers, the organisation by central government of policies designed to alleviate regional economic disparities is widely understood as a key marker of the redistributive character of the post-war Fordist welfare state. This ‘spatial

\textsuperscript{51} Phil Hubbard & Tim Hall, ‘The Entrepreneurial City and the “New Urban Politics”’, in Tim Hall & Phil Hubbard (eds.), \textit{The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime and Representation} (Chichester, 1998), pp. 1-30, p. 2.

Keynesianism’, as it has been called, operated through progressive tax policies and social welfare benefits, but also crucially through direct transfers of investment, industry, and jobs as part of regional development policies.\(^5^3\) For Neil Brenner, ‘regional policies were one of the most significant mechanisms of spatial Keynesianism, for they served explicitly to alleviate inter-place disparities [and] to redistribute employment within national boundaries’.\(^5^4\) Planning historians have also portrayed regional industrial policies as a paradigmatic feature of the socially- and spatially-redistributive post-war planning system. Conventional accounts trace the development of regional policy from pre-war beginnings in the depression of the 1930s, through the landmark Barlow Report in 1940, to the post-war Distribution of Industry Acts.\(^5^5\) Under the post-war regional industrial system, restrictions were placed on all new industrial development in the country with the aim of directing industrial development away from more prosperous conurbations and towards areas of high unemployment.\(^5^6\)

Detailed historical research by Peter Scott and Stephen Rosevear has cast some doubt on this picture of a highly interventionist and redistributive regional policy. Scott and Rosevear both highlight central government officials’ reluctance to intervene in the workings of business and suggest that, in practice, regional policies were unevenly applied and used only sporadically to alleviate particular high concentrations of

localised unemployment.\textsuperscript{57} These revisionist accounts, however, have not examined the impact which regional policies had on traditional industrial cities such as Manchester and Leeds. Although the city governments of Manchester and Leeds believed that new industrial development, managed and subsidised by the state, was essential to the cities’ economic future, neither city was deemed to qualify for government assistance until the mid-1970s.\textsuperscript{58} As a result, the expansive plans of city governments for new industrial development were seriously restricted by central government controls on the location of new industry.

In both cities, officials sought to marry new industrial development with population dispersal by providing industrial estates alongside peripheral housing estates. Leeds’s vast housing estate at Seacroft, along with seven other peripheral sites, was planned with ‘suburban industrial estates’ (see figure 5, p. 221).\textsuperscript{59} In Manchester, city officials similarly envisaged that large new settlements such as those at Wythenshawe and Hattersley would be ‘industrially self-contained’, with industry planned ‘to keep pace with housing development and ensure a socially and economically balanced community’.\textsuperscript{60} There is an array of evidence in the archives of both city governments, and in central government records, which shows that throughout the late-1940s, 1950s, and 1960s local plans for new industrial development were persistently frustrated by

\textsuperscript{58} Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, \textit{Urban and Regional Planning}, pp. 94-98.
\textsuperscript{60} Town Clerk’s report, ‘Industrial Development - Wythenshawe’, 6 June 1950. GMCRO—Development Committee Minutes [DC], Vol. 1, p. 322.
central government’s refusal to grant the necessary licences for planned industrial estates.  

Officials in Manchester repeatedly protested to central government about firms being refused licences to establish themselves on peripheral sites and instead being encouraged by the Board of Trade (the department which operated industrial policy) to relocate to New Towns or areas of particularly high unemployment. In June 1950 the City Surveyor reported to the Development Committee that he ‘was of the opinion that the Board of Trade did not want industry to come to Manchester because existing industrialists in Manchester who wished to move to Wythenshawe were having great difficulty in obtaining licences’.  

Leeds’s City Engineer lodged similar protests.  

Records of the Board of Trade show that these suspicions were well-founded. The Board resisted Manchester’s attempts to gain additional powers over industrial development as ‘eminently undesirable from our point of view when we are trying to get industry out of Manchester’.  

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63 Leeds City Council, ‘Distribution of Industry’, 29 May 1946. WYAS—LLD1/2/811390

64 File note, 16 January 1965. TNA—BT—BT177/2646
Figure 5: City Engineer’s plan for a light industrial estate at the large planned settlement of Seacroft, on the outskirts of Leeds. The orderly arrangement, main road access, and landscaped surroundings bear similarities to the visions of Manchester’s officials for modern, light industrial estates which would rejuvenate and diversify local economic activity. As in Manchester, this estate was developed by Leeds City Council with pre-built factories to be leased to individual firms. The lease arrangement for the highlighted plot was abandoned in 1948 due to central government restrictions on the location of new industry. Source: WYAS—LLD1/1/A16172

Sociologist Alan Cochrane, in an account of the purported ‘turn’ to entrepreneurialism and growth-promotion in British urban governance, suggests that ‘the 1980s saw a shift towards ways of thinking that began to redefine urban policy in terms of economic regeneration and increasingly as an expression of urban competitiveness’. 65 Cochrane describes a new political consensus that ‘the “economic” was paramount’. 66 Whilst this may be a fair assessment of the shifting priorities of central government policy towards cities, with regard to the activities and concerns of city governments this familiar

65 Cochrane, Understanding Urban Policy, p. 85.
66 Cochrane, Understanding Urban Policy, p. 85.
narrative of political transformation is problematic. The evidence presented here suggests that city governments displayed a consistent concern with the potential impacts of structural economic change on their localities, and pursued proactive policies designed to foster economic growth across the interwar and post-war periods. In the period after 1945, city governments viewed their expanded powers over urban space and development as a means of intensifying these projects of economic renewal. The focus within urban historiography and related urban disciplines on urban governments’ welfare provisions such as social housing should not obscure this persistent concern with local economic prospects and interventionist approach to local development.

Central government, on the other hand, at the height of a period in which regional industrial policies have been read as indicative of the redistributive impulses of the Keynesian welfare state, emerges as a reluctant intervener in the spatial logics of the market. Central government officials were loath to interfere in any concerted way with the shifting geographies of capitalist production, and unwilling to sanction local efforts to boost industrial investment and employment. As with urban governance, detailed empirical research into the operation, rather than the stated intent, of the post-war state’s policies raises questions about familiar characterisations of the Keynesian welfare state, and the way that such portrayals have been used to underpin narratives of epochal political transformation in the second half of the twentieth century.

