Introduction

Thatcher's Progress

The Prime Minister's visit offered a priceless opportunity. On 25 September 1979, Margaret Thatcher arrived in Milton Keynes to christen Europe's largest shopping center.[1] As the crown jewel of the world's leading new towns program, Milton Keynes routinely hosted visitors: architects and planners, international students, visiting royalty, and a parade of cabinet ministers.[2] "New towns" were state-directed efforts to produce entire new communities, and the thirty-two that Britain designated in the generation after 1945 won admirers around the world.[3] But Thatcher's visit to Milton Keynes promised the attention of a new Prime Minister. The occasion presented the public agency in charge of building the new city, Milton Keynes Development Corporation, the chance to put the case for new town planning directly to the Prime Minister. To that end, they sent her on a didactic driving tour, designed to show how they had conjured a thriving development out of rural pasture in just a dozen years. They were, in a way, resurrecting the medieval and early modern tradition of the "progress," a form of ceremonial tour in which towns and cities led visiting sovereigns on a series of entertainments through their civic spaces. Most famously associated with

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[1] John Grindrod, *Concretopia: A Journey around the Rebuilding of Postwar Britain* (Brecon: Old Street Publishing, 2013), 397; Janina Gosseye, "Milton Keynes' Centre: The Apotheosis of the British Post-War Consensus or the Apostle of Neo-Liberalism?" *History of Retailing and Consumption* 1:3 (2015): 209–229, at 210; Terence Bendixson and John Platt, *Milton Keynes: Image and Reality* (Cambridge: Granta, 1992), 143–154; Marion Hill, ed., *The Heritage of Milton Keynes: The Story of the Original CMK* (Milton Keynes: Living Archive, 2007), 104–117.

[2] "Visit of Mr Peter Shore MP," 10 March 1977, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS), MKDC, Box DDD A69 A70 A71, File 00400/10/1; "Visit of Mr John Stanley MP," 27 June 1980, CBS, MKDC, Box GM A4, File 122/2/1; "Visit of the Right Hon Michael Heseltine MP, Secretary of State for the Environment," 13 October 1980, CBS, MKDC, Lib 8, 9, 10, File 9/3.

[3] On the elastic definitions of "new towns," see – in addition to the discussion below – Rosemary Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia: An Intellectual History of the New Town Movement* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1–19.

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"The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth," in the words of their nineteenth-century chronicler, these royal visitations offered towns and cities the opportunity to fashion their identities, request privileges and favors, and – if all went well – entangle powerful visitors in bonds of affection and obligation.[4] And so, from half-past nine to two o'clock, the city's makers sent the Prime Minister on a journey through Milton Keynes – or, on "Thatcher's progress."[5]

From the day's beginning in the historic town of Stony Stratford, through its climax inside a raucous shopping building, this book follows Thatcher's progress through Milton Keynes. This single morning's journey, lasting not five hours, illuminates the larger history of postwar urban planning.[6] At each stop along the way, Thatcher's hosts depicted this public sector project as worthy of continuing investment. In the near term, they succeeded: the staff of Number 10 called the visit their best organized to date, and Thatcher personally intervened to secure Milton Keynes a desperately needed hospital.[7] Within two years, however, her government initiated the termination of Britain's pioneering new towns program. By the time the last remaining new town development corporation closed its doors in 1996, these achievements of the welfare state had come to serve as staging grounds for Thatcherite initiatives.[8] So while her hosts plotted the day's itinerary as an argument on behalf of the new towns program, "Thatcher's progress" ironically conveys the mechanism of the program's end. By following the Prime Minister's route – made

[4] John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 2nd edn, 3 vols. (London: John Nichols, 1823); Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight, eds., *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford University Press, 2007). The pageant enjoyed a twentieth-century revival: Zoë Thomas, "Historical Pageants, Citizenship, and the Performance of Women's History before Second-Wave Feminism," *Twentieth Century British History* 28:3 (2017): 319–343; Angela Bartie, Paul Caton, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Alexander Hutton, Paul Readman, and Tom Hulme, *The Redress of the Past*, www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/, accessed 3 August 2017.

[5] Thatcher was the development corporation's third choice, after the Queen and then Prince Charles; the Queen opened the new town's civic offices earlier that summer: Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC), secret board minutes, 3 November 1978, CBS, MKDC, Box AR 117/2006, 8298/9/5, 8298/6/12, 8298/8/1, 6, 7, Ref 8298/6/12; Hill, *The Story of the Original CMK*, 86–87.

[6] "Planning" here refers to those activities variously included under town and country planning, city planning, and urban planning – the first the predominant British term at least until the 1960s, the third the more familiar in American contexts.

[7] Bendixson and Platt, *Milton Keynes*, 146; Jock Campbell, speech at opening of District General Hospital, 9 June 1980, CBS, D187/13.

[8] While it is often claimed that the program ended in 1992, when the last English development corporation closed and the state ceased to treat new towns as distinct from other towns, Scotland's last new town development corporation remained in operation until 1996: Anthony Alexander, *Britain's New Towns: Garden Cities to Sustainable Communities* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 5, 140.

possible by the discovery of a single black binder, thick with schedules, statistics, arguments, and maps, in the development corporation's archive – this book examines the development, eclipse, and legacies of postwar urban planning.

The Spatial Dimension of the Welfare State

Historians rarely note that core Thatcherite policies emerged out of Britain's new towns.[9] Just fifteen days after the general election of 3 May 1979 – still more than a year before their 1980 Housing Act extended the right to buy to council tenants nationally – the new Conservative government initiated the sale of new town housing to its tenants.[10] And a dozen years later, reflecting upon the ongoing sales of nationalized industries, a press release explained that privatization had been quietly proceeding in new towns since the Conservatives first took office. "Since 1979," the Commission for the New Towns noted, "the Government has been undertaking one of the most important aspects of its 'privatisation' policy without the glare of publicity associated with British Telecom, British Gas or Water Authorities flotations – the sale of new town assets."[11]

Why, before selling a single council house or denationalizing the first public industry, did Thatcher's governments begin by privatizing Britain's new towns? On one level, they did so because they could: since new towns fell under ministerial control, the government could alter their management and mission without an act of Parliament. Yet the alacrity with which they pursued these initiatives, turning new towns into stages for policies foundational to Thatcher's Britain, attests to the ideological dimension of the new towns program. If market liberalism included a spatial politics, in the form of enterprise zones, social democracy did as well, in the form of new towns.[12] Partly for this reason, the sociologist Anthony King maintains that the key professions in the rise of market liberalism included, in addition to the usual suspects in banking and

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9 Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era* (London: Pocket Books, 2009); Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders, eds., *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

10 A. R. Atherton, NT Circular 577, NT/203/43, 18 May 1979, CBS, MKDC, MK 39, Ref 00930/23/4.

11 MKDC, "John Walker Appointed General Manager for the Commission for New Towns," 15 February 1991, Local Studies Library, Milton Keynes Library, L060:35; Colin Ward, *New Town, Home Town: The Lessons of Experience* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1993), 105.

12 Sam Wetherell, "Freedom Planned: Enterprise Zones and Urban Non-Planning in Post-War Britain," *Twentieth Century British History* 27:2 (2016): 266–289.

finance, urban planning.[13] Indeed, enterprise zones and new towns were both overseen by "development corporations," which traced their origins to a common ancestor in the New Towns Act of 1946. From this legislative foundation, the new towns program nationalized urban development projects that had previously been private as well as public.[14] By dismantling that program, Thatcher's government recognized something that historians generally have not.[15]

In the quarter century following the Second World War, governments of both parties designated thirty-two new towns across all four nations of the United Kingdom.[16] By so doing, in addition to redistributing family incomes and health outcomes, Britain's welfare state also intervened to rearrange the country's population. To be sure, the welfare state created many kinds of spaces, from hospitals and schools to council estates and shopping districts.[17] Its tools of population management included town and country planning, the expansion of towns and villages, and city center redevelopment.[18] And as tower blocks elevated bodies vertically, suburban development dispersed them laterally.[19] By the 1970s, as a result of

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[13] Anthony King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World-Economy: Cultural and Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 66–67.

[14] Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 69–70.

[15] An exception is Sam Wetherell, "Pilot Zones: The New Urban Environment of Twentieth Century Britain" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2016).

[16] For a brief overview, see John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815–1985* (1978; New York: Methuen, 1986), 292–296. Accountings range between twenty-eight and thirty-two new towns, dividing over whether to include the four designations in Northern Ireland; the figure of thirty-two refers to total UK designations from 1946 to 1970, excluding the two projects abandoned during the 1970s; for further discussion, see Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, ix.

[17] Elain Harwood, *Space, Hope, and Brutalism: English Architecture, 1945–1975* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture: The History of a Social Experiment* (New York: Routledge, 2001); John Boughton, *Municipal Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Council Housing* (London: Verso, 2018).

[18] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion, 1998); Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 28, 38–41, 102–104, 174; Jesse Meredith, "Decolonizing the New Town: Roy Gazzard and the Making of Killingworth Township," *Journal of British Studies* 57:2 (2018): 333–362; Peter Mandler, "New Towns for Old: The Fate of the Town Centre," in *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain, 1945–1964*, eds. Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters (London: Rivers Oram, 1999), 208–227; Otto Saumarez Smith, "Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment in Britain, 1959–1966," *The Historical Journal* 58:1 (2015): 217–244.

