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Decline and the City: the Urban Crisis in Liverpool, c. 1968-1986

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Abstract

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This thesis uses Liverpool to study the British urban crisis from 1968 to 1986, showing how the city became the locus of concern, in particular within central government policy-making, surrounding the processes of urban decline. The British urban crisis is understood, firstly through anxiety surrounding the social effects of urban decline with particular respect to residents of the 'inner city'. The experience of urban decline was shown through central government-sponsored social surveys, as well as through cultural representations. This thesis shows how the processes of urban decline – population decline, de-industrialisation and economic decline, urban decay and dereliction, and urban deprivation – were all linked and mutually reinforcing. Secondly, the urban crisis arose through the inability of central and local government, and voluntary organisations, to ameliorate or reverse the effects of these changes. The British urban crisis was therefore as much a crisis of government policy as it was one of lived experience. As this thesis demonstrates, the urban crisis was the result of long-term processes of urban decline. But there were particular moments during which Liverpool's crisis called into question the governability of urban Britain; these included the 'riots' in Toxteth in July 1981, and the dispute between Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government and the city council, dominated by supporters of the Trotskyist group Militant Tendency between 1983 and 1986. This thesis therefore contributes to the historiographies of decline and declinism, social and economic change, and politics in late twentieth-century Britain.

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List of Abbreviations

CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CDC	Community Development Committee of Liverpool City Council
CDP	Community Development Project
CIUD	Census Indicators of Urban Deprivation
DYW	Detached Youth Work
EIA	Environmental Improvement Area
GIA	General Improvement Area
IADS	Inner Area District Statement
IAS	Inner Area Study
LCRC	Liverpool Community Relations Council
LCVS	Liverpool Council for Voluntary Service
LDLP	Liverpool District Labour Party
LGBCE	Local Government Boundary Commission for England
LICP	Liverpool Inner City Partnership
LPSS	Liverpool Personal Service Society
LRO	Liverpool Record Office, Central Library, Liverpool
LYOC	Liverpool Youth Organisations Committee
MCRC	Merseyside Community Relations Council
MCVS	Merseyside Council for Voluntary Service
MDC	Merseyside Development Corporation
MDHB	Mersey Docks and Harbour Board
MDHC	Mersey Docks and Harbour Company
MRC	Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, Coventry
MTF	Merseyside Task Force
MYA	Merseyside Youth Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NWEPC	North West Economic Planning Council
PRAG	Planning Research Applications Group of the Centre for Environmental Studies

RSG	Rate Support Grant
SNAP	Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project
TNA	The National Archives, London
UDC	Urban Development Corporation
URS	Urban Regeneration Strategy
VNC	Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council

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Introduction

In the 1985 romantic comedy *Letter to Brezhnev*, Elaine, a young woman from Kirkby, Merseyside, leaves her hometown to start a new life in the Soviet Union.¹ Elaine's life, marred by unemployment and ennui, changed dramatically after a night out with her friend Teresa. Though Teresa was 'one of the lucky ones', having a job in a chicken factory, money remained tight. On their night out, the two pay for their drinks by pickpocketing, and in an ensuing chase even stealing the car of, a pair of middle-aged Cypriot men. Moving on to the State Ballroom nightclub, Elaine and Teresa meet Peter and Sergei, Soviet sailors on shore leave during a public relations tour of the United Kingdom. After a chaste but impassioned night, Elaine takes Peter on a tour of Liverpool before he leaves the city forever. Distraught, Elaine writes to Leonid Brezhnev, leader of the Soviet Union, in a bid to re-connect with Peter. Luckily, Brezhnev, described as 'one of the most important people in the world', replies, sending a letter dictated to his secretary 'Miss Jones' and a plane ticket.² Elaine's decision to board a plane to the Soviet Union and find Peter, though deeply imbued with the politics of the Cold War, was emblematic of a 'structure of feeling' which saw Liverpool as a city of 'decline' and 'crisis'.³ Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, a series of television programmes and plays had depicted everyday life in Liverpool with a mix of gritty realism (*Boys from the Blackstuff*) and humour (*The Liver Birds*).⁴ The Cold War romance in *Letter to Brezhnev* took place against a backdrop of high unemployment and a fear of being 'left behind', resonating through an established cultural and political discourse surrounding the city.⁵ For Elaine, the only opportunity to improve her life came through emigration. As this thesis shows, the structure of feeling attached to the city was underwritten by the accumulation of social scientific knowledge, following on from the 'rediscovery of poverty' in the 1960s. The urban crisis in Liverpool, therefore, was much more than a political or

¹ *Letter to Brezhnev* [film], dir. by Chris Bernard (Palace Pictures and Film Four International, 1985).

² Ibid.

³ Tony Shaw, 'From Liverpool to Russia, with love: a *Letter to Brezhnev* and cold war cinematic dissent in 1980s Britain', *Contemporary British History* 19 (2005), pp. 243-62. On 'structures of feeling', see Raymond Williams, *The long revolution* (London, 1961).

⁴ Examples include: *The Liver Birds* [television programme] BBC, April 1969 – January 1979; *Our Day Out* [television programme] BBC, 28 December 1977; *The Blackstuff* [television programme] BBC, 2 January 1980; *Boys from the Blackstuff* [television programme] BBC, 10 October - 7 November 1982; *One Summer* [television programme] Channel 4, 7 August - 4 September 1983; and *Bread* [television programme] BBC, 1 May 1986 - 3 November 1991.

⁵ This fear was explored through discussions between Elaine and Teresa, especially as the former prepares to leave Liverpool.

cultural construct, playing out in high political discourses as much as it did in the everyday experiences of urban residents.⁶

Historiographical debates

The historiography of Britain in the decades after 1945 is composed of a range of sub-fields, with recent interventions seeing historians searching for a new 'metanarrative' to draw together a gamut of social, cultural, economic, and political trends. This has largely been a response to the perceived need to supplant histories of national decline. Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton have argued persuasively in favour of 'affluence' as the central theme of historical change in the second half of the twentieth century.⁷ Jim Tomlinson has proposed 'de-industrialisation', while Emily Robinson, Camilla Schofield, Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, and Natalie Thomlinson have jointly posited 'popular individualism' as the predominant story of the 1970s, and by extension the preceding and succeeding decades.⁸

This thesis does not seek to re-impose decline as a metanarrative for twentieth century Britain. Nevertheless, in pointing towards the evidence of urban decline and the resultant crisis in Britain, this thesis will contribute to three important historiographical debates. Firstly, it contributes to long-standing discussion on decline and declinism, arguing that decline existed within particular urban spaces. Secondly, this thesis contributes to the emerging historiography of late twentieth century Britain more broadly, especially the growing body of work on social, economic, and political change in the 1970s and 1980s. This is a somewhat fragmented historiography, with numerous sub-fields. By focusing on particular urban areas, this thesis brings together these diverse historiographical themes, showing how processes of social, economic, political, and environmental change were fundamentally linked. Thirdly, it contributes to an urban historiography which has argued that the decades after 1945 witnessed the rise and fall of what has been termed 'urban modernism' which culminated in an urban crisis.⁹ This thesis shows that the crisis was both a political construct, evident in the discourses of contemporary actors, and an actually-existing phenomenon. Evidenced through social science, the urban crisis was underscored by rising unemployment, falling population, multiple deprivation, and a decaying physical

⁶ In this assessment, this thesis is influenced by US historiography, including Thomas Sugrue, *The origins of the urban crisis: race and inequality in postwar Detroit* (Woodstock, revised ed., 2005).

⁷ Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton (eds), *An affluent society? Britain's post-war "golden age" revisited* (Aldershot, 2004).

⁸ Jim Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization not decline: a new meta-narrative for post-war British history', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 76-99; 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 (2017), pp. 268-304.

⁹ Simon Gunn, 'The rise and fall of urban modernism: planning Bradford, circa 1945-1970', *Journal of British Studies* 49 (2010), pp. 849-69.

environment. What is more, the existence of this crisis challenged established political and social paradigms, necessitating new forms of governance.

Decline and declinism

'Decline' has long permeated the economic historiography of modern Britain. Given both the prevalence and prominence of a terminology of decline within this thesis, it is prudent to situate it properly within this vast literature. As Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock have noted, historiographical interest in decline was driven by the concerns of contemporaries from the 1870s that the British economy was falling behind those of its emerging rivals, especially Germany and the United States.¹⁰ After the Second World War, the fear of falling behind was increasingly influenced by perceptions of the growth rates of other European nations.¹¹ This relative measure of decline evolved, from the end of the Second World War, to include concerns over the standard of living.¹² As Jim Tomlinson has shown, however, these episodic narratives of decline did not reflect the reality of national economic performance measured as the percentage growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).¹³ This kind of historiographical correction has been characteristic of debates on decline.¹⁴ The persistence of a 'politics of decline', or 'declinism', reflected its continued utility in criticising the policies of the government of the day.¹⁵ Declinism has also resonated beyond debates on economic policy, including fears surrounding the loss of empire, and the consequent waning of British international influence.¹⁶

¹⁰ Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock (eds), *Understanding decline: perceptions and realities of British economic performance* (Cambridge, 1997), p. xiii.