**Removing Obsolescence**

The previous section showed that city governments developed expansive plans for the spatial reorganisation of industry which were understood as part of a process of economic modernisation. City officials were largely prevented from implementing their
proposals for new, planned industrial development by restrictions imposed by central
government, but their capacities to intervene were far less constrained when it came to
the management of existing industrial districts. Through land use zoning, area slum
clearance, and comprehensive redevelopment, city officials transformed the inner areas
of cities, the activities which took place there were closely-regulated, and the physical
environment was dramatically reshaped. This section examines the impact which post-
war redevelopment had on existing industry within cities and demonstrates that state
spatial intervention disrupted and destroyed many established businesses, reshaped the
possibilities for economic activity, and contributed to the inner city problems of
disinvestment and unemployment which have concerned policy-makers from the 1970s
to the present day. By attending to the material consequences of redevelopment on local
businesses, my approach shows that the spaces in which economic activity takes place,
and the way such spaces are managed by the state, have a significance which is often
overlooked in conventional economic histories. The discussion demonstrates that the
management and reorganisation of the physical environment was a critical, though often
ignored, means by which state actors governed the possibilities for social conduct, and
examines this with reference to theoretical approaches to the relationship between
materiality and social practices drawn from science and technology studies.

In the post-war period, contemporaries were well aware that environmental
transformation had dramatic consequences for social practices. Michael Young and
Peter Willmott’s sociological enquiries into the effects of slum clearance in East
London showed that the reorganisation of residential environments had identifiable
consequences for the organisation of familial networks and patterns of sociability.67

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Whilst the disruptive effects of redevelopment on social networks and organisation have been well studied, the physical disruption of urban economic activity has received little attention from either urban or economic historians. For economic historians, describing and explaining Britain’s industrial decline is a key intellectual concern, and the role played by the state in this process of economic change has long been debated. This historiography, however, has generally only conceived of state intervention in terms of macroeconomic policy-making, and ignored the impact which state management of space had on economic activity. In a critique of this tendency to ignore the constraints of space on industrial development, economic policy analysts Steve Fothergill, Michael Kitson and Sarah Monk note that ‘nearly all theories of industrial location ignore the supply of industrial buildings. The exclusion of property, or indeed any consideration of physical space, from theories of national economic development is even more marked’. Industrial decline was most pronounced in the major conurbations, and these were also the sites where state actors undertook extensive projects of environmental reordering, but there has been little consideration of the impact of post-war redevelopment on urban industry.

Post-war city governments’ plans for industrial reorganisation were tied into wider visions of a restructured and rationalised urban environment, and officials were willing

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to countenance widespread economic disruption in the interests of pursuing their environmental objectives. In 1966 Manchester’s chief planner reported that ‘the City’s present large scale slum clearance programme…has resulted in a pressing need to remove, and where possible to relocate, many industrial and commercial firms situated in the older parts of the City’. In Leeds, the city government displayed the same willingness to disrupt and dislocate existing businesses. In a 1973 report, the city’s planning department recognised that ‘the Council’s urban restructuring policies including industrial renewal, although intended to benefit the community at large, will unfortunately cause some upheaval to the city’s industrial life’. Renewal projects would, the report noted, ‘affect a large proportion of Leeds industries’. Leeds’s planners also acknowledged in 1972 that ‘considerable physical disruption to established local industry has taken place…though some of this displacement is self-induced most is occasioned by local authority initiative or advice’. It is clear that, in both cities, officials were aware that the redevelopment of the urban environment had far-reaching impacts on local economic activity.

Strict land use zoning and slum clearance schemes were the primary means through which industry was disrupted, and the available archival sources include details of many individual firms which were restricted or destroyed as part of planned redevelopment. In Longsight, in the east of Manchester, three factories were displaced by a clearance area designated in 1966. One of these, the British Vinegar Company (producers of Sarsons Vinegar), was refused planning permission to upgrade and expand their works because

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73 Leeds City Council, ‘Industrial Renewal and Rehabilitation’, 1973, p. 5. WYAS—LLD1/2/847649
its factory ‘was included in a general development area for housing purposes’.\(^{75}\) Two engineering firms in the same area, the Heidelberg and Daisy works, were permitted by the city government to stay ‘for the time being’ but notified that their premises would be compulsorily purchased and demolished ‘in due course in order to implement…open space proposals’.\(^{76}\) Simply by designating a slum clearance area, city officials placed firms on notice that their premises would be compulsorily purchased and destroyed, and prevented any moves to expand or improve industry \textit{in situ}. \\

In Leeds there were many similar cases of firms which were refused permission to expand, or simply demolished, in the interests of fulfilling planners’ environmental objectives. In the old industrial district of Kirkstall, the Abbey Printing Works was affected by a ‘long standing proposal to remove non-conforming industrial uses in Kirkstall valley’.\(^{77}\) The Abbey Works was engaged in protracted planning disputes with Leeds city council between the 1950s and the 1970s over its continued presence on the site because ‘long term planning proposals visualise[d] the whole of the area…being developed as open space’.\(^{78}\) In 1972 the Hare Park Tannery in Leeds was scheduled for compulsory purchase and demolition because ‘while these premises do not occasion nuisance they would be incongruous and visually offensive if retained in the broad linear sweep of public open space’.\(^{79}\) Council records in the two cities indicate that the above cases were not isolated examples. In 1972 there were 425 firms in Leeds facing

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\(^{75}\) Minutes of a meeting of the Slum Clearance and Rehousing Progress Sub-Committee [SCRC], 31 July 1967. GMCRO—SCRC, Vol. 1, p. 64. 
^{76}\) Minutes of a meeting of the Slum Clearance and Rehousing Progress Sub-Committee, 31 July 1967. GMCRO—SCRC, Vol. 1, p. 64. 
displacement as a result of council renewal schemes. In Manchester in 1966, there were 645 firms affected by ongoing compulsory purchase orders. Even firms operating within newly-designated industrial zones could face destruction in order to fulfil planned environmental objectives. In 1966 there were 98 firms in Manchester whose premises were ‘awaiting demolition…in areas to be redeveloped for industrial purposes’. 