[19] Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Mark Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Postwar England* (Manchester University Press, 1998), 23–61; Clapson, *Suburban Century: Social Change and Urban Growth in England and the United States* (Oxford: Berg, 2003). See also Peter J. Larkham and Keith D. Lilley, *Planning the "City of Tomorrow": British Reconstruction Planning, 1939–1952: An Annotated Bibliography* (Pickering: Inch's Books, 2001).

such initiatives, nearly one in three Britons lived in public accommodation – the highest rate in western Europe.[20] Collectively, these diverse projects testify to the breadth of the welfare state's ambitions and capacities.[21]

The new towns program comprised the most centralized and comprehensive effort within this wider field of spatial politics.[22] By contrast with private American housing developments, British new towns were public sector enterprises; and by contrast with council housing, new towns promised self-sufficient communities. They invite comparison with the "greenbelt towns" of America's New Deal, except that Britain's program produced ten times as many developments.[23] Their initial formal modesty, as in Stevenage in Hertfordshire, combined with chronic image problems, can sometimes make it difficult to register the significance of a program that produced more towns than did any European country outside the Soviet Union.[24] Historians have revealed the many ways in which Britain's welfare state reached inside minds and bodies to forge social democratic subjects.[25] While not as extensive as council housing, in

[20] Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain*, 201; Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture*, 2; Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, 335–337.

[21] For a related discussion, during a slightly earlier period, see James Greenhalgh, *Reconstructing Modernity: Space, Power, and Governance in Mid-Twentieth Century British Cities* (Manchester University Press, 2017).

[22] Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 320–321.

[23] Jason Reblando, *New Deal Utopias* (Heidelberg: Kehrer Verlag, 2017).

[24] J. M. Richards, "Failure of the New Towns," *Architectural Review* 114 (July 1953): 28–32. On the "anti-urbanism" of new towns, see Andrew Saint, "The New Towns," in *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain, Volume IX: Since the Second World War*, ed. Boris Ford (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 146–159, at 147. On the Soviet case, see Chauncy D. Harris, *Cities of the Soviet Union: Studies in Their Functions, Size, Density, and Growth* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970); Stephen J. Collier, *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics* (Princeton University Press, 2011). While acknowledging differences in accounting, Wakeman cites the figure of a thousand Soviet new towns in *Practicing Utopia*, 66.

[25] Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman* (London: Virago, 1986), 121–123; Lawrence Black, "Social Democracy as a Way of Life: Fellowship and the Socialist Union, 1951–9," *Twentieth Century British History* 10:4 (1999): 499–539; Jeremy Nuttall, "Labour Revisionism and Qualities of Mind and Character, 1931–1979," *English Historical Review* 120:487 (2005): 667–694; Teri Chettiar, "The Psychiatric Family: Citizenship, Private Life, and Emotional Health in Welfare-State Britain" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 2013); Michal Shapira, *The War Inside: Psychoanalysis, Total War, and the Making of the Democratic Self in Postwar Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2013); Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford University Press, 2013); Alistair Kefford, "Housing the Citizen-Consumer in Post-War Britain: The Parker Morris Report, Affluence, and the Even Briefer Life of Social Democracy," *Twentieth Century British History* 29:2 (2018): 225–258. Recognizing this aspect of the welfare state, Thatcher sought to counter it: Margaret Thatcher, "Not So Much a Programme, More a Way of Life," *The Downing Street Years* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), 625–641. On popular ownership of the social

terms of residents housed, the new towns program extended these capacities spatially as well.

The legislative vehicle was the New Towns Act of 1946. Labour's 1945 election manifesto, *Let Us Face the Future*, pledged a combination of land nationalizations, universal housing, and "good town planning – pleasant surroundings, attractive lay-out, [and] efficient utility services."[26] The New Towns Act established the framework to realize these commitments. It provided ministers with extraordinary powers to designate development sites, and to appoint development corporations whose powers superseded local authorities. These development corporations could compel sales of private land, lease that land upon development, and reinvest the profits. While the process mandated public consultations, development corporations were largely free of local interests. According to Richard Crossman, minister of housing and local government from 1964 to 1966, development corporations were "completely autocratic" institutions, their budgets and their memberships set from London.[27] This centralized approach distinguished British planning from privately built suburbs, and as such offered an attractive model to states around the world.[28]

By relocating working-class residents to greenfield sites, selected partly for their proximity to industry, resources, and transport links, the British state assumed significant responsibility for the rebalancing of town and country. While the Soviets built more settlements *de novo*, and the enormity of Brasília surpassed any single British effort, in its procedures, diversity, and sheer quantity the UK's program set a global standard.[29] Between 1946 and 1970, the British state designated nearly 250,000 acres as new towns; by the

democratic promise, see Selina Todd, "Phoenix Rising: Working-Class Life and Urban Reconstruction, *c.* 1945–1967," *Journal of British Studies* 54:3 (2015): 679–702; Camilla Schofield, "Bad Neighbors, Bad Bosses, Bad Feelings: The Making of the Race Relations Conciliation Officer, 1958–1976," North American Conference on British Studies (Little Rock), 13 November 2015.

[26] Labour Party, *Let Us Face the Future* (1945), www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/lab45.htm, accessed 30 July 2018.

[27] Richard Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Volume I: 1964–1966* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975), 127.

[28] New towns in England and Wales fell under the purview of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning (1946–1951), the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (1951–1970), and the Department of the Environment (1970–1992); Scottish new towns fell under the secretary of state for Scotland; the four new towns in Northern Ireland were licensed by the New Towns (Northern Ireland) Act of 1965. Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 33, 46–48.

[29] Wyndham Thomas, "Britain's New Towns," in *New Towns World-wide*, ed. A. K. Constandse, E. Y. Galantay, and T. Ohba (The Hague: International Federation for Housing and Planning, 1985), 89–106.

KEY
- • Phase 1 (1946–1950)
- ■ Phase 2 (1955–1964)
- ▲ Phase 3 (1965–1970)
- ★ Capital City

SCOTLAND
Cumbernauld
Livingston
Glenrothes
EDINBURGH

NORTHERN IRELAND
Derry/Londonderry
Irvine
East Kilbride
Ballymena
Antrim
BELFAST ★
Craigavon

North Sea

Washington
Peterlee
Newton Aycliffe

ENGLAND
Central Lancashire (Preston)²
Skelmersdale
Warrington
Runcorn

Irish Sea

DUBLIN ★
IRELAND
WALES

Telford¹
Newtown/Y Drenewydd
Redditch
Cwmbran
CARDIFF

Corby
Peterborough
Northampton
Milton Keynes
Stevenage
Hemel Hempstead
LONDON
Bracknell
Crawley

Welwyn Garden City
Hatfield
Harlow
Basildon

Celtic Sea

English Channel

FRANCE

BLACKMER MAPS

¹ Designated as Dawley in 1963; name changed to Telford in 1968.
² Designated as Central Lancashire in 1970, subsequently curtailed.

ACREAGE AT DESIGNATION (BRITISH NEW TOWNS ONLY)

35,225 ▲ Central Lancashire²	7,180 ■ Redditch	4,150 ■ Cumbernauld
21,883 ▲ Milton Keynes	6,692 ■ Livingston	4,029 ■ Skelmersdale
19,952 ▲ Northampton	6,320 • Harlow	3,160 • Cwmbran
18,650 ▲ Warrington	6,100 • Stevenage	2,500 • Corby
15,940 ▲ Peterborough	5,920 • Crawley	2,350 • Peterlee
12,440 ▲ Irvine	5,910 • Hemel Hempstead	2,340 • Hatfield
10,250 • East Kilbride	5,730 • Glenrothes	1,850 • Bracknell
9,100 ■ Telford	5,300 ■ Washington	1,497 ▲ Newtown/Y Drenewydd
7,834 • Basildon	4,230 • Welwyn Garden City	880 • Newton Aycliffe
7,250 ■ Runcorn	Sources: *The London Gazette,* 1946–1970; *The Edinburgh Gazette,* 1947–1966	

Map 1: The spatial dimension of the welfare state: new towns designated in the United Kingdom, 1946–1970.

early twenty-first century, new towns housed 2.5 million Britons.[30] The new towns did not merely represent analogues to the welfare state's commitments in education, health, and housing: they designated spaces through which the welfare state could realize those commitments.[31] Launched the same year as acts extending National Insurance and establishing the National Health Service, and terminated half-a-century later in tandem with the state's withdrawals from housing, industry, and municipal utilities, the new towns comprised the spatial dimension of the welfare state.[32]

From Garden Cities to New Towns

Like so much else in modern Britain, the new town movement emerged in response to industrialization and urbanization. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, only a third of the country's population lived in towns, but within five decades England had become the world's first urban nation. In 1801, only London claimed more than a hundred thousand residents, and only six towns had more than fifty thousand residents. A century later, those figures had rocketed to thirty-three cities of at least a hundred thousand people, and seventy-five cities with more than fifty thousand people.[33]

Urban growth brought urban squalor. "Whilst we have been building our churches and solacing ourselves with our religion and dreaming that the millennium was coming," charged the influential pamphlet, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, in 1883, "the poor have been growing poorer, the wretched more miserable, and the immoral more corrupt."[34] By the late

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[30] The exact figure was 234,662 acres in the twenty-eight British new towns; the population figure derives from Grindrod, *Concretopia*, 400.

[31] Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture*, 3–5.

[32] On "spatial Keynesianism," see Neil Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood* (Oxford University Press, 2004). For a suggestive, if unelaborated, reference to "the spatial dimension of the welfare state," see Cristina Renzoni, "Spatial Legacies of the Welfare State: Housing and Beyond," *Contemporary European History* 22:3 (2013): 537–546, at 545. On the welfare state, see Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State*, 2nd edn (New York: Longman, 1996); Rodney Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain since 1945*, 2nd edn (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Chris Renwick, *Bread for All: The Origins of the Welfare State* (London: Allen Lane, 2017). The counterpoint remains David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920–1970* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). Edgerton does not deny the existence of the welfare state, but rather argues that "welfarism" blinds commentators to the British state's capacities and strength: "The welfarist, social democratic accounts focusing on the welfare state were also profoundly critical of liberal Britain for its lack of commitment to welfare and a strong state" (12). By contrast with those accounts, this book foregrounds the roles of experts and the state in making postwar Britain.