¹¹ Glen O'Hara, "'This is what growth does': British views of the European economies in the prosperous 'golden age' of 1951-73", *Journal of Contemporary History* 44 (2009), pp. 697-718; and Glen O'Hara, *Governing post-war Britain: the paradoxes of progress, 1951-1973* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 11-27.

¹² Jim Tomlinson, "Inventing 'decline': the falling behind of the British economy in the postwar years", *Economic History Review* XLIX (1996), pp. 731-57.

¹³ Jim Tomlinson, "Thrice denied: 'declinism' as a recurrent theme in British history in the long twentieth century", *Twentieth Century British History* 20 (2009), pp. 227-51.

¹⁴ An example of this can be seen in the chapters by James Alt and Jim Tomlinson in Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton and Pat Thane (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 25-40; 41-60, though the oppositional and revisionist nature of these chapters was a result of editorial decisions.

¹⁵ Jim Tomlinson, *The politics of decline* (Harlow, 2001).

¹⁶ For example, see Charles Feinstein, 'The end of empire and the golden age', in Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock (eds), *Understanding decline: perceptions and realities of British economic performance* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 212-33; and Tony Hopkins, 'Macmillan's audit of empire, 1957', in Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock (eds), *Understanding decline: perceptions and realities of British economic performance* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 234-60. Similar theses have been addressed in Marie-Therese Fay and Elizabeth Meehan, 'British decline and European integration', in Richard English and Michael Kenny (eds), *Rethinking British decline* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 210-30; Henk Overbeek, 'Globalisation and Britain's decline', in Richard English and Michael Kenny (eds), *Rethinking British decline* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 231-56; and Ritchie Ovendale, 'The end of empire', in Richard English and Michael Kenny (eds), *Rethinking British decline* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 257-78.

A particular cultural politics of decline arose in 1960s Britain with a series of publications including C. P. Snow's totemic *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* in 1959, and Arthur Koestler's edited volume, *Suicide of a Nation*, in 1963.¹⁷ Such publications, Guy Ortolano has claimed, formed part of a political 'weapon' of decline in this period.¹⁸ The 'two cultures controversy' of that decade, arising from the polemics of C. P. Snow and F. R. Leavis on the relationship between the arts and sciences, was heavily inflected by contemporary concerns about the fate of Britain and its economy.¹⁹ Such polemics were highly influential in the emerging historiography of modern Britain. In critiquing technological and economic developments made by the British state from 1945, David Edgerton has criticised the protagonists of the 'two cultures controversy' as anti-historians whose influence had arisen from the 'gross distortion of the historical record'.²⁰ From this, we can see how contemporary and historical narratives of modern Britain have been influenced by ideas of decline. This was particularly the case in the 1980s with the endorsement of a peculiarly 'Thatcherite view' of post-war British history. This view, however, was much more prevalent among political commentators than historians.²¹ But this decline has remained firmly rooted in the nation-state as an economic and political unit.²²

In his 1993 Presidential address to the Economic History Society, Barry Supple questioned seemingly pervasive narratives of national economic decline, arguing that the origins of 'the glum sense of moral and civil decay, of social dislocation and *anomie*, of deterioration in traditional institutions' lay in British economic performance.²³ While remaining sceptical of economic determinism, it is here that we can open up the definition of decline through focusing on microeconomic spaces. In fact, more recent historiographical interest in 'de-industrialisation' has provided new impetus for 'decline' as a heuristic

¹⁷ C. P. Snow, *The two cultures and the scientific revolution: the Rede lecture* (Cambridge, 1959); and Arthur Koestler (ed.), *Suicide of a nation: enquiry into the state of Britain today* (London, 1963; re-printed 1993).

¹⁸ Guy Ortolano, "'Decline" as a weapon in cultural politics', in William Roger Louis (ed.), *Penultimate adventures with Britannia: personalities, politics and culture in Britain* (London, 2007), pp. 201-14.

¹⁹ Guy Ortolano, *The two cultures controversy: science, literature and cultural politics in postwar Britain* (Cambridge, 2009).

²⁰ David Edgerton, *Warfare state: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 191-229.

²¹ Tomlinson, 'Thrice denied', pp. 235-6.

²² See Jay Winter, 'The myth of decline: an urban perspective', in Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock (eds), *Understanding decline: perceptions and realities of British economic performance* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 103-22 for an account of 'urban decline' in London during the interwar period. Winter's argument follows much the same line as the national histories that the 'convergence of experience' did not constitute decline.

²³ Barry Supple, 'Fear of failing: economic history and the decline of Britain', in Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock (eds), *Understanding decline: perceptions and realities of British economic performance* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 9; this lecture was originally published in *Economic History Review* 47 (1994), pp. 441-58.

framework. Thus, in adopting the late twentieth-century city as a unit of analysis, a different story emerges. While outside the vein of the established historiography on decline, Natasha Vall has demonstrated how industrial decline led to the emergence of a 'post-industrial society' in both Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Swedish city of Malmö.²⁴ Adopting a comparative approach, Vall has shown how local and national political cultures have inflected the experiences of industrial decline within these cities. Following on from Vall's work, this thesis points to the 'streetlife' of decline in Britain, arguing that the category of space should not be overlooked in national histories.²⁵ In this, it shows that, while we cannot speak of a national story of decline, 'spaces of decline' existed across urban Britain. Moreover, this decline was not simply an economic or industrial phenomenon, but was also evidenced in social and physical change. Though this was a long-term process, with decline setting in at different times in different places, it reached its highpoint in the 'long 1970s' when there was an increasing sense of crisis pervading the cities of the British north.²⁶

In identifying spaces of decline, we must then discern what the process entailed. Urban decline in Britain resulted from of a number of interacting processes of social, economic, and environmental change. This definition therefore builds on the economic base established throughout the historiography on decline, while adding a number of factors specific to the urban focus. Populations declined, particularly in inner urban areas, with particular demographic groups increasingly problematised by the state. At the same time, employment was lost through larger processes of de-industrialisation and economic change. Unemployment had been used as a key indicator of urban decline throughout this thesis. On top of the importance of unemployment as a measure of economic decline, the loss of jobs in a city was linked to other, secular processes of urban decline. For example, unemployment was understood as a 'push' factor, contributing to the depopulation of Britain's inner urban areas. Unemployment was also linked to material and social welfare through its effects on household income and, especially in the case of youth unemployment, was linked to crime and other behavioural issues which were seen to mar everyday life in Britain's inner cities. Unemployment, therefore, was not understood as a macro- or micro-economic problem in isolation of other processes of social change, but as an underlying

²⁴ Natasha Vall, *Cities in decline? A comparative history of Malmö and Newcastle after 1945* (Malmö, 2007).

²⁵ Leif Jerram, *Streetlife: the untold story of Europe's twentieth century* (Oxford, 2011); and Leif Jerram, 'Space: a useless category for historical analysis?', *History and Theory* 52 (2013), pp. 400-19.

²⁶ This idea of an 'urban crisis' will be explored in more detail below, but has been influential in recent urban histories of the 1970s and 1980s; see Otto Saumarez Smith, 'The inner city crisis and the end of urban modernism in 1970s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 578-98; and Sam Wetherell, 'Freedom planned: Enterprise Zones and urban non-planning in post-war Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 266-89.

cause of many urban problems. The effect on the built environment was devastating, with widespread dereliction resulting from the closure of factories, the clearance of housing, planning blight, and decay through a lack of investment. These processes compounded one another; poverty was 'rediscovered' in the 1960s by social scientists and central government, and was seen to be increasingly concentrated within particular areas. In certain cities, Liverpool included, this was further exacerbated by implicit and explicit racism. As we will see, this decline affected most aspects of everyday life, and necessitated new responses. As Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton have argued, in the 1970s, 'the discrediting of the prevailing policy paradigm broke open the policy process and then led to a political battle of ideas'.²⁷ This 'marketplace of ideas', they argued, enables the political and economic crises of the 1970s to be better understood.²⁸ The urban crisis, however, was not just about government policy. As this thesis shows, the radicalisation of local politics, as well as episodes of racialised urban disorder, contributed to a sense that, at least in particular areas, urban Britain was becoming 'ungovernable'.

Late twentieth century Britain

This idea of 'ungovernability' is contentious and forms one of the key points in the historiography of 1970s Britain.²⁹ But as noted above, there are a number of conflicting narratives which have sought to chart the history of Britain from 1945. As such, it is important to begin by attempting to understand social trends in Britain after the Second World War. The war brought about the expansion of the state, including into the domestic interior of the home.³⁰ Popular histories have cast this as the 'people's peace', emphasising the development of the welfare state and the eventual onset, after the end of rationing, of the 'affluent society'.³¹ This is not the only story told about post-war Britain, with a series of

²⁷ For example, see Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, 'Introduction: the benighted decade? Reassessing the 1970s', in Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton, and Pat Thane (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 1-24; and Hugh Pemberton, 'Macro-economic crisis and policy revolution', *Renewal* 17 (2009), pp. 46-56.