It is clear that local planning and redevelopment schemes had a significant impact on urban industry. City officials assumed a level of control over the uses of the urban environment which restricted firms’ activities, forced companies to abandon proposed expansions, and in many cases entailed the compulsory destruction of industrial premises. Hundreds of firms were affected by this enhanced level of state control over the uses of urban space, with obvious consequences for local employment and associated economic activities. And yet the state-led physical disruption of urban economies is absent from conventional accounts of the state’s role in industrial change. Economic historians have tended to look for explanations of industrial decline in the workings of abstract market logics, or in macroeconomic policy-making, in accordance with the principles of classical economics. Despite the identification of a process of ‘de-urbanisation’ of industrial activity, in which economic activity declined in cities but expanded in small towns and rural areas, the state’s management of urban space is given

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83 See, for example, Stephen Broadberry, ‘The Performance of Manufacturing’; Crafts, ‘Deindustrialisation and Economic Growth’.
little explanatory weight in comparison to more familiar narratives of causation based on the profit-maximising choices of rational economic actors.\textsuperscript{84}

The failure to attend to the economic consequences of urban redevelopment thus represents a neglected aspect of the story of the state’s role in industrial change, but it is also indicative of a wider intellectual problem which goes beyond economic historiography whereby the capacity of the state to shape and govern social practices through control of the physical environment is often overlooked. In part this omission is attributable to the difficulties of using the available historical record to draw firm conclusions about how state spatial interventions have affected social habits and patterns of use. Whilst in some cases, such as the compulsory destruction of streets or factories, it is clear that spatial change had incontrovertible consequences for pre-existing social practices, in many instances the historical record is simply silent with regard to the impact which state spatial projects had on the possibilities and practices of everyday life. In the case of the reorganisation of urban industry, however, there is valuable documentary evidence from affected business owners which offers their interpretation of how state actors’ attempts to reorder urban space impacted upon established economic practices and patterns of use. The following discussion explores some of this evidence and interprets it with reference to ideas about the interdependence of social practices and material infrastructures drawn from science and technology studies and from histories produced as part of the recent ‘material turn’.\textsuperscript{85}


Local plans for the physical reordering of industry were based on a spatial and environmental logic that by relocating industrial activities into new, modern facilities, economic performance and productivity would be improved. Indeed a key argument of urban industrial planners in Manchester and Leeds was that existing industry was being hindered by inadequate facilities. The *City of Manchester Plan*, for example, stated that ‘no longer can industry afford to be encumbered by dilapidated premises’.\(^{86}\) The complaints of affected industrialists, however, demonstrate that, contrary to city officials’ predictions, the commercial viability of many local firms was dependent on their existing infrastructures and spatial organisation. Industrialists’ complaints reveal that their economic activities were highly situated, embedded in specially-adapted buildings where costs were low, and reliant on localised networks of labour, supply, distribution, and ancillary industries. Letters and petitions to city governments demonstrate that local industrialists viewed officials’ attempts to reorganise and reconfigure their operations as a disruptive and destabilising project, which failed to appreciate the complexities of the local infrastructures and networks on which they depended.

In 1953, a leading local industrialist and prominent member of the Chamber of Commerce, T.H.G. Stevens, wrote to Manchester’s Development Committee to protest against ‘the disturbance of Manchester’s industry which may be caused by the development of the Manchester plan’.\(^{87}\) Stevens cited the damaging effects of zoning, compulsory purchase and relocation on the city’s industries. He highlighted firms’ dependence on local skilled labour, the costs of transporting raw materials and workers

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\(^{87}\) Letter from T.H.G. Stevens to Manchester Development Committee [MDC], 13 October 1953. GMCRO—MDC, Vol. 1, 3 November 1953
to new, peripheral sites, and also suggested that ‘the site in the centre of the city probably has other easy and low-priced facilities which will not be available on an outlying site.’

Stevens’s intervention was prompted by an unidentified manufacturer’s letter to the Chamber of Commerce who stated his position thus:

Any manufacturer who is in a basic industry where only a small profit margin can be made, has to be certain that under the most stringent business conditions when competition becomes even more fierce than at present, he can be certain that his overheads are no greater than his counterpart in another city whose premises are already established on a freehold plot. We ourselves are in the unfortunate position of having established our business in what is now termed a residential zone, and having lost two appeals, one to the Corporation and another to the Ministry in London by public enquiry, we are now obliged to look for a plot in an industrial zone and especially one where we can retain our key workers.

In contrast to city planners assumptions that ‘obsolete’ industrial premises were holding firms back, Stevens and the unnamed manufacturer make it clear that local industries were reliant on the low overhead costs of inner city factories. Renting newly-built factories on carefully-planned industrial estates represented an increase in basic costs which was simply too much for many existing firms to bear. The same problem faced firms in Leeds, where, in 1973, the city government noted ‘the rise in costs which a transfer [to a new site] will inevitably incur’, and that ‘additional costs have to be met from individual firms’ profit margins and these are often too slender to match the increase’.

Further evidence from contemporary press reports substantiates this picture. A 1971 Guardian report on urban industry stated that:

large numbers of slum factories have been pulled down. But the owners cannot always meet the rents on new industrial estates which are substantially higher than those the slum factory owners or tenants have been accustomed or are willing to pay. Some go out of business: others leave the area.

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88 Letter from T.H.G. Stevens to Manchester Development Committee, 13 October 1953. GMCRO—MDC, Vol. 1, 3 November 1953
89 Letter from unidentified manufacturer to Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 17 August 1953. GMCRO—MDC, Vol. 1, 3 November 1953
In addition to the increased costs of new industrial premises, dislocation and detachment from local networks of skilled labour, and from ancillary economic activities, was another factor which industrialists claimed prevented them from relocating to new sites. As part of the production of the 1945 city plan, industrialists in Manchester were consulted over relocation and most respondents cited ‘nearness to a convenient labour pool’ as the ‘principle advantage’ of their existing locations. Other key benefits noted were access to existing transport infrastructure and the ‘advantages [which] arise from proximity to linked industries’. Similar views were offered by industrialists in Leeds when consulted on the production of the 1951 city plan. One manufacturing firm in Leeds, Dixon Powner and Sons, protested strongly against the city government’s serving of a compulsory purchase order on its premises in 1946. This company, which employed 150 workers producing architectural metalwork, complained that a central location was essential for attracting workers, for liaising with architectural practices, and for obtaining raw materials. The company’s owner wrote to the Town Clerk, with a touch of curtness, that ‘we point these facts out as the reason why we have not considered building a single storey workshop away from the centre of the City [as suggested by the city council]’.