[33] Figures refer to England and Wales. Harold Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society* (London: Routledge, 1969), 117; the precise end date on the latter statistics is 1907.

[34] Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, ed. Anthony S. Wohl (1883; New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 55–56.

1880s, Charles Booth, the shipowner-turned-social-investigator, estimated that more than a million Londoners lived in poverty.[35] The Conservative leader, Lord Salisbury, had ignited a furore among his fellow Tories by calling for the reform of working-class housing. Salisbury identified two approaches to the housing crisis: build upward, or build outward.[36] He did not go so far as to endorse municipal housing, but in 1890 the movement's supporters passed the Housing of the Working Classes Act, empowering local authorities to build and manage housing.[37] This act provided the foundation of housing policy for most of the next century.

The urban crisis captured the attention of a self-taught London stenographer, Ebenezer Howard (1850–1928). Having left school at fourteen, Howard lived briefly in the United States during the early 1870s. There he witnessed Chicago's rebuilding after its great fire of 1871, admiring the city's incorporation of generous parklands that inspired a pleasing accolade: "garden city."[38] Howard soon returned to an England grappling with overcrowding and squalor. In 1898, he borrowed £50 to publish his only book, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*.[39] Reprinted four years later as *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, Howard's little volume became the unlikely founding text of town and country planning. Within five years, his admirers raised more than £100,000 to establish England's first garden city, Letchworth, in Hertfordshire; a second, Welwyn Garden City, followed in 1920.[40]

Howard favored not simply suburban housing developments, but self-sufficient communities – each with its own farms, industries, shopping, towns, and administration – of thirty-two thousand residents.[41] He sought a socialist alternative to capitalist immiseration, by combining the benefits of town and country within a single ordered space. These

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[35] Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design since 1880*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 14–47, especially 28–29.

[36] Lord Salisbury, "Labourers' and Artisans' Dwellings," *The National Review* 9 (November 1883), reprinted in Mearns, *The Bitter Cry*, 113–129, at 118; for discussion, in the same volume, see Wohl, "Introduction," 28–29.

[37] Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture*, 25.

[38] Mervyn Miller, "Howard, Sir Ebenezer (1850–1928)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34016, accessed 5 October 2017.

[39] Ebenezer Howard, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1898), reprinted as *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1902; Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1965). On Howard, in addition to Miller, see Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 23–88.

[40] Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, 25; Peter Hall and Colin Ward, *Sociable Cities: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1998), 45–46.

[41] Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, 142–143.

proposals echoed earlier ventures, such as Robert Owen's New Harmony, Indiana (1825). But rather than retreating from the world, Howard wanted to change it. To that end, his collaborator, Frederic Osborn (1885–1978), urged an alliance with the state. Writing in 1918 with Howard and two others, calling themselves the "New Townsmen," Osborn called upon the government to establish a hundred postwar new towns.[42] Upon Howard's death in 1928, the energetic Osborn assumed leadership of the movement, and he played a crucial role in persuading Clement Attlee's Labour government to pass the New Towns Act in 1946.[43] The new towns thus developed out of a history with an unsteady relationship to the city: in some ways emerging out of urban history, in other ways rejecting it.[44]

This British story represents a single iteration within a global history.[45] From its origins in Letchworth, the garden city movement spread throughout England, Europe, and the world.[46] First imagined as socialist cooperatives, subsequently adopted by liberals, fascists, and communists, and symbolizing both imperial power and nationalist independence, new towns became embraced as catch-all panaceas.[47] Upon the end of the Second World War, spurred by urban reconstruction and post-

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[42] New Townsmen [Ebenezer Howard, Frederic Osborn, C. B. Purdom, and W. G. Taylor], *New Towns after the War: An Argument for Garden Cities* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1918); Michael Hughes, "Osborn, Sir Frederic James (1885–1978)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31 520, accessed 19 October 2017; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 42.

[43] Dennis Hardy, *1899–1999: The TCPA's First Hundred Years, and the Next . . .* (London: Town and Country Planning Association, 1999), 12; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 41–69; Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 22, 70 – but compare Meryl Aldridge, *The British New Towns: A Programme without a Policy* (London: Routledge, 1979). There are many useful accounts of the garden city movement and the genesis of the 1946 act: in addition to Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 15–26, see Frederic Osborn and Arnold Whittick, *The New Towns: The Answer to Megalopolis* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1969), 82–110; Helen Meller, *Towns, Plans, and Society in Modern Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 67–73; Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 275–317.

[44] Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs*, 5–13.

[45] The essential account is Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia*. See also, chronologically, Constandse *et al.*, *New Towns World-wide*; Alain R. A. Jacquemin, *Urban Development and New Towns in the Third World: Lessons from the New Bombay Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*; Leif Jerram, *Streetlife: The Untold History of Europe's Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 317–384; Kenny Cupers, *The Social Project: Housing Postwar France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014). But for a reminder of the importance of national contexts, see William Whyte, "The 1910 Royal Institute of British Architects' Conference: A Focus for International Town Planning?" *Urban History* 39:1 (2012): 149–165.

[46] Helen Meller and Heleni Porfyriou, eds., *Planting New Towns in Europe in the Interwar Years: Experiments and Dreams for Future Societies* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2016); Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia*, 20–46; Reblando, *New Deal Utopias*.

[47] Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia*, 33, 20, 35–37, 48.

colonial nationalism, the new towns' moment had arrived.[48] Planned cities arose on both sides of the Iron Curtain, including Nowa Huta, Poland; Stalinstadt, East Germany; Vällingby, Sweden; Tapiola, Finland; and Columbia, Maryland.[49] In south Asia, post-colonial states erected modern capitals, such as Islamabad, West Pakistan; Dhaka, East Pakistan; and Chandigarh in India's Punjab.[50] And most spectacularly of all, Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's Brasília promised a new modernity.[51] These flagship examples were joined by hundreds – even thousands – of new towns across Malaya, Israel, Iraq, India, Algeria, Nigeria, and beyond.[52]

While these settlements were generally state-planned, their objectives varied. "New towns," writes the movement's historian, Rosemary Wakeman, "were used to resettle refugees, to militarize and populate frontier territory, to tap unexploited natural resources and develop national infrastructure, to redistribute population, to tackle housing shortages and provide employment opportunities, to offer a better life."[53] In this global economy of planning, in which experts, texts, experiences, and funding routinely crossed borders, Britain played an outsized role. From the movement's origins with Howard, to the Garden City Association's tireless proselytizing, to Patrick Abercrombie's widely imitated *Greater London Plan*, to the international demand for UK planning stars, the British experience featured prominently throughout the movement's early history.[54] That trend continued after the Second World War, as international visitors flocked first to Stevenage, then to Cumbernauld, and eventually to Milton Keynes.[55]

Britain's new towns program developed over four New Towns Acts. The first, the 1946 act, marked the culmination of a series of steps

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[48] Wakeman dates the "golden age of new towns" to 1945–1975 in *Practicing Utopia*, 1.

[49] *Ibid.*, 66–79, 85–99, 248–253.

[50] *Ibid.*, 102, 138–142, 127. For a correction to the common attribution of Chandigarh solely to Corbusier, recovering the roles played by British and Indian architects, see Iain Jackson, "Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew's Early Housing and Neighbourhood Planning in Section-22, Chandigarh," *Planning Perspectives* 28:1 (2013): 1–26.

[51] James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (University of Chicago Press, 1989).

[52] Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia*, 2, 102–150; Osborn and Whittick, *The New Towns*, 425–434.

[53] Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia*, 7.

[54] *Ibid.*, 2, 11, 20, 23, 54–58, 80–82, 107 (on Stevenage as the model for Petaling Jaya, Malaya), 110 ("Israel's new town strategy was lifted almost directly from the planning manuals in Great Britain"), 135. See also Ruth Craggs and Hannah Neate, "Post-colonial Careering and Urban Policy Mobility: Between Britain and Nigeria, 1945–1990," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42:1 (2017): 44–57.

[55] Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia*, 83–84, 86, 221 (on the British case as a negative example, rejected by French planners).

increasing the state's role in population management. The war provided the crucial impetus, because of both the destruction that it wrought and the planning that it validated. "The New Britain Must Be Planned," the architect Maxwell Fry declared in the *Picture Post* of January 1941, demanding "cheerful, healthy conditions, which only proper planning can ensure."[56] A few months earlier, the Barlow Report had called for moving the industrial workforce out of urban centers; in 1943, the government established the Ministry of Town and Country Planning; in 1944, Abercrombie called for new towns to redistribute London's population; and in 1947, the Town and Country Planning Act established a national planning framework.[57] In 1945, as part of these conversations, the new Labour government invited the BBC's retired director-general, John Reith, to chair a committee on new towns.[58]

The New Towns Act of 1946 ensured the new towns' status as public enterprises – inviting the epithet applied to Lewis Silkin's first designation, as minister of town and country planning, at Stevenage that year: "Silkingrad."[59] The program nevertheless proceeded, yielding fourteen designations by 1950: eight around London, and six more across Scotland, Wales, and England's midlands and northeast. Returned to power in 1951, the Conservatives favored private development, establishing only a single new town, Cumbernauld in Scotland, during the 1950s. They worried that new towns would produce new Labour councils, while also sending Labour MPs to Westminster. In 1959, a second New Towns Act somewhat alleviated these concerns, by providing for a new agency, the Commission for New Towns – rather than councils – to administer new towns' assets once their development corporations finished work.