²⁸ This conception was influenced by Peter A. Hall, 'Policy paradigms, social learning, and the state: the case of economic policymaking in Britain', *Comparative Politics* 25 (1993), pp. 275-96.

²⁹ This idea of ungovernability seems to pervade narratives of the 1970s, as shown in Black and Pemberton, 'Introduction'. Nevertheless, the discursive trope is most frequently attached to episodes of 'crisis', in particular the 'winter of discontent' in 1978-79. Much work has been done to dispel this idea, but for a highly influential account, see Colin Hay, 'Narrating crisis: the discursive construction of the "winter of discontent"', *Sociology* 30 (1996), pp. 253-77; and Colin Hay, 'Chronicles of a death foretold: the winter of discontent and construction of the crisis of British Keynesianism', *Parliamentary Affairs* 63 (2010), pp. 446-70.

³⁰ Jim Greenhalgh, 'The threshold of the state: civil defence, the blackout and the home in Second World War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 28 (2017), pp. 186-208; and Matthew Hollow, 'Governmentality on the Park Hill estate: the rationality of public housing', *Urban History* 37 (2010), pp. 117-35.

³¹ Kenneth O'Morgan, *Britain since 1945: the people's peace* (Oxford, 3rd ed., 2001); also see David Kynaston's *Tales of a new Jerusalem* series: David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain, 1945-51* (London,

metanarratives, mentioned above, currently being proposed to provide a heuristic lens for historical accounts of the period. While it may therefore be unfashionable to remain incredulous towards metanarratives, the history of post-war Britain is too fragmented to be told through a single, overarching narrative.³²

The increasing 'affluence' of the middle and working classes has formed an important foundation for the historiography of late twentieth century Britain that has eschewed narratives of economic decline.³³ Greater material wealth afforded an increased level of prosperity for British households, including through the growing availability of consumer goods.³⁴ In addition to shaping an emergent consumer and material culture, however, the affluent society had an important impact on contemporary political culture.³⁵ In what must by now be a cliché of the period, Harold Macmillan's 1957 claim that Britons had 'never had it so good' is emblematic of this, but as Stuart Middleton has shown, the politics of affluence also had a transformative effect on the British left in particular.³⁶ The work of US economist, J.K. Galbraith, was central in this.³⁷ Affluence undoubtedly re-shaped Britain, especially in terms of the social changes it engendered. But the re-making of British society in the decades after the end of the Second World War was also seen through the rise of 'permissiveness'.³⁸ Such accounts of social change undoubtedly provide progressive narratives of twentieth century Britain. The period with which this thesis is concerned begins after the heyday of the affluent society, but these social changes were not experienced by everyone.³⁹ This is the case whether, as Selina Todd has done, we take 'class'

2007); David Kynaston, *Family Britain, 1951-57* (London, 2009); and David Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, 1957-62* (London, 2015).

³² Cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge* (Manchester, 1984).

³³ An early example of this can be seen in Vernon Bogdanor and Robert Skidelsky (eds), *The age of affluence* (London, 1970); more recent accounts include the essays published in Black and Pemberton (eds), *An affluent society?*

³⁴ Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, 'Introduction – the uses (and abuses) of affluence', in Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton (eds), *An affluent society? Britain's post-war 'golden age' revisited* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 1-14.

³⁵ Lawrence Black, 'The impression of affluence: political culture in the 1950s and 1960s', in Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton (eds), *An affluent society? Britain's post-war 'golden age' revisited* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 85-106.

³⁶ The phrase, for example, is used as the title for a popular account of the period: Dominic Sandbrook, *Never had it so good: a history of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London, 2005). Stuart Middleton, '"Affluence" and the left in Britain, c. 1958-1974', *English Historical Review* CXXIX (2014), pp. 107-38.

³⁷ As shown by Noel Thompson, 'Socialist political economy in an age of affluence: the reception of J.K. Galbraith by the British social-democratic left in the 1950s and 1960s', *Twentieth Century British History* 21 (2010), pp. 50-79.

³⁸ See Frank Mort, *Capital affairs: London and the making of the permissive society* (London, 2010); and Frank Mort, 'The Ben Pimlott Lecture 2010: The permissive society revisited', *Twentieth Century British History* 22 (2011), pp. 269-98.

³⁹ This was the subject of a special issue of *Contemporary British History*; see Shinobu Majima and Mike Savage, 'Contesting affluence: an introduction', *Contemporary British History* 22 (2008), pp. 445-55.

as our point of departure, or if, as this thesis does, we focus on the category of space.⁴⁰ Fissures in the affluent society were, *inter alia*, crucial in making the British urban crisis. Nevertheless, whatever the merits of the framework of affluence in understanding post-war Britain, it was not a monocultural society.

The social and cultural history of Britain was transformed on or around 22 June 1948 when the *Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury, Essex.⁴¹ Of course, as Peter Fryer noted in his 1984 work *Staying Power*, '[t]here were Africans in Britain before the English came here'.⁴² This was especially true in port towns and cities, with Liverpool's multi-ethnic 'sailortown' a long-standing feature of its demographic and social structure.⁴³ But post-war migration from the colonies and New Commonwealth had a transformative effect, re-making Britain, slowly and often reluctantly, into a multicultural nation.⁴⁴ This migration was predominantly an urban phenomenon, with the creation of multicultural spaces within Britain's cities, as Simon Gunn and Colin Hyde have evidenced in Leicester.⁴⁵ As Elizabeth Buettner has shown, however, the limits of multiculturalism were evident in the social and cultural interactions of everyday life.⁴⁶ These limits came to the fore in the 1960s, with the restriction of New Commonwealth migration through legislation passed in 1962 and 1968, through the racialised – and racist – rhetoric of the Smethwick election in 1964, and following Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech, delivered in April 1968.⁴⁷ Post-war migration thus not only re-shaped British society and the social geographies of Britain's cities, but also transformed the way the population was understood. These changes provide

⁴⁰ For example, see Selina Todd, 'Affluence, class and Crown Street: reinvestigating the post-war working class', *Contemporary British History* 21 (2008), pp. 501-18.

⁴¹ At least, the arrival of the Windrush provides an important locus in the popular imagination of social and cultural change in Britain; see Kennetta Hammond Perry, 'Black Britain and the politics of race in the 20th century', *History Compass* 12 (2014), pp. 651-63.

⁴² Peter Fryer, *Staying power: the history of black people in Britain* (London, 1984; re-issued 2010). On the politics behind this book, see Rob Waters, 'Thinking black: Peter Fryer's *Staying power* and the politics of writing black British history in the 1980s', *History Workshop Journal* 82 (2016), pp. 104-20.

⁴³ John Belchem, *Before the Windrush: race relations in 20th-century Liverpool* (Liverpool, 2014).

⁴⁴ See Jordanna Bailkin, *Afterlife of empire* (Berkeley, CA, 2012); Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: the irresistible rise of multi-racial Britain* (London, 1998); and for a comparative history of Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Portugal, see Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after empire: decolonization, society, and culture* (Cambridge, 2016).

⁴⁵ Simon Gunn and Colin Hyde, 'Post-industrial place, multicultural space: the transformation of Leicester, c. 1970-1990', *International Journal of Regional and Local History* 8 (2013), pp. 94-111. This was similarly shown through the re-development of Bradford; see Simon Gunn, 'The rise and fall of British urban modernism'.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Buettner, '"Going for an Indian": South Asian restaurants and the limits of multiculturalism in Britain', *Journal of Modern History* 80 (2008), pp. 865-901.

⁴⁷ See Commonwealth Immigrants Acts 1962 and 1968; Elizabeth Buettner, '"This is Staffordshire not Alabama": racial geographies of Commonwealth immigration in early 1960s Britain', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42 (2014), pp. 710-40; Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the making of postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, 2015).

essential context for the discussion within this thesis, as well as an essential point of departure. The problematisation of race was not limited to right-wing, anti-immigrant discourses. The emergence of postcolonial theory and the field of cultural studies in Britain had a transformative effect on the way race and race relations were understood.⁴⁸ Organisations such as the Institute for Race Relations, Community Relations Councils, and small, community-based voluntary organisations, also worked to understand and improve the conditions of Britain's black, Asian and ethnic minority populations.⁴⁹ This thesis builds on these narratives, highlighting the uneven experience of urban decline and crisis by showing how the effects of social, economic, and physical change were seen to be much more acute on ethnic minority communities. This was especially the case in terms of urban deprivation.⁵⁰

The 'de-industrialisation' of post-war Britain has recently come to the attention of historians, though the term itself has earlier origins.⁵¹ Historiographical narratives of de-industrialisation have been highly-charged, indicating a sense of loss felt by the authors, though this could also reflect their politics.⁵² That de-industrialisation changed Britain's economy is unsurprising, but as Jim Tomlinson and others have shown, changes in employment were gendered.⁵³ These employment changes, fundamental to the definition of the process as the decline in the manufacturing, mining, and construction industries, thus re-shaped British society, as well as reanimating local politics.⁵⁴ Moreover, the policies of Margaret Thatcher's first government, and the effects of the early 1980s recession, remain central to historical accounts of de-industrialisation.⁵⁵ Though Liverpool did experience de-

⁴⁸ Key texts include Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts, *Policing the crisis* (Basingstoke, 2nd ed., 2013); Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) *Empire strikes back: race and racism in 70s Britain* (Abingdon, 1994; first published 1982); and Paul Gilroy, *There ain't no black in the union jack* (London, 2002; first published 1987). These texts had their origins in the CCCS at the University of Birmingham; on the CCCS, see Kieran Connell and Matthew Hilton (eds), *Cultural studies 50 years on: history, practice and politics* (London, 2016).