The complaints of Dixon Powner in Leeds, and of Stevens and other industrialists in Manchester, reveal that business owners viewed city governments’ plans for physical restructuring as deeply naïve. In 1952, six years after being served with a compulsory purchase order and still awaiting demolition, the owner of Dixon Powner wrote with exasperation to the city council that, ‘we often wonder whether any member of the Committee responsible for this action has the slightest conception of the effect of this

92 Nicholas, City of Manchester Plan, p. 238.
93 Nicholas, City of Manchester Plan, p. 238.
94 D. Currie, City and County Borough of Leeds, March 1951, pp. 28-29. LCL
95 Letter from Dixon Powner & Sons to Leeds Town Clerk, 20 November 1946. WYAS—LLD1/2/817150
order on a business such as ours’. Business owners knew instinctively, through practice and experience, that their activities were dependent on highly situated networks and existing infrastructures in ways which city planners simply failed to grasp. This dependency between social practice and material infrastructure, which was common sense to the post-war urban manufacturer, can also be difficult for historians to understand. Our explanatory categories tend to privilege immaterial forces such as class, capital, or gender, or to focus on the intentions and agency of the individual subject. And yet as historians we also instinctively know that individual and collective practices, habits, and experiences, take place within, and are shaped by, localised contexts in which the possibilities for action are structured by external constraints and established patterns of conduct. By drawing on some intellectual approaches from science and technology studies, and from recent materialist historical work, it is possible to (lightly) theorise the reasons why post-war manufacturers viewed spatial reordering as such a disruptive and damaging project.

In attempting to explore the role of materiality in shaping socio-historical practices and experiences, a number of historians have turned to ideas from the field of science and technology studies (STS). Building on the influential work of Bruno Latour, scholars in STS have sought to highlight the complex interactions between human actors and non-human objects, things, or technologies, which produce specific historical outcomes. Indeed, Latour suggested abandoning the epistemological distinction between ‘the social’ and ‘the technical’ and concentrating instead on mutually-constitutive networks of human actors and non-human technologies. Such work has led to the use of concepts such as ‘socio-technical networks’, or ‘sociotechnical ensembles’, which are

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96 Letter from Dixon Powner & Sons to Leeds Town Clerk, 23 January 1952. WYAS—LLD1/2/817150
97 For examples see the contributions to Tony Bennett & Patrick Joyce (eds.), Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn (London, 2010).
98 These ideas are developed in Bruno Latour, Reassembling the Social: an Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory (Oxford, 2007).
intended to capture the inseparability of human activity from the technologies in and through which it takes place. Cities in particular lend themselves to such analyses, being essentially constituted of physical spaces, buildings, machines, and infrastructures which are in a state of constant interaction with the citizens who occupy and use them. For the historian, however, abstract theoretical concepts must demonstrate their utility when applied to empirical historical research, and the discussion here attempts to understand the disruptive effects of post-war industrial re-planning with reference to urban theorist Anique Hommels’ ideas about the ‘obduracy’ of sociotechnical ensembles.

Hommels has suggested that urban networks of human actions and material infrastructures (which she terms sociotechnical ensembles) develop over time, through practice and repeated patterns of use, to become ‘obdurate’, self-sustaining, and resistant to change. The complaints of post-war industrialists show that their activities were rooted in localised spatial networks of labour, infrastructure, and supply, which had evolved over time and which were resistant to planners’ attempts to relocate and transplant them. In addition to being dependent on local supplies and networks, the activities of small firms took place within workshops and factories in which the spaces and technologies of production had been specifically developed and adapted to suit highly contingent working processes. Dixon Powner, the Leeds metalworkers, complained to the Town Clerk that the company had, since 1912, ‘been constantly adding to and improving the property to suit our particular needs’. The owner offered


100 Hommels, ‘Studying Obduracy in the City’.

101 Letter from Dixon Powner & Sons to Leeds Town Clerk, 23 January 1952. WYAS—LLD1/2/817150
the city council a detailed account of his premises to illustrate the way it fulfilled his company’s unique needs:

The premises consist of four floors; the Basement is Worker’s Canteen, Kitchen and Stores, Ground and First Floors are machine and fitting shops and Second Floor is Office, Drawing Office, Staff Canteen, Kitchen and Directors Dining Room. In developing and altering the site we have of necessity had to make a steel framed structure inside the shell to carry and support our various machines and heavy working components. Our reason for developing these particular premises has been in the value to us of the central situation.102

This account demonstrates that the activities of this particular firm took place at a location and in a building which had been developed and adapted over decades in order to facilitate and sustain specific working practices (see figures 6-9). The company’s viability was rooted in a network of established practices and infrastructures which were obdurate and resistant to change. The prospect of disrupting and dislocating this network was thus deeply worrying to the firm’s owner, and city governments’ extensive plans for industrial reorganisation affected hundreds of firms in this way.

102 Letter from Dixon Powner & Sons to Leeds Town Clerk, 20 November 1946. WYAS—LLD1/2/817150
Figure 6: Leeds City Surveyor’s photograph of the frontage of Dixon Powner and Sons

Figure 7: City Surveyor’s photograph of the specially designed workshops at rear
Figure 8: City Surveyor’s photograph of the rear access and adjoining premises

Figure 9: City Surveyor’s photograph of rear access to Dixon Powner and Sons
The set of photographs in figures six to nine show the premises of Dixon Powner and Sons on Rockingham Street in central Leeds. Figure six shows the large frontage of the premises occupying a number of buildings and extending along Rockingham Street. Figure seven shows the specially designed extensions and adaptations to the rear of the premises which housed the firm’s workshops. Figures eight and nine show the rear access to the premises, as well as adjoining properties. These images give a sense of the scale, setting, and layout of the works—the infrastructure which the firm’s owner felt was essential to its continued viability. The images form part of a collection produced by the City Surveyor’s department in 1946, as part of the designation of the Rockingham Street district as a slum clearance area. The full collection of images and their descriptions reveal that Dixon Powner and Sons was just one of many small manufacturers and businesses in the area which contained engineering works, a brewery, tailors, printers, a confectioner, stonemasons (figure 10), textiles works, a motor parts manufacturer, as well as hotels, shops and pubs. The wholesale destruction of all of these premises, and the economic activities they sustained, gives some indication of the level of disruption to local economies which post-war area clearance schemes entailed.