The New Towns Act of 1959 facilitated a second wave of designations, by the Conservative government, in the early 1960s. These "Mark II" new towns, as they were called (borrowing a term from product design, especially common within the military), were less London-centered and more formally experimental, from Runcorn outside Liverpool to Washington near Sunderland.[60] Labour's 1964 victory then ushered in the New Towns Act of 1965, launching a final generation of projects.

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[56] Maxwell Fry, "The New Britain Must Be Planned," *Picture Post*, 4 January 1941, 16–20, at 16.

[57] *Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population* (the Barlow Report), cmd. 6153 (London: HMSO, 1940); Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan 1944* (London: HMSO, 1945); Jules Lubbock, "1947 and All That: Why Has the Act Lasted So Long?" in *Man-made Future: Planning, Education, and Design in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain*, ed. Iain Boyd Whyte (London: Routledge, 2007), 1–15; Meller, *Towns, Plans, and Society in Modern Britain*, 75–76.

[58] Osborn and Whittick, *The New Towns*, 435–442; Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 68–70.

[59] Saint, "The New Towns," 152.   [60] Thanks to John Gold.

These "Mark III" new towns included the substantial sister projects of Central Lancashire New Town, aiming for 400,000 residents, and Milton Keynes, with its target of 250,000. By the 1970s, however, Central Lancashire New Town met cutbacks, while two additional schemes – Llantrisant in Wales and Stonehouse in Scotland – were abandoned owing to a combination of local opposition, spending restrictions, and changing state priorities. A Labour minister, Peter Shore, reoriented urban policy from suburban dispersal to urban redevelopment – a demotion, but not a demolition, of the new town project. It was Thatcher's first secretary of state for the environment, Michael Heseltine, who announced the eventual closure of all remaining development corporations while preparing the New Towns Act of 1981.[61]

In so densely populated a country, without jungles to clear or deserts to settle, Britain's new towns did not generally entail erecting settlements where none had gone before. They involved, rather, employing the expansive powers of development corporations to achieve up to ten distinct (if often overlapping) goals. Most importantly, they promised to (1) *disperse urban populations*, for instance in East Kilbride (from Glasgow), Craigavon (from Belfast), Skelmersdale (from Liverpool), and Telford (from Birmingham), as well as the London ring including Stevenage, Harlow, and Bracknell. But new towns could also (2) *expand existing towns*, as in Hemel Hempstead, Warrington, and Northampton. Elsewhere they served to (3) *rationalize unplanned growth*, as in Hatfield, Basildon, and Cwmbran; or, where growth had recently declined, they offered a means to (4) *regenerate local areas*, from Newton Aycliffe to Peterlee. The government coordinated these efforts to (5) *meet industrial needs*: so Runcorn and Irvine were located near ICI chemical plants, Corby near a Stewart Lloyd steelworks, and Livingston alongside a British Leyland factory.[62] The state thus aimed to (6) *spur regional development*, situating Washington in the northeast and Newtown in eastern Wales; and it also sought to (7) *exploit natural resources*, designating Glenrothes near the coal fields between Edinburgh and Dundee.

New towns functioned as more than simply a means to (8) *build new housing*. But in three of the four Northern Irish designations – Londonderry, Ballymena, and Antrim (excepting only Craigavon) – new town development corporations essentially did just that, by bolstering local housing stocks. Every new town could claim to (9)

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[61] Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 15–51. See also Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs*; Meller, *Towns, Plans, and Society in Modern Britain*.
[62] L. C. B. Seaman, *Post-Victorian Britain, 1902–1951* (London: Methuen, 1966), 458.

improve living conditions, through the housing, green spaces, and amenities depicted in the Ministry of Town and Country Planning's classic information film, *Charley in New Town* (1948).[63] But at their most aspirational, new towns also promised to (10) *create new citizens*. "We may well produce in the new towns a new type of citizen," Silkin declared, "a healthy, self-respecting dignified person with a sense of beauty, culture, and civic pride."[64] This ambition of social uplift indicates the new towns' primary constituency: though national in scope, their planners always hopeful of achieving cross-class social balance, new towns overwhelmingly housed working-class Britons.[65]

New towns promised to achieve these goals by relocating British families. Not only were the projects' planners, architects, and administrators overwhelmingly men, but the entire program operated within a mid-century economy of ideas about race and gender. As was true in many welfare states – and in many aspects of Britain's welfare state – these planners generally imagined their subjects as white, male breadwinners and their families.[66] "Most important of all is the *child*," intoned the cheerful narrator of *Charley in New Town*, "so we'll need pedestrian routes for the pram-pusher."[67] Filling in the cartoon's scheme, women's voices called for churches and shopping centers, until a man interjected to

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[63] Central Office of Information, *Charley in New Town* (1948), www.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-pe ople/4ce2b6a35aafe, accessed 22 August 2017.

[64] David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain, 1945–1951* (New York: Walker and Company, 2008), 161.

[65] The typology is mine, drawing upon Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 31–48. See also Thomas, "Britain's New Towns," 98; Osborn and Whittick, *The New Towns*, 167–405; Clapson, *Suburban Century*, 39–41.

[66] Gender figured most prominently, as Chapter 4 discusses, in discussions of community and how to build it. On gender, families, and the welfare state, see Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1993); Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); Laura Levine Frader, *Breadwinners and Citizens: Gender in the Making of the French Social Model* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Herrick Chapman, *France's Long Reconstruction: In Search of the Modern Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2018). On the far-reaching implications of departing from this model, see Roslyn Dubler, "Sex Discrimination, Equality, and the Redefinition of Government Responsibility in Britain, 1967–2006" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, in progress). On the centrality of gendered assumptions to market liberalism as well, see Ben Jackson, "Free Markets and Feminism: The Neo-Liberal Defence of the Male Breadwinner Model in Britain, *c.* 1980–1997," *Women's History Review*, online publication 18 June 2018, https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2018.1482658, accessed 19 June 2018. On race as a mechanism of exclusion from the rights of postwar citizenship, see Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

[67] Central Office of Information, *Charley in New Town*.

demand "lots of pubs, right next door to me." This remark elicited a woman's protest, leading the narrator to reassure his viewers that Charley's new town – by implicit contrast with some earlier garden cities – would indeed have pubs. Yet those off-screen voices anticipated the ways in which women would shape their new towns after all: less through expert planning than consumer demand.[68]

If Charley's new town would have plenty of pubs, the same could not be said for childcare or part-time work. From the 1950s, as women increasingly entered the workforce, social norms and labor markets changed more rapidly than did planners' imaginations.[69] In the early 1960s, as Chapter 1 discusses, even futuristic visions imagined men at work and women shopping; by decade's end, as Chapter 2 shows, planners still anticipated that post-industrial prosperity would drive women from the workforce. Long before *The Plan for Milton Keynes* (1970) broke with these assumptions, women found increasing scope for work as new towns developed over time, and both men and women generally expressed satisfaction with the homes, communities, and opportunities that new towns afforded.[70] In some cases, however – especially, as seen in Chapter 4, during a development's early years – women still lamented the inadequate provision of childcare and employment.

As these variable findings indicate, new towns continue to divide opinion. One line of dispute concerns their impact. A "massive undertaking," "a bold and creative achievement which all the world comes to see," and even "the greatest conscious programme of city-building ever undertaken by any country in history," by the early twenty-first century new towns housed 1 in 24 Britons, with many more times that figure impacted via family or employment – and many more again if new towns are understood as one of several tools of population management discussed above.[71] And yet, in strictly numerical terms, their significance

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[68] Sarah Mass, "At the Heart of the City: The Battle for British Marketplaces, *c.* 1925–1979" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2018), 135. On the limitations of expert planning, see Greenhalgh, *Reconstructing Modernity*, 121–156.

[69] Dolly Smith Wilson, "A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain," *Twentieth Century British History* 17:2 (2006): 206–229; Anna K. Danziger Halperin, "Education or Welfare? American and British Child Care Policy, 1965–2004" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2018), 2.

[70] MKDC, *The Plan for Milton Keynes*, Vol. II (Milton Keynes: MKDC, 1970), 147–180; Lynn Abrams, Barry Hazley, Valerie Wright, and Ade Kearns, "Aspiration, Agency, and the Production of New Selves in a Scottish New Town, *c.* 1947–*c.* 2016," *Twentieth Century British History*, online publication 30 May 2018, https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwy006, accessed 20 June 2018; Mark Clapson, "Working-Class Women's Experiences of Moving to New Housing Estates in England since 1919," *Twentieth Century British History* 10:3 (1999): 345–365; Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs*.