⁴⁹ Into the 1970s, 'black' was an inherently politicised term deployed to refer to non-white people; in this the term was similar to the present usage of 'people/person of colour' in the United States. On the politics of this term, see Waters, 'Thinking black'; and Gilroy, *There ain't no black in the union jack*.

⁵⁰ See chapter 4.

⁵¹ As note in Jörg Arnold, "'De-industrialization": a research project on the societal history of economic change in Britain (1970-90)', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 34 (2012), p. 36.

⁵² Steven High, "'The wounds of class": a historiographical reflection on the study of deindustrialization, 1973-2013', *History Compass* 11 (2013), pp. 994-1007.

⁵³ Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization not decline', pp. 91-3; Sara Connolly and Mary Gregory, 'Women and work since 1970', in Nicholas Crafts, Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell (eds), *Work and pay in twentieth century Britain* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 142-77.

⁵⁴ This has particularly been shown through the closure of coal mines; see Jim Phillips, 'Deindustrialization and the moral economy of the Scottish coalfields, 1947 to 1991', *International Labour and Working-Class History* 84 (2013), pp. 99-115; Jim Phillips, 'The closure of Michael colliery in 1967 and the politics of deindustrialization in Scotland', *Twentieth Century British History* 26 (2015), pp. 551-72.

⁵⁵ See Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization not decline', p. 87.

industrialisation, it was not an 'industrial' city in the same way as, for example, Manchester and Sheffield.⁵⁶ This thesis therefore adds a further layer of complexity to the emerging historiography on de-industrialisation. Liverpool's long-term unemployment problems are well-known, but this was primarily the result of decline in the service sector, especially the docks.⁵⁷ Thus, while histories predominantly focus on macroeconomic changes and their social effects, this thesis shows how microeconomic spaces complicate this narrative; not only in terms of how we conceptualise industrial loss, but also the apparent triumph of the service sector.⁵⁸

Margaret Thatcher's spectral presence in the historiography of twentieth century Britain raises important issues of periodisation. In fact, 4 May 1979, the day Thatcher first walked into 10 Downing Street as Prime Minister, quoting St. Francis of Assisi, is seen to mark the end of the social democratic consensus in Britain, and the beginning of a new, 'neoliberal' age.⁵⁹ There is an extensive, and growing, historiography of 'Thatcher's Britain', covering a broad spectrum of historical subjects.⁶⁰ The policies and legacies of Thatcherism, a term coined by Stuart Hall in 1979, have also been debated by social and political scientists.⁶¹ It is undeniable that the character and language of central government policy changed in the 1980s, though as recent interventions have made clear, the intellectual influences on this shift included left-wing thinkers.⁶² Rather than seeing a distinct 'break' in

⁵⁶ See Ian Taylor, Karen Evans and Penny Fraser, *A tale of two cities: global change, local feeling and everyday life in the north of England; a study in Manchester and Sheffield* (London, 1996).

⁵⁷ Recent works include Jörg Arnold, "'Managed decline"? zur diskussion um die zukunft Liverpools im ersten Kabinett Thatcher (1979-1981)', *Informationen zur modernen Stadtgeschichte* (2015), pp. 139-54; Brian Marren, *We shall not be moved: how Liverpool's working class fought redundancies, closures and cuts in the age of Thatcher* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 31-51; and Charlotte Wildman, *Urban redevelopment and modernity in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918-1939* (London, 2016).

⁵⁸ Stephen Broadberry, 'The rise of the service sector', in Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries and Paul Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge economic history of modern Britain, vol. II: 1870 to the present* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 330-61.

⁵⁹ On the establishment of a 'consensus', see Paul Addison, *The road to 1945: British politics and the Second World War* (London, 1994); Dean Blackburn, 'Reassessing Britain's "post-war consensus": the politics of reason, 1945-1979', *British Politics* (forthcoming, 2017) offers a more recent critique of the idea of 'consensus' in post-war Britain. The effect of the rise of 'Thatcherism' on the popular conscience as well as public policy has been discussed in Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: the politics and social upheaval of the 1980s* (London, 2009), pp. 1-11.

⁶⁰ For a brief overview, see Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders, 'Introduction: varieties of Thatcherism', in Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders (eds), *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 1-22, and the various essays within the collection. More recently, Matthew Hilton, Chris Moores and Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite have edited a journal special issue: 'New Times revisited: Britain in the 1980s', *Contemporary British History* 31 (2017), pp. 145-317.

⁶¹ Stuart Hall, 'The great moving right show', *Marxism Today* (January 1979), pp. 14-20. See the essays published in Stephen Farrall and Colin Hay (eds), *The legacy of Thatcherism: assessing and exploring Thatcherite social and economic policies* (Oxford, 2014).

⁶² Elements of this can be found in Ben Jackson, 'Revisionism reconsidered: "property-owning democracy" and egalitarian strategy in post-war Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 16 (2005), pp. 416-40; and Sam Wetherell, 'Freedom planned'.

1979, this thesis will focus on continuities, viewing Thatcherite urban policymaking as a response to long-term processes of change. As with the Labour and Conservative governments of 1964 to 1979, the policies of which this thesis will address, ideology helped to shape responses, but was not the only determining factor. Through this approach, the divisions between 'social democracy' and 'neoliberalism', each problematic terms, become blurred.⁶³

The transformation of Britain during this period can therefore be seen through the emergence of an affluent material and consumer culture, the mixing of cultures through immigration, the decline of manufacturing employment through de-industrialisation, and the rise of 'Thatcherism'. In many ways, these are distinct narratives of change. While their interaction has been discussed through a number of accounts of contemporary Britain, these often either take little account of space and place, or are otherwise focused on London.⁶⁴ This thesis shows how a number of distinct processes of change interacted within the city of Liverpool. The city highlights the importance of the political culture of affluence; while this conception of British society culminated in the 'rediscovery of poverty' in the late 1960s, it was influential in the problematisation of spatialised inequality into the 1970s. Ideas of race and ethnicity were important in this, but as Liverpool shows, the longevity of the black and Asian population inflected racial discrimination with a particular discourse of belonging distinct from that which pervaded New Commonwealth communities at the time.⁶⁵ These social changes occurred within the context of de-industrialisation and economic decline, contributing to seemingly ever-increasing rates of unemployment and were constituted as a 'crisis' by central and local government, voluntary organisations, and the print media. Using Black and Pemberton's definition of crisis as a 'marketplace for ideas', this can account in part for the ascendancy of Thatcher's government.⁶⁶ But this thesis goes further. By highlighting the importance of social science and structures of feeling, it shows that, during the long 1970s, there was a real urban crisis, shaped by the everyday lives of urban residents as much as it was by the conceptions of policymakers.

⁶³ Alistair Kefford has shown this through state approaches to the built environment; see Alistair Kefford, *Constructing the affluent citizen: state, space and the individual in post-war Britain, 1945-79* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2015).

⁶⁴ For example, Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the sun: the battle for Britain, 1974-79* (London, 2012). Andy Beckett, *Promised you a miracle: why 1980-82 made modern Britain* (London, 2015), however, highlights the importance of different spaces in national narratives.

⁶⁵ Chris Waters, "Dark strangers" in our midst: discourses of race and nation in Britain, 1947-1963', *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997), pp. 207-38.

⁶⁶ Black and Pemberton, 'Introduction: the benighted decade?', pp. 14-15.

Urban modernism and urban crisis

In the 1940s and 1950s, Britain's bomb-damaged towns and cities were re-constructed.⁶⁷ This planning process involved the decentralisation of population and industry from 'congested' urban centres to New Towns and 'overspill areas'.⁶⁸ In the 1960s, 'utopian' plans were drafted to re-order and rationalise the modern city, including the accommodation of the motor car and continued decentralisation.⁶⁹ The demise of urban modernism, as this approach is known, came about in the 1970s through the external pressure of conservationists, and internally, through changing approaches to the built environment by planners themselves.⁷⁰ Thus, in spite of historiographical reticence over the 'tendency to package decades as entities', decennial narratives persist.⁷¹ This thesis analyses changes from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s to show how the end of urban modernism was linked to secular processes of urban decline. From this brief overview, we can see how accounts of the rise and fall of urban modernism are most often understood through the approaches of architects and planners to the built environment. Urban modernism encompassed a number of different technologies of rule, beyond built form; perhaps the most importance of these was the growth of social science, which occurred broadly concurrently with that of urban modernism.⁷² Nascent in the interwar years before coming to prominence following the

⁶⁷ Recent examples of this literature include Catherine Flinn, "'The city of our dreams'? The political and economic realities of rebuilding blitzed Britain's cities, 1945-54', *Twentieth Century British History* 23 (2012), pp. 221-45; and John Pendlebury, Erdem Erten and Peter Larkham (eds), *Alternative visions of post-war reconstruction* (Abingdon, 2015) which offers international perspectives.