103 The full collection has been digitised by Leeds City Council and is available at: http://www.leodis.net/searchResults.aspx?LOCID=0&DECADE=0&YEAR=&KEYWORDS=rockingham%20street&KEYWORDS2=&KEYWORDS3=&ANDOR2=&ANDOR3=&RECSPAGE=5&VIEW=1&CURRPAGE=1 [Accessed 3 August 2015]
These photographs are themselves technologies through which local officials assumed a heightened level of control over the uses and organisation of the urban fabric. The images were all taken on 14th June 1946, as part of a survey of the whole area to be cleared, and they have been subsequently annotated by the City Surveyor’s department to show the occupation and ownership of specific buildings and plots. The photographs, and way they have been used to produce maps of buildings, spaces, and patterns of use, are thus part of a process in which state actors asserted their authority over the urban environment. The images are technologies through which Rockingham Street was surveyed, recorded, and codified, before the entire district was destroyed in 1954. Ten years later, on the cleared site which had once been Rockingham Street, the Merrion Shopping Centre was officially opened after the city government leased the land to local entrepreneur and developer Arnold Ziff (see chapter one, p. 79). The dramatic new shopping space and consumer experience of the Merrion Centre could not have
materialised without the extensive spatial powers of the state to take control of Rockingham Street, to capture and map the spaces and activities which existed there, and to obliterate the area and the situated social practices it sustained. Here then, not only was the state’s ultimate authority over space the means by which small scale urban industry was disrupted and destroyed, but it was also instrumental in the emergence of new spaces reorganised around the demands of consumer capital.

The disruption and destruction of the businesses in Rockingham Street was just one example among many of the effect of urban redevelopment on local industry, and small firms were most vulnerable to these pressures.\(^\text{104}\) By the 1970s officials in Manchester and Leeds were forced to recognise the damaging consequences which their redevelopment and relocation plans had on firms in the city, and acknowledged that many businesses had proved to be dependent on their ‘obsolete’ infrastructures and local spatial networks. In 1972, for example, a Leeds council report noted that ‘the non-survival rate of firms displaced through restructuring is relatively high’, and attributed this to ‘the need [for firms] to remain close to linkages’.\(^\text{105}\) The report also recognised that ‘it is the small firm sector which is hardest hit by urban restructuring policies’, and that ‘many small firms [were] obliged either to liquidate voluntarily or to move to a property [which was] similarly affected in the longer term by planning/highway proposals’.\(^\text{106}\) Similar conclusions were reached in Manchester where, as early as 1966, the city planning officer reported that:

> In the main, industrial concerns have in fact shown a marked reluctance to relocate outside the City boundaries because of the financial risks involved and the uncertainty

\(^{104}\) There are some uncertainties about defining what constitutes a ‘small firm’, but the criteria employed by the 1971 Bolton Committee into the small firm sector provide a useful guideline. Bolton characterised small firms as employing less than 200, having only a small share of their market, and run by local owner-managers. These criteria accurately capture most of the urban industrial works discussed in this chapter. For discussion see Colin M. Mason, ‘The Small Firm Sector’, in Lever (ed.), *Industrial Change in the United Kingdom*, pp. 125-148.

\(^{105}\) Leeds City Council, ‘Industrial Renewal and Rehabilitation’, 1973, p. 7. WYAS—LLD1/2/847649

of securing suitable labour; this again underlines the small scale nature of the bulk of the firms affected by redevelopment and the complex local linkages between apparently independent firms within the City.107

By disrupting and destroying the ‘complex local linkages’ which sustained existing economic activities, city governments’ spatial interventions had enormously damaging consequences for small businesses in the inner areas of cities. In juxtaposition with the visions of planned, orderly, and modernised, industry which guided the formation of industrial plans, existing businesses and economic practices were constructed as ‘obsolete’, unproductive, and inefficient—the antithesis of ‘modern’. In a recent study of redevelopment in east London for the 2012 Olympic Games, urban geographers Mike Raco and Emma Tunney note that small businesses are ‘particularly vulnerable to land clearance as they often exist in unsightly, low-cost neighbourhoods and are easily written-off as collections of “oldfashioned”, uncompetitive firms whose decline is inevitable’.108 We can observe strikingly similar treatments of small firms in the post-war city. Small businesses were imagined by city planners as obsolete and thus ‘ripe for renewal’.109 The physical destruction of such firms was viewed as a necessary and unproblematic modernising project.

Along with the concept of obsolescence, discourses of competitiveness and efficiency were deployed to dismiss objections and compensation claims from business owners. The compensation claim of a small Manchester business which processed and sold pet food, for example, was rejected by the City Treasurer in 1960 because he ‘considered

that the clearance area has merely clouded the effects of competition’. In a similar case, a baker’s compensation claim was rejected because the City Treasurer felt that the business ‘could not have been operating economically’, he went on to cite ‘a national trend for the small baker to shut down in the face of competition from bigger manufacturers’. These were not isolated cases: in November 1959 the City Treasurer was dealing with around 100 such claims. The concepts of modernisation and obsolescence validated city officials’ objectives, and established their authority to define and dictate appropriate patterns of use whilst simultaneously devaluing the objections of those who contested or opposed redevelopment.

In their explanation of Britain’s poor industrial performance in the post-war period, economic historians Michael Kitson and Jonathan Michie suggest that the ‘fundamental problem’ for industry was ‘a lack of any strong modernising force’. This assessment reveals two problems with existing intellectual approaches to post-war economic history. Firstly, the authors’ assumption that an effective project of modernisation would represent a straightforwardly progressive and improving force displays the same ‘belief in the modern as the guarantor of efficiency, progress, and human satisfaction’ which guided the activities of post-war urban planners. The danger for modern British historiography of adopting an uncritical and under-theorised concept of modernisation is apparent here. As James Vernon has suggested, reproducing progressive narratives of post-war modernisation points to a ‘critical failure of historiography to step outside the interpretive frameworks of its subjects’.

110 Minutes of a meeting of the Health Committee [HeC], 15 March 1960. GMCRO—HeC, Vol. 55
111 Minutes of a meeting of the Health Committee, 15 March 1960. GMCRO—HeC, Vol. 55
112 Minutes of a meeting of the Health Committee, 15 March 1960. GMCRO—HeC, Vol. 55
A second, and related, problem with Kitson and Michie’s assessment is that industrial activity in Britain’s major cities was subjected to a radical modernising project, in which state actors restructured and reconfigured the physical spaces of urban production. Officials attempted to reorder and relocate industrial activity, disrupted and prohibited many established economic practices, and physically destroyed vast numbers of buildings and infrastructures on which urban industry depended. This modernising project was violent, coercive, and disruptive, and had identifiable consequences for local economies. And yet this aspect of the state’s governance of economic activity has been largely overlooked because of the tendency, both within post-war economic historiography and beyond, to locate the state’s role in society in a narrow conception of ‘politics’ centred on Westminster policy-making, rather than in the management and organisation of the physical fabric of everyday life.