[71] Alexander, *Britain's New Towns*, 4; Nan Fairbrother, *New Lives, New Landscapes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 165 (quoting Leslie Lane of the Civic Trust);

remains limited. By 2007, after all, 23 of 24 Britons did not live in new towns, rendering them welfare state creations with a fraction of the impact of, say, comprehensive schools or the NHS. The historian David Kynaston recognizes the significance of new towns, devoting substantial attention to them in his blockbuster histories of postwar Britain, but he alights upon a second dispute about them when he punctures claims about their success.[72]

This second line of dispute, over new towns' success or failure, is even more intractable than the first. New towns' fortunes are as various as their locations. Some, such as Warrington (between Manchester and Liverpool), developed into comfortable commuter suburbs; but others, such as Corby, suffered from the declining industries (in Corby's case, steelworks) that they were planned to serve.[73] Generally, however, two competing evaluative arguments must be conceded. First, new towns attract derision, their public relations problems are manifest, and many people prefer not to live in them. "Instead of serving as metaphors for progress and idealism," in Dominic Sandbrook's judgment, "New Towns … instead signalled the onset of decline and dystopia."[74] And yet, thousands upon thousands of new town residents are proud of their homes, enjoy their environments, and appreciate their communities. "[A]s people moved from materially worse, closer-built housing to more private and comfortable housing," writes Mark Clapson, "they developed the neighbours, friendships, associates, and acquaintances to match."[75]

Pointing to this dynamic – acknowledging the new towns' critics, before revealing their residents' satisfactions – is a well-worn maneuver.[76] BBC 4's sympathetic *Milton Keynes and Me* (2017), for example, predictably discovered that "far from being dull and boring," Milton Keynes actually boasts "huge approval ratings from the people

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Grindrod, *Concretopia*, 400. For details of the program's initial scope, including figures on the number of dwellings, factories, offices, shops, and schools completed, see Osborn and Whittick, *The New Towns*, 416–423.

[72] Kynaston, *Austerity Britain*, 159–163, 606–608.

[73] Jerram, *Streetlife*, 376. See also George Legg, "Contradictory Capitalism, Geographical Inertia, and the New City of Craigavon," *The Irish Review* 52 (2016): 1–14.

[74] Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Little, Brown, 2006), 602.

[75] Clapson, *A Social History of Milton Keynes: Middle England/Edge City* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 120. Clapson is discussing suburban development generally, but the claim applies to new towns. See also Abrams *et al.*, "Aspiration, Agency, and the Production of New Selves in a Scottish New Town." For a sensitive discussion of the gap between ambitions and experiences, see Jason Cowley and Gus Palmer, "New Town Blues," *Granta* 143, https://granta.com/new-town-blues/, accessed 14 June 2018. Thanks to Nick Garland.

[76] Ruth Finnegan, *Tales of the City: A Study of Narrative and Urban Life* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

who live there."[77] Rather than rehearsing these arguments yet again, *Thatcher's Progress* places new town planning within the broader sweep of British history. Because, whether they changed postwar Britain, for better or for worse, new towns provide a vantage point from which postwar Britain looks changed.

A Dynamic Social Democracy

A central question in postwar history concerns the relationship between the predominant ideological formations of the second half of the twentieth century, social democracy and market liberalism.[78] Social democracy aimed to reduce collective inequality by removing aspects of social and economic life from the market, while market liberalism aimed to increase individual freedom by removing aspects of social and economic life from the state.[79] These positions competed to define the terms, subjects, and limits of political life, regardless of which party was in power. "We intend to revitalise our Welfare State," promised the Conservatives in 1966, adopting a language they neither set nor favored; "At the core of our convictions," insisted Labour in 1992, "is belief in individual liberty."[80] The contrast can be overdrawn, and exceptions can

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[77] BBC 4, *Milton Keynes and Me* (Platform Productions, 2017), presented by Richard Macer, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b091gy05, accessed 24 August 2017. For an attempt to escape the success/failure dichotomy in architectural history, see Adrian Forty, "Being or Nothingness: Private Experience and Public Architecture in Post-War Britain," *Architectural History* 38 (1995): 25–35. For a review of attempts to sidestep that question in European urban history, see Renzoni, "Spatial Legacies of the Welfare State." For a conceptually related move, bracketing the reality of spirits in order to pursue different questions about spiritualism, see Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Nineteenth Century England* (London: Virago, 1989).

[78] By preferring the term "market liberalism," as more precise, descriptive, and analytical than "neoliberalism," this book follows Avner Offer, "The Market Turn: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism," *Economic History Review* 70:4 (2017): 1051–1071. For discussions of the terminology of "neoliberalism," see Philip Mirowski, "Postface," in *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*, eds. Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 417–455; Andrew Gamble, "Economic Libertarianism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, eds. Michael Freeden and Marc Stears (Oxford University Press, 2013), 405–421; Daniel Rodgers, "The Uses and Abuses of 'Neoliberalism'," *Dissent* (Winter 2018), www.dissentmagazine.org/article/uses-and-abuses-neoliberalism-debate, with replies from Julia Ott, Mike Konczal, N. D. B. Connolly, and Timothy Shenk, accessed 8 October 2018.

[79] Tony Judt, *Ill Fares the Land* (New York: Penguin, 2010); Ben Jackson, "Social Democracy," *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, 348–363; Avner Offer, "British Manual Workers: From Producers to Consumers, *c.* 1950–2000," *Contemporary British History* 22:4 (2008): 537–571.

[80] Conservative Party, *Action Not Words: The New Conservative Programme* (1966), www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/con66.htm, accessed 8 June 2018; Labour Party, *It's*

be found: ideologies are never uncontested, victories are always partial, and continuities persisted on either side of the 1970s.[81] Broadly speaking, however, the late twentieth century saw a shift from a social democratic politics to an age of market liberalism.[82] In explaining this development, commentators generally adopt one of two approaches.

The first approach, emphasizing sequence, depicts a linear succession from social democracy to market liberalism, triggered by the crises of the 1970s. Economic stresses forced structural transformations, undermining actors, policies, and institutions that had developed under conditions no longer operative. In the face of these crises, according to this logic, Britain's economy and polity ground to a halt. The nation, it seemed, had entered a period of "stasis," in response to which the left, intellectually "bankrupt" and overcome by "exhaustion," effectively ran "out of ideas on how to govern."[83] As social democratic answers no longer obtained, the advocates of market liberalism sprang into action, "reforming a stagnant economy, restraining unions, and rejuvenating Britain's status as a world power."[84] The agents of history, in

Time to Get Britain Working Again (1992), www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/lab92.htm, accessed 8 June 2018.

[81] Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 17–18; David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4–5; Aled Davies, "Pension Funds and the Politics of Ownership in Britain, c. 1970–86," *Twentieth Century British History*, online publication 23 April 2018, https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwy005, accessed 15 June 2018; Emily Robinson, Camilla Schofield, Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, and Natalie Thomlinson, "Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the 'Crisis' of the 1970s," *Twentieth Century British History* 28:2 (2017): 268–304.

[82] In addition to Mirowski and Plehwe, *The Road from Mont Pèlerin*, Judt, *Ill Fares the Land*, Self, *All in the Family*, and Offer, "The Market Turn," see Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Right Show," *Marxism Today*, January 1979, 14–20; Richard Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-Tanks and the Economic Counter-Revolution, 1931–1983* (London: HarperCollins, 1994); David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005); Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (Oxford University Press, 2010); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011); Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2012); Jennifer Burns, "Across the Great Divide: Free Markets from Right to Left," *Modern Intellectual History* 11:2 (2014): 253–265.

[83] Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974–1979* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 415–640; David Marquand quoted in Jeremy Nuttall, "Tony Crosland and the Many Falls and Rises of British Social Democracy," *Contemporary British History* 18:4 (2004): 52–79, at 53; Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What Crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (London: Aurum, 2008), 274. For an American analogue, see Craig Shirley, *Reagan Rising: The Decisive Years, 1976–1980* (New York: Broadside Books, 2017), which "depicts [the 1970s] as a time of near-unimaginable lassitude," according to Romesh Ratnesar, "Miracle Worker," *New York Times Book Review*, 2 April 2017.

[84] Robert D. McFadden, "Geoffrey Howe, 88, Dies; Hastened Thatcher's Fall," *New York Times*, 10 October 2015.

this account, passed from left to right: the former bereft of ideas and energy, the latter bounding forward with both in abundance.[85]

The second approach, stressing origins, delves ever deeper into welfare state Britain in pursuit of the roots of market liberalism. More than the development of liberal economic ideas among intellectuals, think-tanks, and the Conservative Party, this work finds that individualism, consumerism, home ownership, investing, and more were all stirring long before their apotheoses in Thatcher's 1980s.[86] While individually compelling, adding necessary texture to postwar histories, collectively these findings make the social democratic settlement appear tenuous from the outset: a precarious achievement that – even in its moment of apparent triumph – was already nurturing the forces that would eventually displace it. British social democracy, from this perspective, appears riddled with fissures and brittle under pressure. Indeed, it even raises a question as to whether Britain boasted much of a social democracy at all.

These two approaches, prioritizing sequence and origins, err when they flatten the history of social democracy – emphasizing its brevity, to adapt James Vernon's terms, at the expense of its life.[87] Historians of other times and places routinely reveal that the societies they study

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[85] For an analysis of this dynamic in US history, see Kim Phillips-Fein, "Conservatism: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 98:3 (2011): 723–743. Kit Kowol notes the tendency to lose sight of conservatism's opponents in "Renaissance on the Right? New Directions in the History of the Post-War Conservative Party," *Twentieth Century British History* 27:2 (2016): 290–304, especially at 299, 302–303.

[86] Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London: Verso, 2005); Peter Shapely, *The Politics of Housing: Power, Consumers, and Urban Culture* (Manchester University Press, 2007); Aled Davies, "'Right to Buy': The Development of a Conservative Housing Policy, 1945–1980," *Contemporary British History* 27:4 (2013): 421–444; Amy Edwards, "'Manufacturing Capitalists': The Wider Share Ownership Council and the Problem of 'Popular Capitalism', 1958–92," *Twentieth Century British History* 27:1 (2016): 100–123 – though Edwards's subject is a form of investing marginalized, rather than realized, under Thatcher. For a dissenting view, rooting its conservative subject in a context that emphatically does not anticipate the 1980s, see James Freeman, "Reconsidering 'Set the People Free': Neoliberalism and Freedom Rhetoric in Churchill's Conservative Party," *Twentieth Century British History*, online publication 18 September 2017, https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwx050.