⁶⁸ Peter Mandler, 'New towns for old: the fate of the town centre', in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds), *Moments of modernity: reconstructing Britain, 1945-1964* (London, 1999), 208-27.

⁶⁹ For example, see Gunn, 'The rise and fall of British urban modernism'; and Otto Saumarez Smith, 'Central government and town-centre redevelopment in Britain, 1959-1966', *Historical Journal* 58 (2015), pp. 217-44. On the 1960s redevelopment of Liverpool city centre, see Otto Saumarez Smith, 'Graeme Shankland: a sixties architect-planner and political culture of the British left', *Architectural History* (2014), pp. 393-422. This planning culture also applied to New Towns; see Guy Ortolano, 'Planning the urban future in 1960s Britain', *Historical Journal* 54 (2011), pp. 477-507. Urban planning at this time took place within a wider political culture of planning; see Glen O'Hara, *From dreams to disillusionment: economic and social planning in 1960s Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 101-28. On the importance of the motor car, see Simon Gunn, 'The Buchanan report, environment and the problem of traffic in 1960s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 22 (2011), pp. 521-42; Simon Gunn, 'People and the car: the expansion of automobility in urban Britain, c. 1955-70', *Social History* 38 (2013), pp. 220-37.

⁷⁰ See Christopher Klemek, *The transatlantic collapse of urban renewal: postwar urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago, 2011); and Saumarez Smith, 'The inner city crisis'.

⁷¹ Joe Moran, 'Decoding the decade', *Guardian*, 13 November 2009, as cited in Black and Pemberton, 'Introduction: the benighted decade?', p. 3; Alistair Kefford, 'Disruption, destruction and the creation of "the inner cities": the impact of urban renewal on industry, 1945-1980', *Urban History* 44 (2017), pp. 492-515 has sought to challenge the periodisation of urban modernism, showing longer-term processes of continuity and change.

⁷² On the growth and importance of social science in post-war Britain, see Mike Savage, *Identities and social change in Britain since 1940: the politics of method* (Oxford, 2010).

Second World War, the growth of professional social science provided the epistemological basis for understanding the effects of social change in Britain.⁷³ As Jon Lawrence has shown, the research questions of these social scientists were integral in shaping contemporary understandings of the social; this included the conception of the affluent society in the 1950s.⁷⁴ But into the mid-1960s, social science was also vital in exposing fissures within the affluent society as research questions – and corresponding structures of feeling – began to change.

The ‘rediscovery of poverty’ in the 1960s was evidenced through a series of social scientific investigations, though television programmes also played a role in disseminating such ideas to the public.⁷⁵ However, social science and other empirical accounts of social and economic change continued to play an important role in 1970s and 1980s Britain. These studies, which expanded definitions of material poverty to a new conception of ‘multiple deprivation’ (see chapter 4), were integral in identifying the spaces of decline which were located within the British ‘inner city’. In his recent study of deprivation and state interventions in urban communities, Peter Shapely has shown how central government responded to evidence of persistent deprivation through the establishment of a series of area-based initiatives.⁷⁶ In focusing on the role of central government, however, this has overlooked the importance of local government and voluntary organisations in the development of policy responses to urban problems. Moreover, Shapely’s analysis focused on the period 1968-79. This thesis shows how evidence of urban deprivation and other seemingly immutable urban problems at a very local level – including population decline,

⁷³ Social scientific studies have shaped perceptions of class, gender, and community; see Lise Butler, ‘Michael Young, the Institute of Community Studies, and the politics of kinship’, *Twentieth Century British History* 26 (2015), pp. 203-24; Jon Lawrence, ‘Social-science encounters and the negotiation of difference in early 1960s Britain’, *History Workshop Journal* 77 (2013), pp. 215-39; Jon Lawrence, ‘Class, “affluence” and the study of everyday life in Britain, c. 1930-64’, *Cultural and Social History* 10 (2013), pp. 273-99; Jon Lawrence, ‘Inventing the “traditional working class”: a re-analysis of interview notes from Young and Wilmott’s *Family and kinship in east London*’, *Historical Journal* 59 (2016), pp. 567-93; and Helen McCarthy, ‘Social science and married women’s employment in post-war Britain’, *Past and Present* 233 (2016), pp. 269-305.

⁷⁴ Lawrence, ‘Class, “affluence” and the study of everyday life in Britain’.

⁷⁵ Selina Todd, ‘Family welfare and social work in post-war England, c. 1948-c.1970’, *English Historical Review* CXXIX (2014), pp. 362-87. Prominent studies include: Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, *The poor and the poorest: a new analysis of the Ministry of Labour’s Family Expenditure Surveys of 1953-54 and 1960* (London, 1965); and Ken Coates and Richard Silburn, *Poverty: the forgotten Englishmen* (Nottingham, 4th ed., 1983; first published 1970). The most well-known of the television programmes was *Cathy Come Home* [television programme], BBC, 16 November 1966. Also see Rodney Lowe, ‘The rediscovery of poverty and the creation of the child poverty action group, 1962-68’, *Contemporary Record*, 9 (1995), pp. 602-11; and Selina Todd, ‘Affluence, class and Crown Street’.

⁷⁶ Peter Shapely, *Deprivation, state interventions and urban communities in Britain, 1968-79* (Abingdon, 2017).

deindustrialisation and economic decline, and racial discrimination – continued to influence central and local government policy responses into the 1980s.

While the emerging literature on the ‘inner city’ has identified it as the predominant site of Britain’s urban crisis, recent studies have focused on planning and economic change.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the anarchist and urbanist Colin Ward has claimed that the inner city in the 1970s and 1980s was ‘an idea not a place’, with the space being seen as a euphemism through which issues of race and inequality could be discussed.⁷⁸ This rhetorical definition is inadequate, overlooking the importance of contemporary social science and changing definitions of deprivation in highlighting the everyday experiences of people living in inner-city areas. Historiographical accounts of poverty and deprivation have largely focused on issues of transmission which arose through twentieth century political and social discourses.⁷⁹ Within this, issues of spatiality have been largely overlooked. As this thesis demonstrates, spaces of decline and deprivation were pivotal in the identification of the inner city and the development of Britain’s urban crisis.

Recent historiographical interventions have referred to Britain’s urban crisis as something more than a discursive construct.⁸⁰ Otto Saumarez Smith has shown how the looming crisis, located around the inner city, appeared to show that urban modernist approaches to the built environment were no longer tenable.⁸¹ Similarly, Sam Wetherell has persuasively argued that the urban crisis – an aberration created by ‘simultaneous economic and demographic collapses’ – led to the search for radical new solutions to persistent problems.⁸² Nevertheless, the urban crisis within the historiography of

⁷⁷ Saumarez Smith, ‘The inner city crisis’; and Kefford, ‘Disruption, destruction and the creation of “the inner cities”’.

⁷⁸ Colin Ward, ‘Introducing the thinner city’, *The Times*, 19 December 1988, p. 8. The phrase ‘inner city’ has its origins in the United States in the mid-1960s where it had been applied to, predominantly black, inner areas of US cities, especially following the Watts ‘riots’ in Los Angeles, California, in 1965. The inner city is described as a euphemism for race in Joan Higgins et al., *Government and urban poverty: inside the policy making process* (Oxford, 1983), 190, as quoted in Daisy Payling, ‘“Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire”: grassroots activism and left-wing solidarity in 1980s Sheffield’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (2014), 622.

⁷⁹ For example, see John Welshman, *Underclass: a history of the excluded, 1880-2000* (London, 2006); Welshman, ‘Ideology, social science, and public policy: the debate over transmitted deprivation’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 16 (2005), pp. 306-41; and Welshman ‘From the cycle of deprivation to troubled families: ethnicity and the underclass concept’ in Catherine Cox and Hilary Marland (eds), *Migration, health and ethnicity in the modern world* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 174-94.

⁸⁰ Simon Gunn, ‘Ring road: Birmingham and the collapse of the motor city ideal in 1970s Britain’, *Historical Journal* (forthcoming, 2017) shows how an accumulation of urban problems came to be constituted as a crisis. Beckett, *Promised you a miracle* provides evocative accounts of this crisis as it appeared in Liverpool (pp. 41-58) and London (pp. 291-316).

⁸¹ Here, it is rightly argued that the Inner Area Studies of the 1970s were ‘indicative of a move away from a design-led approach towards a more holistic social approach’, but the underlining re-evaluation of the social are largely overlooked; Saumarez Smith, ‘The inner city crisis’, p. 592.