Although post-war historiography has largely overlooked the impact of state spatial reordering on urban economies, when ‘the inner cities’ became a serious object of national political concern in the 1970s, politicians and policy-makers were clear that urban redevelopment schemes had caused significant disruption and job losses in cities.116 Under James Callaghan’s premiership, a Ministerial Group on Inner City Areas was established in 1976 led by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Peter Shore.117 Shore’s working group collated evidence from various studies of major cities in Britain, and concluded that ‘the process of redevelopment has contributed materially to the demise of small firms in inner areas’ (although central government officials were keen to downplay the restrictive effects of their own regional industrial policies on cities

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116 The identification and problematisation of ‘the inner cities’, and the development of ‘urban policy’ as a centrally-orchestrated state response to this is well-covered in the urban studies literature and thus not repeated here: Paul Lawless, Britain’s Inner Cities: Policies and Problems (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 1-16; Cochrane, Understanding Urban Policy, pp. 24-29; Rob Atkinson & Graham Moon, Urban Policy in Britain: The City, the State and the Market (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 21-42.
117 Letter from the Prime Minister’s Office to Secretary of State for the Environment, 20 September 1976. TNA—BT—BT 177/3133
like Leeds and Manchester.\textsuperscript{118} On 17\textsuperscript{th} September 1976 Shore visited Manchester to give a speech on the ‘inner urban problem’. Shore stated that ‘inner urban areas [faced] problems of a most daunting kind, arising above all from a declining economic and industrial base’, and went on to argue that:

[Firms] have died as a consequence – albeit unintended – of the planning and housing policies which have been pursued. Comprehensive redevelopment schemes, uncertainty created by planning blight, and well-intentioned but perhaps over-vigorous efforts to remove “non-conforming” industrial users from areas zoned for residential use have all led to the permanent closure of many firms, and particularly small and medium ones.\textsuperscript{119}

Research conducted in Manchester and Leeds supported Shore’s analysis. A 1976 report by geographers at the University of Manchester found that ‘43,000 manufacturing jobs were lost from the inner city areas’ between 1966 and 1975 and that ‘most of this decline could be attributed to the death of small, single plant firms in the area’.\textsuperscript{120} The report suggested that ‘by 1981 over 25% of all industry [in Manchester] will have been affected by [compulsory purchase and redevelopment] involving the loss of 27,000 jobs’.\textsuperscript{121} In Leeds, employment in manufacturing in the inner city areas fell by nearly 10,000 between 1966 and 1971, and a 1980 study linked declining employment in Leeds’s inner areas with ‘the policy of redevelopment that has been pursued’.\textsuperscript{122} Such findings led to a complete reversal of local and national policy approaches towards Britain’s major cities. The 1977 white paper \textit{Policy for the Inner Cities} called for city governments to ‘administer all their powers, including those for housing, planning and the environment, so as to facilitate the growth of employment in inner areas’.\textsuperscript{123} After

\textsuperscript{118} Interdepartmental Group on Inner City Employment Problems, ‘The Effect of Redevelopment on Firms in Inner Areas’, report, p. 1. TNA—BT—BT177/3133
\textsuperscript{119} ‘Inner Urban Policy: Speech to be given by Mr Peter Shore’, 16 September 1976. GMCRO—EPG, Vol. 2.
\textsuperscript{121} Interdepartmental Group on Inner City Employment Problems, ‘The Effect of Redevelopment on Firms in Inner Areas’, report annexe, p. 6. TNA—BT—BT 177/3133
being dismissed by city governments as obsolete, small businesses were lionised and
subsidised as key sources of employment, enterprise, and innovation. Callaghan
appointed a Minister for Small Business and orchestrated a series of conferences in
major cities to support and liaise with small companies.\textsuperscript{124} In Manchester the city
government reversed its policy of industrial dispersal and launched ‘a crash programme
to attract new industrial investment to the inner city areas’.\textsuperscript{125} Policies of urban dispersal,
decentralisation, and wholesale clearance were abandoned, and the resources of the state
were redirected into subsidies and initiatives to protect and promote employment in
existing urban centres.

It is clear from the dramatic reversal of state policy towards economic activity in the
inner areas of cities that governmental projects of spatial reordering were understood to
have had damaging consequences for urban industry and employment. There were of
course other factors at play, national and global shifts in patterns of production and
demand, and the emergence of new industrial nations, had profound implications for
urban industry and employment in Britain.\textsuperscript{126} Indeed, in the face of these global shifts in
economic structure, geographers at the University of Manchester concluded that, instead
of undertaking extensive spatial reorganisation, ‘the best thing you can do with inner
city industry is hang on to what you have got’.\textsuperscript{127} Small urban manufacturers in post-
war Manchester and Leeds faced structural challenges which were dictated by the
vagaries of global capitalist production, but urban industry was also subjected to three
decades of physical constraints, disruption, and in many cases simply destroyed in order
to pursue the spatial objectives of state actors. This aspect of the British state’s role in

\textsuperscript{124} Details of these initiatives can be found in the Department of Industry’s record series, ‘Small Firms in the Inner City’, 1977-1978. TNA—AH—AH 5/35
\textsuperscript{126} For discussion see Andrew Gamble, \textit{Britain in Decline: Economic Policy, Political Strategy and the British State} (London, 1981).
\textsuperscript{127} Comments reported in Michael Duffy, ‘Inside-out City’s Jobs in Jeopardy’, \textit{Manchester Evening News}, 20 April 1977. GMCRO—M507/Box 1
urban economic change has been largely written out of the story of post-war deindustrialisation because of a lack of integration between the conventional approaches of economic historiography and what we know about the operation of state power through the management and organisation of space.