[87] James Vernon, "The Local, the Imperial, and the Global: Repositioning Twentieth-Century Britain and the Brief Life of Its Social Democracy," *Twentieth Century British History* 21:3 (2010): 404–418. For another critique of the "social democracy/neoliberalism narrative," see Matthew Hilton, Chris Moores, and Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, "*New Times* Revisited: Britain in the 1980s," *Contemporary British History* 31:2 (2017): 145–165, especially 148–149. For an argument against "flattening" the 1980s, see Stephen Brooke, "Living in 'New Times': Historicizing 1980s Britain," *History Compass* 12:1 (2014): 20–32. For an important article that anticipates this book's approach, see Robinson *et al.*, "Telling Stories about Post-War Britain."

were more dynamic and complex than previously believed. It is standard disciplinary practice to argue, for example, that the Stuart regime on the eve of 1688 was innovative and modernizing, or that the Indian subcontinent before British colonization was part of a fluid imperial system.[88] When it comes to 1970s Britain, however, narratives of sequence and origins depict a shallow, supine, and ultimately moribund social democracy.[89] "The party's over," Labour's Anthony Crosland famously remarked in 1975.[90] Crosland was referring to a cut in subsidies to local government, but political lore depicts him as finally acknowledging that government spending had gone too far. In fact, Crosland remained an advocate of public sector spending, even through the following year's negotiations with the International Monetary Fund. In an age of retrenchment, Crosland knew, social democrats needed more – not less – creativity in response.[91]

The narratives of sequence and origins characterize urban history as well. In British urban history, sequence looms large, as historians tracking the rise and fall of urban modernism narrate a shift from the 1960s heyday of professional hubris, concrete towers, and motorway construction towards the 1980s reversion to popular taste, vernacular styles, and historic preservation.[92] In US urban history, origins predominate, the field's defining monograph locating the causes of the urban crisis in the

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[88] Steven C. A. Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (London: Longman, 1989).

[89] Lynsey Hanley, *Estates: An Intimate History* (London: Granta, 2012), 123. Exceptions include Ben Pimlott, *Harold Wilson* (London: HarperCollins, 1992); Nick Tiratsoo, "'You've Never Had It So Bad'? Britain in the 1970s," in *From Blitz to Blair: A New History of Britain since 1939*, ed. Nick Tiratsoo (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), 163–190; Joe Moran, "'Stand Up and Be Counted': Hughie Green, the 1970s, and Popular Memory," *History Workshop Journal* 70:1 (2010): 172–198; Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton, and Thane, eds., *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester University Press, 2013).

[90] Roy Hattersley, "Crosland as a Minister," *Crosland and New Labour*, ed. Dick Leonard (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 57–66, at 63–64. For context (and a slightly different locutionary rendering), Julian Glover, "The Party Is Over – This Phrase Has a History," *Guardian*, 29 September 2008, www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/2008/sep/29/toryconference.conservatives4, accessed 19 June 2018.

[91] Nuttall, "Tony Crosland and the Many Falls and Rises of British Social Democracy."

[92] Brian Harrison, *Seeking a Role: The United Kingdom, 1951–1970* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 146–164; Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 385–389; Sandbrook, *White Heat*, 585–604. The most important work on British urban modernism includes Simon Gunn, "The Rise and Fall of British Urban Modernism: Planning Bradford, circa 1945–1970," *Journal of British Studies* 49:4 (2010): 849–869; Gunn, "Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse of the Motor City Ideal in 1970s Britain," *The Historical Journal* 61:1 (2018): 227–248. A key work that resists a "rise and fall" narrative is John Gold, *The Practice of Modernism: Modern Architects and Urban Transformation, 1954–1972* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

structures of the New Deal itself.[93] The search for sequence and origins remains foundational to historical analysis, and both are amply present in the following chapters. But these analyses introduce fallacies when they obscure the capacity of actors on the losing sides of history – social democrats in political history, urban modernists in urban history – to adapt and respond, rather than meekly submit, to novel challenges. Historians must attend not only to the dominant ideological formation at century's end – its origins and triumph – but also to foreclosed efforts to sustain an alternative settlement.

They must attend, that is, to the evidence of a dynamic social democracy. "Dynamic" in this sense refers not to an ideal political formation, possessed of the answers, but rather to an adaptable one, capable of seeking them. It stakes not a normative claim about political values, but rather a disciplinary claim about historical actors. If the quest for origins prioritizes a nascent market liberalism, this approach remains focused on social democracy's own life. "Far from expiring," David Edgerton notes, "British social democracy and the welfare state were to be at their peak" during the 1970s.[94] And if the narrative of sequence depicts social democracy as static and moribund, this approach calls attention to social democrats' responses to new economic and political challenges. "[S]ocial democrats were not simply ignorant of the changes, or fatalistic in response to the challenges arising from them," Aled Davies writes. "[T]hey instead sought to reformulate and reconstruct their economic strategy in the 1970s in an attempt to advance the social democratic project beyond the post-war settlement."[95] Rather than accepting the fate that history would later assign them, dynamic historical actors – less redundantly, historical actors – develop their ideas and approaches in response to changing times.[96]

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[93] Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton University Press, 1996).

[94] David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth Century History* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), 403.

[95] Aled Davies, *The City of London and Social Democracy: The Political Economy of Finance in Britain, 1959–1979* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 2. The left found more success shaping society and culture than economics and politics: G. Andrews, R. Cockett, A. Hooper, and M. Williams, *New Left, New Right and Beyond: Taking the Sixties Seriously* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); James Curran, *Culture Wars: The Media and the British Left* (Edinburgh University Press, 2005).

[96] See, chronologically, Ben Jackson, "Revisionism Reconsidered: 'Property-Owning Democracy' and Egalitarian Strategy in Post-War Britain," *Twentieth Century British History* 16:4 (2005): 416–440; Brooke, "Living in 'New Times'"; Otto Saumarez Smith, "The Inner City Crisis and the End of Urban Modernism in 1970s Britain," *Twentieth Century British History* 27:4 (2016): 578–598; Robinson *et al.*, "Telling Stories about Post-War Britain"; Alexandre Campsie, "'Socialism Will Never Be the Same Again': Re-imagining Left-Wing Ideas for the 'New Times'," *Contemporary British History* 31:2 (2017): 166–188; Jeremy Nuttall and Hans Schattle, eds., *Making Social*

Sensitivity to these capacities distinguishes histories of more obviously marginalized subjects. "[W]e need to move forward in time with historical subjects," Daniel Magaziner writes of South African artists under apartheid, "to survey the terrain … and watch as creative beings pick and choose from the possible."[97] Or, as Keith Taylor writes in his history of the Vietnamese, "If we imagine the past with the dynamism of possibility with which it was lived, we can glimpse it looking back at us with the eyes of aspiration that each human life and each generation have aimed at the future."[98] By moving "forward in time," "survey[ing] the terrain" of "the possible," and recapturing the "dynamism" and "aspiration" pointing towards futures never realized, this orientation promises a richer history of social democracy's development.[99] But it also reveals that development's unintended consequences, in the accommodation of priorities that helped secure a rival ideology. These abstract claims require grounding in a specific time and place: for instance, in Britain's "last, largest, and … most innovative new town," a state project built precisely during social democracy's decade of trial: Milton Keynes.[100]

The Problem of Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes sits precisely where a planner would place a city, between London and Birmingham, and between Oxford and Cambridge. That location helps to explain how, since 1970, Milton Keynes has routinely

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Democrats: Citizens, Mindsets, Realities: Essays for David Marquand (Manchester University Press, 2018); Otto Saumarez Smith, "The Lost World of the British Leisure Centre Boom," *History Workshop Journal*, forthcoming.

[97] Daniel Magaziner, *The Art of Life in South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2016), 14.

[98] K. W. Taylor, *A History of the Vietnamese* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 7.

[99] The methodological point obtains beyond the case of Britain: see, for example, Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton University Press, 2006); Guian A. McKee, *The Problem of Jobs: Liberalism, Race, and Deindustrialization in Philadelphia* (University of Chicago Press, 2008); Judith Stein, *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

[100] Quoted in Piko, "'You've Never Seen Anything Like It': Multiplexes, Shopping Malls, and Sensory Overwhelm in Milton Keynes, 1979–1986," *The Senses and Society* 12:2 (2017): 147–161, at 148. See also Ward, *New Town, Home Town*, 8, 47; Maev Kennedy, "Milton Keynes Shopping Centre Becomes Grade II Listed," *Guardian*, 16 July 2010, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/jul/16/milton-keynes-shopping-centre-grade-listed, accessed 3 October 2017. Milton Keynes was, strictly speaking, neither the last nor the largest new town upon its designation. But Warrington, Peterborough, and Northampton developed existing towns; Londonderry's designation essentially facilitated housing construction; and Central Lancashire New Town's size was slashed before major construction began. As the last "greenfields" development to reach fruition, then, Milton Keynes indeed represents the United Kingdom's "last and largest" new town.

figured as England's fastest growing city.[101] The city takes its name not from an inartful pairing of the poet and the economist (though that might explain why it caught a minister's eye), but rather from one of the picturesque villages that the new town unceremoniously absorbed. Perhaps that founding act of appropriation contributed to Milton Keynes's chronic image problems.