⁸² Wetherell, ‘Freedom planned’, p. 274.

twentieth-century Britain remains under-studied; this is in stark contrast to the US urban crisis, which has been theorised as a product of 'white flight' and the de-industrialisation of the 'rust belt'.⁸³ There were important differences between the US and British urban crises. First and foremost, the politics of race were fundamentally different.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, studies of the US urban crisis are important owing to the influence of transatlantic comparisons on British policymakers' understanding of urban change in Britain. As Mark Clapson has shown, British urban policy was influenced by research and planning developments in the United States.⁸⁵ Christopher Klemek has persuasively argued that the 'collapse' of urban renewal in cities across North America and western Europe was framed both by the reactions of conservationists against what they saw as destructive planning practices, as well as a perception that planning had not improved urban life as had been hoped.⁸⁶ Building on these histories, this thesis shows how the British urban crisis was produced through the persistence of depopulation, de-industrialisation and economic decline, deprivation and racial disadvantage, and urban decay.

This policy-focused conception opens up our understanding of how the urban crisis developed in Britain. Academic studies conducted in the late 1970s and early 1980s attempted to understand processes of urban change in the US, Britain, and a number of continental European countries.⁸⁷ Varying conclusions were reached, with the idea of

⁸³ Thomas Sugrue, *The origins of the urban crisis* provides an authoritative account of the crisis in Detroit, extending the narrative to the 1940s. Similar accounts have covered a range of US cities, demonstrating that the crisis was not a result of a racialised politics peculiar to Detroit; some prominent examples include: Jon Teaford, *Cities of the heartland: the rise and fall of the industrial Midwest* (Bloomington, IN, 1993); Colin Gordon, *Mapping decline: St. Louis and the fate of the American city* (Philadelphia, PA, 2008); and S. Paul O'Hara, *Gary: the most American of all American cities* (Bloomington, IN, 2011). While most often thought of as a de-industrial/post-industrial region of the US, the rust belt has been shown to extend into Canada, though politics and economics meant that the label was applied much later to the cities of south east Canada; see Steven High, *Industrial sunset: the making of North America's rust belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto, 2003). For a more polemical account of urban decline in Canada, see Robert Laxer (ed.), *(Canada) Ltd.: the political economy of dependency* (Toronto, 1973). An important study, influenced by the 'linguistic turn', is Robert Beauregard, *Voices of decline: the postwar fate of US cities* (Cambridge, MA, 1993). Here, Beauregard argued that de-industrialisation led to a critique of capitalism becoming contained within a discourse of urban decline, thereby focusing attention on the city, rather than the system. For recent critical discussion of this literature, see Timothy Weaver, 'Urban crisis: the genealogy of a concept', *Urban Studies* 54 (2017), pp. 2039-55; and Marlon Barbehön and Sybille Münch, 'Interrogating the city: comparing locally distinct crisis discourses', *Urban Studies* 54 (2017), pp. 2072-86.

⁸⁴ Although, television programming did play an important role in bringing the US black power movement to a British audience; see Rob Waters, 'Black power on the telly: America, television, and race in 1960s and 1970s Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 54 (2015), pp. 947-70.

⁸⁵ Mark Clapson, *Anglo-American crossroads: urban research and planning in Britain, 1940-2010* (London, 2013).

⁸⁶ Klemek, *The transatlantic collapse of urban renewal*, pp. 239-48.

⁸⁷ Examples include Charles Leven (ed.), *The mature metropolis* (Lexington, MA, 1978); Katherine Bradbury, Anthony Downs and Kenneth Small, *Urban decline and the future of American cities* (Washington, D.C., 1982); Peter Hall and Dennis Hay, *Growth centres in the European urban system* (London, 1980); Leo van den Berg, Roy Drewett, Leo Klaassen, Angelo Rossi and Cornelis Vijlberg,

metropolitan 'maturity', i.e. that decline occurred in the older cities of more established industrial societies, being particularly influential.⁸⁸ While this urban studies literature has therefore suggested a convergence in terms of processes of change, the effects were modulated by local circumstances.⁸⁹ For example, Liverpool's economy, centred on the port and commercial activity, was susceptible to changing patterns in global trade. The problem was not that Liverpool was a 'mature' city, but that its location became increasingly marginalised as maritime trade began to concentrate in the south of England. Through eschewing such ideas as 'maturity', this thesis therefore avoids a teleological approach to urban decline.⁹⁰

While the historiography of urban decline and crisis in Britain is relatively under-developed, much has been written in the field of urban studies.⁹¹ This literature has sought to explain the process of urban decline through different scales.⁹² In identifying changing patterns of urban growth and decline across a number of countries, Saskia Sassen has claimed that some cities had 'basically lost ground in their national urban systems' as a result of the financialisation of the global economy.⁹³ Focusing on Britain, Thilo Lang used the term urban decline 'to describe undesirable changes such as job losses accompanied by growing unemployment, social exclusion, physical decay and worsening living conditions'.⁹⁴ Though decentralisation was a long-term urban and regional policy aim in mid-twentieth-century Britain, population decline is frequently cited as a major cause of urban problems.⁹⁵ Urban population change in Western Europe has been evidenced through cliometric analysis, with the aim of 'ranking' cities in terms of demographic and economic change. In a

Urban Europe, vol. 1: a study of growth and decline (Oxford 1982); and Paul Cheshire and Dennis Hay, *Urban problems in western Europe: an economic analysis* (London, 1989).

⁸⁸ Charles Leven, 'The emergence of maturity in metropolis', in Charles Leven (ed.), *The mature metropolis* (Lexington, MA, 1978), pp. 3-20.

⁸⁹ This point was made in documents produced for the European Commission: T. Broadbent and D. McKay, *Urban change and research needs in the Community* (Brussels, 1983), cited by P. Cheshire, D. Hay and G. Carbonaro, *Regional policy and urban decline: the Community's role in tackling urban decline and problems of urban growth* (Luxembourg, 1986), p. 2.

⁹⁰ As was noted, with regard to a suburb of Melbourne, Australia: 'This was a process of change, rather than a contemporary outcome'; Seamus O' Hanlon and Simone Sharpe, 'Becoming post-industrial: Victoria Street, Fitzroy, c. 1970 to now', *Urban policy and research* 27 (2009), p. 298.

⁹¹ One notable example is D. Clark, *Urban decline: the British experience* (London, 1989) which was produced as a textbook for planning students.

⁹² Bernhard Struck, Kate Ferris and Jacques Revel, 'Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History', *International History Review* 33 (2011), 573-84

⁹³ Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a world economy* (London, 2nd ed., 2000), pp. 11; 45. A similar argument was made in N. Glickman, 'Cities and the international division of labour' in M. Smith and J. Feagin (eds), *The capitalist city* (Oxford, 1987), p. 80.

⁹⁴ Thilo Lang, *Insights in the British debate about urban decline and urban regeneration* (Erkner, 2005), p. 2 <http://www.irs-net.de/download/wp_insights.pdf> [accessed 3 March 2014].

⁹⁵ Colin Jones, 'Population decline in cities', in Colin Jones (ed.), *Urban deprivation and the inner city* (London, 1979), pp. 191-214.

1989 study, conducted by Paul Cheshire and Dennis Hay, Liverpool was identified as one of the 'worst' cities in Western Europe in terms of the urban problems evidenced within the urban region.⁹⁶ Population change was problematised for a number of reasons, with Cheshire and Hay advancing the idea of 'pathological decentralisation', or population decentralisation under conditions of overall decline.⁹⁷ The effects of this population change were modulated by de-industrialisation and economic decline, with the observation that population decline contributed to an increase in unemployment in a number of British cities.⁹⁸ The effects of economic decline were evidenced in the emerging problem of urban deprivation, as well as a decaying built environment.⁹⁹ While the interaction of processes of social and economic change had important consequences, they have frequently been studied in relative isolation from each other. This thesis will make a significant contribution to this extensive, but fragmented, literature. Studies of urban change on a macro-level provide a comparative insight into the experiences of different urban centres, but these studies overlook important local dynamics which are integral in contextualising and

⁹⁶ See table 4.7, Cheshire and Hay, *Urban problems in western Europe*, pp. 84-5. The analysis was based on the principle of 'Functional Urban Regions (FURs)' to create consistent boundaries across western Europe; the FURs were based on identified 'travel-to-work areas'.