**Conclusion**

The experience and consequences of re-planning the spaces of industrial activity in post-war British cities suggest a number of conclusions which relate to key arguments of this thesis, and are also of relevance to the field of modern British historiography in a more general sense. Firstly, it is clear that the familiar narrative within urban geography of a post-1970s ‘entrepreneurial turn’ in urban governance needs to be questioned and revised in light of empirical research into the activities of city governments in the three decades after 1945. If entrepreneurialism is understood to denote proactive, growth-oriented urban development policies on the part of city governments then post-war industrial plans display marked similarities of approach and objectives. The governments of Manchester and Leeds were deeply concerned with local economic prospects and with the effects of shifts in the national distribution of economic activity, and developed expansive plans to diversify and rejuvenate urban economies. Rather than undergoing an epochal transformation from post-war social welfare provision to ‘Thatcherite’ growth-promotion, the story of urban governance in the second half of the twentieth century seems to be much more one of continuity with regard to local economic objectives and interventions. Urban historiography could do more to foreground this continuity, and challenge partial understandings of post-war urban
governance, by shifting the focus of study away from familiar areas of welfare provision such as social housing.

Secondly, this chapter has shown that the state’s control over the form and functions of urban space was a crucial mechanism through which the possibilities for social practice were governed. In this case, the impact of state spatial controls on urban economic activity have been considered, and it is clear that the power of state actors to manage and reorganise the physical fabric of cities operated as a compelling tool, shaping and reconfiguring what forms of activity were possible in a given environment, and in some cases disrupting and destroying established economic practices. Reordering space had irresistible consequences for the courses of action which were available to economic actors, and post-war urban redevelopment ultimately contributed to a collapse of industry and employment in the inner areas of Britain’s cities. And yet the interpretive frameworks of modern British economic historiography have failed to capture this experience, because ‘the economy’ has been conceived of as an abstracted, aspatial, entity, and approached through aggregated national statistics and macroeconomic indicators.

Debates around industrial decline in economic history have too often been conducted in the terms of policy-makers and economists, rather than as part of an interrogation into how the idea of ‘the economy’ was assembled, or how specific forms of economic activity emerged and declined in highly situated socio-spatial contexts. In 1989 the geographer and spatial theorist Edward Soja criticised conventional economic theory for approaching the past ‘as if it were packed solidly on the head of a pin, in a fantasy
world with virtually no spatial dimensions’. Since the 1980s, the field of ‘new economic geography’ has responded to Soja’s critique by foregrounding the spatial dynamics of economic activities. The research presented here suggests that such analytical approaches could usefully be integrated into post-war economic historiography to better understand processes of socio-economic change.

Thirdly, whilst this study has highlighted the capacities of state actors to regulate social and economic practices through the management and organisation of space, governmental control over the physical fabric of cities emerges as an unwieldy technology of rule. State spatial interventions were highly effective at prohibiting, disrupting, and destroying existing economic practices. Attempts to engineer and orchestrate the creation of new forms and new sites of urban industrial activity were, however, far less effective. City governments’ ambitious projections of reordered, modernised, industrial spaces which would rejuvenate local economies largely failed to materialise. The envisaged industrial reorganisation was thwarted by the conflicting objectives of different branches of the British state, and by planners’ failure to grasp how dependent urban industry was on existing local networks and infrastructures.

For historians of governmentality and the ‘techno-political turn’, who have usefully located the workings of state power in the organisation and infrastructure of everyday life, the experience of post-war industrial planning also reveals the limitations of state power. As Vanessa Taylor and Frank Trentmann have noted, techno-political accounts of state and society tend to privilege ‘systemic order and expert power’ with the danger


of presenting a totalising model of social control. Similarly Henri Lefebvre’s account of the state’s use of space as its ‘privileged instrument’ with which to organise economic activity is in danger of overstating the coherence and effectiveness of applications of state spatial power. The state’s ability to take control of and destroy portions of post-war cities undoubtedly represented a violent and coercive imposition on individuals and established patterns of use, but the efforts of industrial planners to orchestrate new forms of economic activity were unsuccessful due to the limitations of expert knowledge, and the incoherence of the state apparatus itself. If space is the state’s ‘privileged instrument’, it is nevertheless often a blunt and unwieldy one.

Finally, this chapter has shown that investigating the state’s governance of society through space allows us to question and revise some familiar narratives of post-war Britain, and provides a potential means of overcoming sub-disciplinary divisions within post-war historiography. Yet the experience of reorganising post-war urban economies also has a relevance beyond the concerns of modern British historiography. The ‘inner city problems’ of economic decline and unemployment, exacerbated by planned environmental reordering, which Peter Shore and others identified in the 1970s were not straightforwardly resolved. In the 1980s, continued economic decline and urban riots prompted new policy responses from central government centred on the ‘regeneration’ of cities, and urban regeneration as a means of addressing poverty and unemployment in cities was taken up and expanded by the post-1997 Labour administrations.

The inner areas of Britain’s major conurbations remain characterised by high levels of relative poverty and lower life expectancies strongly linked with the poor quality and low quantity of employment opportunities. The Department for Communities and Local Government’s *English Indices of Deprivation 2010* showed that the inner, formerly industrial, districts of Manchester and Leeds stood out within those cities as areas with particularly high concentrations of poverty and worklessness. Such areas have been, and continue to be, subjected to successive waves of state intervention, often involving projects of demolition and redevelopment, under the auspices of post-war urban renewal, or present day urban regeneration. In pursuing new forms of state intervention it would be useful to recognise the state’s own role in the production of urban social and economic problems, and to acknowledge the potential for unintended and damaging consequences demonstrated by earlier rounds of intervention.

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Conclusion

This thesis began by identifying a set of problems with the scholarship on post-war Britain. It suggested that understandings of the role of the state remain largely locked within reassuring and triumphalist narratives centred on welfare, consensus, and collectivism, and that this is particularly true within popular history, cultural memory, and the adjacent disciplines of urban studies, geography, and urban sociology. It also argued that, while progressive narratives of post-war collectivism look increasingly untenable within critical historiography, sub-disciplinary divides between histories of ‘the political’ and ‘the social’, or ‘cultural’, militate against the development of new interpretive frameworks with which to approach the relationship between state and society. The introduction to the thesis questioned the way in which the dramatic transformations of post-war society and culture wrought by mass consumerism have been narrated at a remove from the functions and rationalities of the state. In response to these problems, the thesis looked beyond post-war historiography at the ways in which statehood has been understood in a wider context by historians, sociologists, and critical urban theorists. It proposed a more expansive model of governance than has been allowed for in post-war historiography, in which state power was often located not at Westminster but in the material organisation of everyday life. The thesis has shown that the state’s power over space was a key interface between governors and governed, and was deployed in pursuit of objectives which demand a reassessment of both the comfortable narratives of post-war collectivism, and of the subject-centred histories of consumer culture.
One of the key objectives of this study has been to challenge existing conceptions of the role and functions of post-war urban governments. The study has suggested that both urbanists’ mythologised accounts of collectivist ‘urban Keynesianism’, and historians’ focus on the rationalising visions of town planners, do not adequately describe how the local state governed cities in the three decades after 1945. The thesis has challenged the perceived contrast between post-war ‘managerial’, welfare-oriented, urban governance, and post-1980s, ‘entrepreneurial’, growth-oriented, urban governance. Chapter one showed that, in developing urban shopping centres, the local state worked in partnership with commercial interests to reshape cities, deploying its political and financial powers to facilitate property developers’ accumulation strategies. Chapters one and two showed that city governments managed and modified the urban environment as part of a strategy of economic and cultural reinvention in which cities competed to provide the best shopping experiences. Chapter four also emphasised city governments’ overriding concern with local economic development, which was evidenced in ambitious plans for industrial rejuvenation and diversification. The thesis has thus modelled a local state which was consistent in its pursuit of economic growth and in its attempts to accommodate and encourage new modes of economic activity.