Milton Keynes has long attracted a paradoxical combination of admiration and contempt. Among planners and scholars, it figures as "one of the most written-about, visually devoured, and celebrated places in the broad landscape of twentieth-century urban planning," and is lauded as "the most comprehensive and thorough attempt to reimagine the English city of the late twentieth century."[102] Within British culture, however, Milton Keynes famously connotes "soullessness and sterility," and even the most ingenious advertising campaign could not hope to erase its status as "a byword for bland uniformity."[103] "Note for Americans and other aliens," explain Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett in their 1990 novel, *Good Omens*, "Milton Keynes … was built to be modern, efficient, healthy, and, all in all, a pleasant place to live. Many Britons find this amusing."[104] The fact that the jokes write themselves – "I never got as far as Milton Keynes," admits *Yes Minister*'s unimpressive banker, Sir Desmond, confusing Milton with Maynard – does not deter the wits.[105] But perhaps the "joke," as the cultural historian Robert Darnton suggested, is precisely where analysis should begin.[106]

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[101] Clapson, *A Social History of Milton Keynes*, 1. Only Aberdeen, in the midst of its oil boom, created more jobs between 1971 and 1981: Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber, 2009), 427. Though referred to as Britain's first "new city" from its inception, to differentiate the project's scale from earlier new towns, technically Milton Keynes was founded as – and, as of 2018, remains – a town. In acknowledgment of its comparatively ambitious scope, as well as simply varying the text's language, this book alternates between the labels "town" and "city."

[102] Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia*, 212; Richard J. Williams, *The Anxious City: English Urbanism in the Late Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 55.

[103] John Ayto and Ian Crofton, *Brewer's Britain and Ireland* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005), 762.

[104] Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman, *Good Omens* (1990; New York: William Morrow, 2006), 39.

[105] BBC Worldwide, "You're a Banker," *YouTube*, posted 15 August 2011, accessed 11 October 2017, https://youtu.be/KgUemV4brDU. An exception is Steve Coogan's creation, Alan Partridge, who hails from Norwich rather than Milton Keynes – as initially intended – because the joke was already a cliché: "Partridge Originally Planned as MK Man," *mknews*, 11 December 2002, cited in Clapson, *A Social History of Milton Keynes*, 167.

[106] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre, and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage, 1985), 75–104. For a more sustained interrogation of this metaphor, which I learned of upon completing this book, see Lauren Piko, "Mirroring England? Milton Keynes, Decline, and the English Landscape" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Melbourne, 2017).

In attempting to turn an object of scorn into an object of study, historians have pursued a range of strategies.[107] Terence Bendixson produced the new town's first general history. Working with John Platt, an alumnus of Milton Keynes Development Corporation, Bendixson enjoyed privileged access to sources still sealed at the time, and described his semi-official account as the view from over the development corporation's shoulder.[108] Mark Clapson has since emerged as Milton Keynes's most important champion, placing residents' experiences at the heart of his sympathetic social histories.[109] And, most recently, Lauren Piko sets out less to refute the city's press than to historicize it, showing how Milton Keynes's inglorious reputation resulted from forces far beyond its planners' control.[110]

This book adopts another approach, treating the creation of Milton Keynes as a lens through which to examine larger issues in British and urban history. Its perspective is not evaluative, but rather historical: no more invested in persuading readers to want to live in Milton Keynes than a history of the French Revolution would seek to persuade them to want to join the Committee of Public Safety. Neither a history from below, placing residents at its center, nor from above, privileging decisions made in London, this book focuses on the ideas that made Milton Keynes during a pivotal period in postwar British history. In so doing, it offers an urban history not about London, a political history not about Parliament, an intellectual history not about Oxbridge, and a transnational history not about empire. It offers, instead, a chance to look afresh at a seemingly familiar time and place.

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[107] Clapson contextualizes the city's planning in his introduction to MKDC, *The Plan for Milton Keynes* (1970; London: Routledge, 2013); an oral history of the making of the city center is Hill, *The Story of the Original CMK*; another valuable set of recollections is Mark Clapson, Mervyn Dobbin, and Peter Waterman, eds., *The Best Laid Plans: Milton Keynes since 1967* (University of Luton Press, 1998); for the controversial chief architect's point of view, see Derek Walker, *The Architecture and Planning of Milton Keynes* (London: The Architectural Press, 1982); an important work in progress, by a veteran of Milton Keynes Development Corporation, is Lee Shostak, *Milton Keynes: Building a Dream* (working title). Substantial discussions also include Saint, "The New Towns"; Lionel Esher, *A Broken Wave: The Rebuilding of England, 1940–1980* (London: Allen Lane, 1981), 246–271; Williams, *The Anxious City*, 54–81; Sandbrook, *White Heat*, 179–182; Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out*, 423–433; Owen Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* (London: Verso, 2010), 47–62; Wakeman, *Practicing Utopia*, 212–218; Roland Jeffery, "The Centrality of Milton Keynes," in *The Seventies: Rediscovering a Lost Decade of British Architecture*, eds. Elain Harwood and Alan Powers (London: Twentieth Century Society, 2012), 106–109.
[108] Bendixson and Platt, *Milton Keynes*.
[109] Clapson, *Suburban Century*; Clapson, *A Social History of Milton Keynes*.
[110] Lauren Piko, *Milton Keynes in British Culture: Imagining England* (London: Routledge, 2019).

To that end, Milton Keynes is less "representative" of other places than emblematic of broader changes. This was no British Middletown, that purportedly typical community of American sociology.[111] London maintained a larger private rental market, Glasgow housed more public sector tenants, Sheffield built more iconic modern housing, Birmingham included greater racial diversity, Liverpool suffered more from deindustrialization – and so on, in a bottomless profusion of particularities. The developments examined in these chapters, from planning to community to housing, will indeed look different in different places, and in that sense this book contributes to the larger composite project of urban historiography.[112] At some point, however, itemizing such particularities inhibits the capacity of local studies to offer general insights. Both cultural history and urban history offer well-established methods of reading parts for wholes, of mining the particular for broader insights.[113] Framed within these traditions, Milton Keynes is revealing not because it stands in for other places, but because of how it differs from them.

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[111] Robert Staughton Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929); Sarah Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 68–102; Mike Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 137–164.

[112] Joining, among others, Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Shapely, *The Politics of Housing*; Daisy Payling, "'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire': Grassroots Activism and Left-Wing Solidarity in 1980s Sheffield," *Twentieth Century British History* 25:4 (2014): 602–627; Nicholas Garland, "The Labour Party, Localism, and the Idea of Community, 1968–1994" (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, in progress).

[113] See, in addition to Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (1961; New York: Vintage, 1981); Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London: Odhams Press, 1963); Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect: A History of Intellectual Life in New York City, from 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Time* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); Patrick Wright, *The Village that Died for England: The Strange Story of Tyneham* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995); Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton University Press, 2003); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton University Press, 2005); David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Despina Stratigakos, *A Women's Berlin: Building the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Nancy Reynolds, *A City Consumed: Urban Commerce, the Cairo Fire, and the Politics of Decolonization in Egypt* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012); N. D. B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (University of Chicago Press, 2014); Andrew Needham, *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest* (Princeton University Press, 2014). On the work needing to be done on European cities, by contrast with the US field, see Moritz Föllmer and Mark B. Smith, "Urban Societies in Europe since 1945: Toward a Historical Interpretation," *Contemporary European History* 24:4 (2015): 475–491. For discussion of "the problem of representativeness" in cultural history, see Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), 178–198, quotation at 184.

As a public sector infrastructure project, the creation of which fell evenly on either side of 1979, Milton Keynes offers insights into both social democracy and market liberalism. As one veteran of Milton Keynes Development Corporation recognized, "The contrast between the originating energy of the seventies and the cynical laissez-faire of the eighties can be seen more clearly in the built environment of Central Milton Keynes than anywhere else in England."[114] In accounting for that transition, the impact of 1979 can be overstated. Thatcher's election marked but a single moment in a longer history, one that included industrial militancy and the oil crisis at one end, and the Falklands War and miners' strike at the other. And yet for a public sector enterprise, 1979 was undoubtedly significant. In other towns and cities, that election's consequences were mediated through local political cultures, economic situations, and social configurations. In a new town, however, the change of government registered directly. Milton Keynes was funded not by local rates, but rather from the Treasury; its authorities answered not to local voters, but rather to a minister; and – by a new town's very nature – it lacked the accreted civic culture that might elsewhere have forestalled political change. For these reasons, Milton Keynes illustrated what Thatcher's governments wanted to achieve elsewhere.[115] The city's scale, timing, and political exposure – in short, not its typicality, but its singularity – render it an ideal site through which to examine contrary ideological priorities on either side of 1979.

Begrudging Market Liberalism

But if social democracy was so dynamic, how was it displaced? In order to answer this question, given the subject's recent vintage, historians might look to more mature historiographies. During the past generation, Alon Confino shows, scholars of both the French Revolution and the Holocaust have developed structurally related approaches to explaining these otherwise very different phenomena. Moving beyond purely social, political, or intellectual accounts, this broadly shared paradigm points to the radicalization of ideas under circumstances that were contingent.[116] Combined with William Sewell's account of the relationship between structures, events, and historical change, this approach offers

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[114] Stuart Mosscrop, "Making Sense of the Centre," *Architectural Design Profile No. 111: New Towns*, ed. Derek Walker (London: Architectural Design, 1994), 45.

[115] Wyn Grant, "The Erosion of Intermediary Institutions," *Political Quarterly* 60:1 (1989): 10–21, with thanks to Nick Garland.