⁹⁷ On pathological decentralisation, see Cheshire and Hay, *Urban Problems in Western Europe*, p. 33. For more on this idea, see Peter Hall, 'The rise and fall of great cities: economic forces and population responses' in R. Lawton (ed.), *The rise and fall of great cities: aspects of urbanisation in the western world* (London, 1989), p. 27. An important question, however, was whether decentralisation trends in the 1970s and 1980s were a continuation of long-term demographic changes, or a 'clean break'; this question was asked of population changes in the United States, Britain, and Germany: D. Vining and A. Strauss, 'A demonstration that the current deconcentration of population in the United States is a clean break with the past', *Environment and Planning A* 9 (1977), p. 751; C. Hamnett and W. Randolph, 'The changing population distribution of England and Wales, 1961-81: clean break or consistent progression', *Built Environment* 8 (1982), pp. 272-80; M. Wegener, 'Modelling urban decline: a multilevel economic-demographic model for the Dortmund region', *International Regional Science Review* 7 (1982), p. 218. In the US literature, the primary concerns are fiscal, but are also inherently racialised; for more on fiscal crisis and the politics of race in Liverpool, see: See Michael Parkinson, 'Liverpool's fiscal crisis: an anatomy of failure', in Michael Parkinson, Bernard Foley and Dennis Judd (eds), *Regenerating the cities: the UK crisis and the US experience* (London, 1989), pp. 101-16; and Gideon Ben-Tovim, 'Race, politics, and urban regeneration: lessons from Liverpool' in Michael Parkinson, Bernard Foley and Dennis Judd (eds), *Regenerating the cities: the UK crisis and the US experience* (London, 1989), pp. 129-42.

⁹⁸ S. Fothergill and G. Gudgin, *Unequal growth: urban and regional employment change in the UK* (London, 1982), p. 2. Contemporary academic accounts of de-industrialisation include: F. Blackaby (ed.), *De-industrialisation* (London, 1978); P. Elias and G. Keogh, 'Industrial decline and unemployment in the inner city areas of Great Britain: a review of the evidence', *Urban Studies* 19 (1982), p. 2; V. Hausner, 'Introduction: economic change and urban policy' in V. Hausner (ed.), *Urban economic change: five city studies* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 6-9; and B. Robson, *Those inner cities: reconciling the economic and social aims of urban policy* (Oxford, 1988).

⁹⁹ There is an extensive historiography on urban poverty, but for a contemporary economic assessment, see G. Norris, 'Defining urban deprivation' in C. Jones (ed.), *Urban deprivation and the inner city* (London, 1979), pp. 17-31. A very flexible definition of urban decay was adopted in M. Edel and J. Rothenberg, *Readings in urban economics* (London, 1972) cited in Cheshire, Hay and Carbonaro, *Regional policy and urban decline*, p. 5.

historicising urban change. This thesis therefore shows how space shaped the urban crisis in Liverpool from *circa* 1968 to 1986.

Research questions

This thesis uses the city of Liverpool as a case study of urban decline and urban crisis in Britain between 1968 and 1986. In so doing, it focuses on four main research questions: how was 'decline' experienced and evidenced in particular urban areas? What role did evidence of urban decline play in shaping approaches to urban governance at national and local levels? How did evidence of the persistence of urban decline constitute a 'crisis'? What was the role of particular events in Liverpool in shaping discourses of urban crisis in Britain? The methodological approach and source base, as well as an overview of recent literature on Liverpool, are outlined below.

Methodology, sources and case study

This thesis uses quantitative and qualitative research methods to study the process of urban decline in Liverpool. The accumulation of statistics, and a series of social scientific studies, were integral to the identification of urban decline from the late 1960s. Beginning in 1968/69, government-sponsored social studies increasingly focused on Liverpool; through this, the city fed directly into central government policymaking. As such, the findings of numerous social studies, including but not limited to the Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project, Community Development Project, and Inner Area Study, are central to my narrative. In addition to high profile studies, numerous reports were compiled by Liverpool City Council and Merseyside County Council which sought to identify and understand social and economic trends. As mentioned above, cliometric analysis has been an important research method, particularly within the field of urban studies. Such analyses, however, offer a superficial narrative of change as they often overlook how these were experienced in particular cities. Studies conducted during the long 1970s are contextualised and historicised through central and local government documents, respectively held in the National Archives and Liverpool Record Office, as well as contemporary reportage through national and local print media. The records of non-governmental organisations have also been consulted, including the Confederation of British Industry, and a number of Liverpool-based voluntary organisations, including charities. Where possible, the thesis also makes reference to contemporary cultural representations of everyday life in the city. These were an important focus in the development of a structure of feeling which identified Liverpool as a city in crisis.

‘Space’ is an important category of analysis within the thesis. As Simon Gunn has argued, the spatial turn in social theory during the 1970s influenced academic studies.¹⁰⁰ This turn is important in contextualising the centrality of space as a category of analysis in 1970s social studies. As Leif Jerram has shown, space can often be an elusive concept within historical studies, with the term used to describe factors ranging from geographical location to a site imbued with deep social and cultural meaning (for example, a *lieu de mémoire*).¹⁰¹ In contrast to Jerram’s definition of space as ‘the proximate physical disposition of things in relation to one another and to humans’, this thesis shows how particular geographical locations, most notably the ‘inner city’, were understood by central and local government and voluntary organisations.¹⁰² Henri Lefebvre argued that there are three concepts of space: spatial practice (physical); representations of space (conceptual); and representational spaces (experiential).¹⁰³ Spatial practice largely conforms to the definition adopted by Jerram. But as this thesis shows, these physical spaces should not be viewed in isolated from the meaning attached to them (cf. representations of space). The ‘inner city’ was a physical space – identified through social science and state policy – which came to be imbued with specific political, social and cultural meaning. The inner city was the space in which deprivation, decay, and decline were concentrated. This idea of space seems to exemplify Edward Soja’s concept of ‘thirdspace’, based on Lefebvre’s definition of representational space. In Soja’s definition, ‘*Everything* comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable’.¹⁰⁴ Influenced by this conception of space, this thesis uses Liverpool as a case study to show how material processes of social and economic change – for example, depopulation and the closure of businesses – were experienced by local residents and interpreted by government and civil society actors in the 1970s and 1980s.

The city of Liverpool – its people and environs – was the locus of the British urban crisis. Liverpool’s economic problems were deeply-entrenched and long-standing.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ During the 1970s, space replaced time/history as a central category of analysis; for example, see Michel Foucault, ‘Of other spaces’, *Dialectics* 16 (1986), p. 22, as cited in Simon Gunn, ‘The spatial turn: changing histories of space and place’, in Simon Gunn and Robert Morris (eds), *Identities in space: contested terrains in the western city since 1850* (Aldershot, 2001), 1-14. Also see Doreen Massey, ‘Politics and space/time’, *New Left Review* 196 (1992), pp. 65-84.

¹⁰¹ Jerram, ‘Space: a useless category’.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 403.

¹⁰³ Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991), pp. 38-9.

¹⁰⁴ Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined-places* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 56-7, as cited in Alan Latham, ‘Edward J. Soja’, in Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin (eds), *Key thinkers on space and place* (London, 2nd ed., 2011), p. 384.

¹⁰⁵ Charlotte Wildman, *Urban redevelopment and modernity in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918-1939* (London, 2016) shows how Liverpool’s economic problems spurred action from the local authority; the resultant redevelopment was important in the creation of new urban cultures.

Indeed, the negative effects of global economic change on British cities were termed the 'Liverpool syndrome' by the political scientist Brian Jacobs.¹⁰⁶ In the wave of urban disorder which swept across Britain's cities in the spring and summer of 1981, the 'rioting' in Toxteth was amongst the most notorious.¹⁰⁷ Of all the local authorities which were taken over by the 'hard left' in the 1980s, Liverpool City Council was the most radical, and amongst the most high-profile.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, there is a danger in presenting Liverpool as an exceptional case.¹⁰⁹ Liverpool was exceptional in terms of the scale and severity of its urban problems, but it was not unique. Chronic levels of deprivation were evidenced in parts of Belfast, Birmingham, Glasgow, and London.¹¹⁰ Where possible, therefore, evidence from Liverpool will be contextualised through concurrent trends in other cities.

This thesis focuses on the period between 1968 and 1986, during which Britain's urban crisis was at its height. In 1968, Harold Wilson's Labour government initiated the Urban Programme, not only marking a renewed focus on British cities, but firmly problematising issues of race and migration. A series of central government-sponsored surveys were initiated in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s which provided evidence of urban problems. By 1986, scenes of urban disorder had been witnessed across Britain's cities, especially in the spring and summer of 1981, and Liverpool had come under the leadership of a radical faction within the British Labour Party known as Militant Tendency. This period therefore demonstrates the interaction between long-term processes of urban decline and short-term upsurges of violence or political dispute in Liverpool's urban crisis.

Thesis Structure

In order to properly understand this period, this thesis is divided into six thematic chapters. Chapter 1 shows how demographic change became increasingly problematised by policymakers through the decline of Liverpool's population. This was not simply an issue of a reduced rate-paying population. The demographic structure of the remaining population was also a cause for political concern over elderly and young dependents, the poor, and

¹⁰⁶ Brian Jacobs, *Fractured cities: capitalism, community and empowerment in Britain and America* (London, 1992), pp. 86-8.

¹⁰⁷ Diane Frost and Richard Phillips (eds), *Liverpool '81: remembering the riots* (Liverpool, 2011).

¹⁰⁸ Diane Frost and Peter North, *Militant Liverpool: a city on the edge* (Liverpool, 2013).