The thesis has demonstrated that the state’s concern with managing economic activity manifested itself in the post-war period in interventions and regulations which organised patterns of commercial consumption. It has argued that state actors’ management of consuming practices, and of the individual consumer, is a neglected aspect of the history of post-war consumerism. Chapter two showed that managing the movements of the citizen-shopper was a central objective of post-war transport planning, and that space was used to create geographies of consumerism which were designed to enhance cities’ function and status as shopping destinations. Chapter three looked at state actors’ efforts
to manage consumption of, and in, the home. It showed how consumerist models of the
domestic subject shaped debates about the design and provision of housing, and how the
recasting of citizens’ needs in terms of their consuming desires introduced new ways of
classifying and regulating the individual in their own home. Chapter one showed how,
through the new public space and public experience of the shopping centre, state actors
actively aligned civic with commercial cultures, and participation in the public life of
the city came to mean engagement with cultures of shopping.

The thesis has foregrounded the state’s use of space to organise and structure post-war
society. It has drawn on intellectual approaches from science and technology studies,
and from materialist histories, to emphasise that state spatial projects often had
compelling and irresistible consequences for individuals. Chapter one showed how the
destruction and reconstruction of the urban shopping landscape forcibly expelled
alternative forms of retailing and alternative patterns of use from redevelopment areas.
The imposition of shopping centres materially transformed the possibilities for shopping
and other cultural practices in British cities. Chapter four highlighted the damaging
effects of spatial reorganisation on urban industry, and demonstrated that the physical
transformation of the urban landscape had identifiable consequences for local
economies. Frank Mort has suggested that post-war planning documents ‘relentlessly
marginalised’ what were perceived as dysfunctional practices in a cultural sense.¹ This
thesis has shown that, upon implementation, post-war planning practices also
marginalised undesirable practices in a very concrete, material sense. Spatial
interventions were used to disrupt, displace, and expel unwanted patterns of use. The
thesis has therefore argued that there were often clear class and power dynamics at work
in redevelopment projects with, for example, less affluent households being expelled in

¹ Frank Mort, ‘Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s’, Journal of British Studies
favour of shopping motorists, or small shopkeepers being displaced in favour of high
value retailing. I have argued for an interrogation of the ways in which the discourses of
modernisation and obsolescence functioned in this context of material conflict over
urban space and the dispossession of less favoured groups in urban society.

The study, of course, has some limitations. It is in the nature of a work which aims to
speak across, and synthesise, different bodies of scholarship that some literatures may
not have received the depth of engagement that would be possible in a more narrowly
focused study. It is suggested that the interdisciplinary aims of the thesis provide a
justification for the breadth of scholarship included and hopefully for any oversights in
dealing with discrete literatures. Another methodological issue with the thesis concerns
the sources used and the nature of the historical record. The thesis has focused on the
objectives and interventions of state actors, and thus relied heavily on government
archives. Yet the study has also investigated the material consequences of state spatial
interventions and here sources are more limited. Unless state actors actively collected
evidence on the socio-spatial consequences of specific development projects, it can be
difficult to get a sense of the localised effects of physical interventions within
conventional archival sources. As a result the thesis has, out of necessity, made much of
specific case studies where detailed evidence is available. Extending the scope of
analysis beyond the limits of the written archive would require the use of alternative
methodologies which is a possible means through which this research could be
developed further. Detailed mapping showing spatial changes in specific locales could
be used effectively if supported by written sources, and oral histories would provide a
means of obtaining a wider range of perspectives on the impact of state spatial
interventions than is available in government records.
This thesis has wider implications for how historians approach and investigate social change. It has emphasised the structuring force of materiality in the organisation of social practices and cultural forms, and the state’s role in managing and manipulating physical space. Integrating such structuration into historical analyses may well require the adoption of concepts and theoretical approaches drawn from beyond the discipline of history, and the engagement with science and technology studies in recent materialist history indicates how this might be undertaken. This thesis has also drawn on Lefebvre’s Marxist account of the state’s management of space and, if historians seek to understand and explain broad-based social change, we may need to resurrect interpretive frameworks that have fallen out of favour in recent decades. The conditioning of social experience by the demands of capital accumulation and the coercive powers of the state may not be a comfortable area of enquiry but it is one which nevertheless remains pertinent to the study of socio-historical processes. A rapprochement with structuralist or materialist frames of analysis should not, however, mean adopting totalising models of social control at the expense of agency and contingency—the final chapter of this thesis demonstrated that projects of socio-spatial reordering had material consequences for cities and citizens, but did not necessarily produce the outcomes which practitioners intended.

This thesis has also shown that empirical historical research can be used effectively to engage with, and test, theories developed in adjacent disciplines. Yet speaking across disciplinary boundaries requires historians to learn the languages and concerns of other disciplines in order to engage authoritatively and persuasively. The thesis has shown that this is a necessary intellectual task because, in the absence of such engagement from historians, mythologised accounts of the past can be deployed in problematic and...
uncritical ways. Historical research can offer much in the way of concrete case studies and empirical detail with which to refine theoretical approaches and historians should look beyond the confines of our own intellectual concerns. Much of the urban scholarship referred to in this thesis is concerned with analysing and critiquing present day public policy, and thus forms part of an ongoing academic engagement with current governance practices. Historical research has the potential to make this engagement more nuanced and effective, and to demonstrate the continued public relevance of the discipline.
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