[116] Alon Confino, *Foundational Pasts: The Holocaust as Historical Understanding* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 37–48.

a generalizable way of understanding the ascendance of market liberalism.[117] Beginning in 1973, triggered by the Arab–Israeli War in October, the combined effects of oil crisis, recession, and inflation enabled previously marginal ideas to gain traction. Antecedents were not causes, whether republicanism, antisemitism, or market-oriented individualism. Rather, the crises of 1789, 1941, and 1973 each created spaces into which existing ideas rushed. Seeking to make sense of volatile situations, actors assembled novel configurations of available ideas, eventually arriving at new frameworks for understanding, managing, and shaping the world around them.[118]

Milton Keynes was founded in 1967 as a social democratic project. Befitting a political enterprise deep in Tory Buckinghamshire, the board included the Conservative local politician (and, from 1977 to 1981, leader of the Greater London Council) Horace Cutler, and from 1983 its chairman was the "radical Tory," Henry Chilver.[119] Generally, however, while neither politicians nor ideologues, the city's founders were social democratic in their identities and outlooks. The chairman, Jock Campbell, stood out in his family's sugar business as a self-proclaimed socialist. He and the master planner, Richard Llewelyn-Davies, sat on Labour's benches in the House of Lords, while the chief architect, Derek Walker, boasted of the left-wing credentials of his team. Beneath the development corporation's upper echelons, the staff's sensibilities were on the left – as in the fleets of community workers who, when not welcoming new residents, spent lunch hours discussing books by Ebenezer Howard and Lee Rainwater.[120] But even more fundamentally than their explicit political identities, Milton Keynes Development Corporation – like the new towns program writ large – proceeded under the auspices, and advanced the priorities, of the welfare state. Enabled by the 1946 act, established by a Labour government, dependent upon the

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[117] William H. Sewell, Jr., *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), 197–224; Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (University of Chicago Press, 1985).

[118] For another example, one that similarly emphasizes the reordering of existing ideas upon a dramatic precipitating event, see Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[119] Bendixson and Platt, *Milton Keynes*, 275, 213; John Davis, "Cutler, Sir Horace Walter (1912–1997)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65252, accessed 19 October 2017.

[120] One veteran of the corporation explained divisions within the corporation not as pitting socialists against their critics, but rather as fights between competing versions of socialism: interview with Bill Berrett, on the CD-ROM created by Anthony Burton and Joyce Hartly, eds., *The New Towns Record, 1946–2002* (London: IDOX Information Services, n.d.).

Treasury, and charged with building housing and community, the new city developed within – and testifies to – a broadly social democratic political culture.[121]

Yet however deeply social democracy was lived, market liberalism did displace it.[122] Consider, for example, the politics of housing. In 1977, public rentals comprised nearly three out of four homes in Milton Keynes, but within fourteen years that figure had plummeted to just one in four.[123] How did a public sector agency, social democratic in orientation, oversee such a shift? Market liberalism's historians tend to focus on the innovations of the political right. Certainly, key policy changes – such as those favoring owner-occupation – resulted from the efforts of think-tanks, university departments, international organizations, and the parties of the right.[124] But the field was never theirs alone, and apostles of market liberalism were not the only actors navigating the 1970s. Market liberalism's triumph truly became secured not when its partisans forced any single policy through, but when even its opponents came to accommodate the market's priorities. In this way, market liberalism could change the ideological landscape without necessarily changing minds.

Thatcher's Progress emphasizes first the profusion, and then the narrowing, of responses to the ruptures initiated in 1973. Rather than presuming the exhaustion of social democracy (the fallacy of sequence), or chronicling the long rise of market liberalism (the fallacy of origins), it integrates both dynamism and contingency into a non-deterministic account of ideological change. From 1976, facing hostile policy changes and crippling funding cuts, Milton Keynes

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[121] For a related argument, neatly encapsulated by the term "Butskellite city centres" (233), see Saumarez Smith, "Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment in Britain, 1959–1966." See also Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain since 1945*: "Social democracy, at least until the mid-1970s, had history on its side" (23).

[122] On the persistence of the welfare state and social democracy, see Brooke, "Living in 'New Times'"; Jim Tomlinson, "Tale of a Death Exaggerated: How Keynesian Policies Survived the 1970s," *Contemporary British History* 21:4 (2007): 429–448; Jackson and Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain*, 1–21, especially 15; Alistair Fair, "'Modernisation of Our Hospital System': The National Health Service, the Hospital Plan, and the 'Harness' Programme, 1962–77," *Twentieth Century British History*, online publication 23 June 2018, https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwy008, accessed 1 August 2018.

[123] "Milton Keynes – Encouragement for Private Developers," *Building Trades Journal*, 11 February 1977, CBS, MKDC, Lib 28–30, Ref 30/10.

[124] Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable*; Jeffrey M. Chwieroth, *Capital Ideas: The IMF and the Rise of Financial Liberalization* (Princeton University Press, 2010); Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe*; Ben Jackson, "At the Origins of Neo-liberalism: The Free Economy and the Strong State, 1930–1947," *The Historical Journal* 53:1 (2010): 129–151; Jackson, "The Think-Tank Archipelago: Thatcherism and Neo-liberalism," in *Making Thatcher's Britain*, 43–61; Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Depression* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).

Development Corporation began to reorient itself. Determined to complete its mission of building the new city, while uncertainly navigating a shifting ideological environment, MKDC developed novel mechanisms for generating revenue and selling houses. This effort succeeded, in that by 1979 the corporation could make the case for its continuation to even a hostile Conservative government. But the terms enabling that achievement accommodated priorities contravening several of the organization's founding goals – for example, as examined in Chapter 6, the pursuit of social balance through the management of housing. Facing a fluid – and, from 1979, narrowing – ideological context, this social democratic project ultimately came to serve as an agent of market liberalism.

Departures

Thatcher's Progress develops a series of arguments about the welfare state, social democracy, and market liberalism. First, as the spatial dimension of the welfare state, the new towns program attested to the ambition and the depth of the social democratic project. Second, rather than an exhausted and discredited force, social democracy proved dynamic in response to the economic, social, and political challenges of the 1970s. And third, in light of this vitality, market liberalism succeeded when indifferent – even hostile – actors internalized its priorities. A fourth argument emerges along the way, as British planners continually located themselves within transnational networks. In the post-colonial world, becoming less imperial did not mean becoming less international – rather, Britain continued to be internationally oriented, if in different ways. The conclusion considers the implications of these arguments for our understandings of Thatcherism and New Labour. It distinguishes market liberalism from Thatcherism, reading the latter as a political narrowing of the possibilities that emerged in response to the 1970s. New Labour helped to erase those alternatives from memory, in favor of a reading of postwar history as dominated by the equally discredited extremes of statism and the market.[125] The book closes by identifying a more expansive history of British social democracy.

These arguments emerge over the course of Thatcher's tour. The first two chapters, "Horizons" and "Planning," follow the trajectory of urban planning from the 1940s to the 1960s. Inherited experiences,

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[125] Mark Bevir, *New Labour: A Critique* (London: Routledge, 2005), especially 128–156. On the ruthlessness of such claims to moderation, see Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion, and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

transnational influences, and new expectations for affluence, leisure, and mobility all transformed the urban horizon, not undermining but developing a social democratic worldview. The following two chapters, "Architecture" and "Community," reveal the rejuvenation, rather than the exhaustion, of modernist architecture and community development during the 1970s. But these renewed practices met opposition, as rivals challenged not only these particular initiatives, but also the broader ideologies they served. The final two chapters, "Consulting" and "Housing," show public sector actors, determined to secure their survival in a shifting political context, laying claim to seemingly conservative shibboleths. They developed social democratic approaches to entrepreneurialism and home ownership, attaching those commitments to initiatives retaining roles for the public sector – only for the Conservatives eventually to terminate both. Through each of these episodes, the builders of Milton Keynes were seeking to translate social democratic commitments into built forms. As the 1970s turned into the 1980s, however, economic constraints, intellectual tensions, and political changes undermined their ability to do so. They were forced, in response, to accommodate alternative priorities. These adjustments secured their immediate survival, but at the cost of their originating vision.

Ultimately, *Thatcher's Progress* tracks the process by which a social democratic political culture became displaced by market liberalism. The analysis focuses upon a specific time and place – indeed, reading these chapters will take about as long as did Thatcher's drive through the city. But in a historiographical moment dominated by imperial, transnational, global, and other "big" histories, a contextualized account can redress the problem of what Catherine Hall and others see as "'global' histories that operate at such high levels of abstraction as to risk losing their moorings in the evidence."[126] And while the framing is precise, the issues are substantial.[127] They include the postwar state's redistribution of populations across its national territory (Introduction); the promise of spectacular urban futures to manage unsettling urban presents (Chapter 1); the remaking of global networks in a world after empire (Chapter 2); the translation of political convictions into aesthetic styles, and the consequent vulnerability of both (Chapter 3); the contest

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[126] Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, Keith McClelland, Katie Donington, and Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2. See also Allan Megill, "'Big History' Old and New: Presuppositions, Limits, Alternatives," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 9:2 (2015): 306–326. For a defense of global history, see Richard Drayton and David Motadel, "Discussion: The Futures of Global History," *Journal of Global History* 13:1 (2018): 1–21.

[127] Maza, *Thinking about History*, 178–185.

between rival approaches to building community (Chapter 4); the development of an entrepreneurial and property-owning social democracy (Chapters 5 and 6); and, ultimately, the dynamism of social democracy, the triumph of market liberalism, and the meaning of Thatcherism and New Labour in light of both. Today this past speaks to us through the ruins it left behind, its lingering built forms testifying to alternative ways of thinking – even if those ruins are more recent than ancient, and more banal than magnificent.[128] *Thatcher's Progress* views them once again from the perspective of their makers, as they might have looked on a crisp autumn morning in September 1979.

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[128] The metaphor comes from Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*.