¹⁰⁹ This is a theme throughout much of the historiography, but is explored in detail in John Belchem, *Merseypride: essays in Liverpool exceptionalism* (Liverpool, 2006).

¹¹⁰ The problems of these cities were acknowledged in the 1977 white paper Cmnd. 6845. *Policy for the inner cities* (London, 1977). For more detail on individual case studies, see Glasgow City Archives, Mitchell Library, Glasgow: SR1/2/14, Multiple Deprivation: report from the Policy and Resources Seminar, 30 August 1976; Graeme Shankland, Peter Willmott and David Jordan, *Inner London: policies for dispersal and balance: final report of the Lambeth Inner Area Study* (London, 1977); and Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker and Bor, *Unequal city: final report of the Birmingham Inner Area Study* (London, 1977).

ethnic minorities. Chapter 2 highlights Liverpool's chronic unemployment issues which came to dominate contemporary political discourses surrounding the city. But more than this, unemployment underlay the experiences of many of Liverpool's residents. The city's high unemployment resulted from changes in technology and trade, undermining the position of the port. While Liverpool was not an 'industrial' city, unemployment continued to rise through a process of de-industrialisation from the late 1970s. Chapter 3 shows how population and economic decline, as well as blight resulting from redevelopment, left their mark on the built environment. A derelict and decaying environment was constituted as barrier to economic regeneration, but also came to symbolise the social problems within. Chapter 4 builds on this, showing how, after the 'rediscovery of poverty' in the 1960s, deprivation became a significant issue. This deprivation was spatialised in social scientific studies and political discourses, leading to the identification of the 'inner city'. The experience of deprivation was compounded, for Liverpool's black and Asian residents, by racial discrimination. These problems were particularly acute in the Toxteth area of the city, which was the scene of major urban disorder in 1981. Chapter 5 demonstrates how the unfolding urban crisis in Liverpool necessitated new forms of governance. The city had long been home to charities and other voluntary organisations. By the 1970s, these voluntary organisations, in concert with local and national government, had begun adapting to the pressures of the urban crisis, developing new responses in an effort to ameliorate seemingly pervasive social problems.

The final chapter argues that the rise of the Militant Tendency faction within the Liverpool District Labour Party, and its leadership of the city council, represented the apex of the urban crisis. Re-branding the local authority a socialist council, Militant sought to use Liverpool's urban crisis as leverage to combat the policies of the Thatcher government. Despite initial successes, however, Militant was eventually defeated by the combined forces of central government-appointed auditors, and Labour leader Neil Kinnock. The defeat of Militant did not mark the end of the urban crisis, and many of the processes with which this thesis is concerned have continued to affect urban change in Liverpool.¹¹¹ In the twenty-first century, Liverpool remains a city of 'change and challenge', but discourses surrounding the city have moved away from the crisis-laden everyday lives depicted in television series',

¹¹¹ Though it has recently been suggested that Liverpool's relative position has recently improved; see Liverpool City Council, *The index of multiple deprivation 2015: a Liverpool analysis* (Liverpool, 2015) <<http://liverpool.gov.uk/media/10001/1-imd-2015-executive-summary.pdf>> accessed 28 April 2017.

to one emphasising resilience and regeneration, as shown through the commemorations of the city's 800th anniversary in 2007.¹¹²

¹¹² John Belchem, *Liverpool 800: culture, character and history* (Liverpool, 2006).

Chapter 1

Population Pathologies: Decentralisation, Demography, and Decline, c. 1931-87

Introduction

Just as the question of urban growth often relies upon evidence of population expansion, urban decline, by its very nature, implies a loss. While this draws necessary attention to urban population decline, the population politics of post-war Britain involved conflicting concerns and policy aims. Population decline, as a 'natural' process in which national death rates exceeded the birth rate, has long been a concern for British policymakers.¹ At the same time, however, urban population decline was a long-term policy aim of the British state. From the 1930s, there was an important expansion in the biopolitics of the British state as the government of the population extended beyond issues of natality and mortality to include concerns over its distribution.² As such, state policy was directed towards the dispersal of the population from 'congested' inner urban areas. The 'slums' were increasingly subject to clearance, with households moving to New Towns, overspill areas, and suburban housing estates through a policy of 'decentralisation'.³ Decentralisation and suburbanisation, however, were not simply a result of state planning, as Mark Clapson has shown.⁴ Rising 'affluence', and increasing car-ownership, were also reshaping the social and physical geography of the city in post-war Britain.⁵ Nevertheless, population decline and demographic change have frequently been identified as a key indicator of urban crisis through their associated negative effects on urban areas.⁶ Contemporary urban studies

¹ Pat Thane, 'Population politics in post-war British culture' in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds), *Moments of modernity: reconstructing Britain 1945-1964* (London, 1999), pp. 115-19.

² Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended: lectures at the College de France, 1975-76* (New York, NY, 2003), pp. 239-63.

³ Peter Mandler, 'New towns for old: the fate of the town centre', in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds), *Moments of modernity: reconstructing Britain 1945-1964* (London, 1999), pp.208-27.

⁴ Mark Clapson, *Suburban century: social change and urban growth in England and the USA* (Oxford, 2003); on Liverpool, see Madeline McKenna, 'The suburbanisation of the working-class population of Liverpool between the wars', *Social History* 16 (1991), pp. 173-89.

⁵ Simon Gunn, 'People and the car: the expansion of automobility in urban Britain, c. 1955-70', *Social History* 38 (2013), pp. 220-37.

⁶ As one US study argued: 'initial falls in population and employment often start self-reinforcing effects that tend to perpetuate them well beyond relief of overcrowding. For this and other reasons, the amount of decline in most large cities since 1960 has imposed net negative impacts upon their

focused on the question of whether patterns of urban migration in the 1970s and 1980s represented a continuation of existing trends, or a 'clean break' with the past.⁷ As this chapter shows, the most obvious break occurred in state policy, as decentralisation moved from being a policy *aim* to a policy *problem*. The case of Liverpool highlights this transition in national policymaking, but also complicates the narrative.

This chapter will chart the depopulation of Liverpool primarily through the use of census data. These were long-term trends, and so the first section will begin by studying continuities and changes across the twentieth century. This requires a discussion of planning policies in Liverpool beyond the main temporal focus of this thesis (c. 1968-1986). Demographic change occurred at multiple scales, and as such the migration of Liverpool's population was understood within the context of the region (the Merseyside conurbation), and against other urban areas. An analysis of these trends is important because they informed many of the changes addressed throughout this thesis. The second section focuses on the implications of population decline for local government. The third section focuses on patterns of migration *within* Liverpool. Through available data based on local government wards, it analyses the spatial distribution of Liverpool's population decline. Specifically, this will relate to the importance of population decline to the identification of the 'inner city' in the 1970s. The final section shows how changes in the urban population came to be seen as symptomatic of a much deeper crisis. Local and national state actors problematised the population remaining within the city's boundaries through a number of demographic categories. These included, but were not limited to, race, sex, and class (as enumerated in the socio-economic groups (SEGs) identified within the census). As this chapter shows, this problematisation increasingly pointed towards issues of deprivation located within the 'inner city'. This process of problematisation occurred through various 'technologies of

residents and upon the nation as a whole'; Katherine Bradbury, Anthony Downs and Kenneth Small, *Urban decline and the future of American cities* (Washington D.C., 1982), p. 4. This idea is evident throughout the US literature, with a prominent example being Thomas Sugrue, *The origins of the urban crisis: race and inequality in postwar Detroit* (Woodstock, revised ed., 2005).

⁷ This debate revolved around the question of whether population decline was the result of a new migratory process, or a continuation of longer-term trends. For more on the 'clean break', see C. Hamnett and W. Randolph, 'The changing population distribution of England and Wales, 1961-81: clean break or consistent progression', *Built Environment* 8 (1982), pp. 272-80. For similar discussion on the United States and Germany, see William Alonso, 'The population factor and the urban structure' in Arthur Soloman (ed.), *The prospective city: economic, population, energy, and environmental development* (London, 1980), pp. 32-51; Brian Berry, 'Urbanization and counterurbanization in the United States', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 451 (1980), p. 15; D. Vining and A. Strauss, 'A demonstration that the current deconcentration of population in the United States is a clean break with the past', *Environment and Planning A* 9 (1977), pp. 751-8; and; Michael Wegener, 'Modeling urban decline: a multilevel economic-demographic model for the Dortmund region', *International Regional Science Review* 7 (1982), pp. 217-4.

government', most notably the decennial census and the social survey.⁸ It is on these technologies which this chapter will focus.

Planning and the population, c. 1931-91

The British state has long exerted control over the population through a range of technologies of government, but in the lead-up to the Second World War, concern turned to the distribution of what was termed the 'industrial population'.⁹ The *Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population*, known as the Barlow Commission, was established in 1937 and published its majority report in 1940. Acknowledging the 'disastrous harvest of slums, sickness, stunted population and human misery from which the nation suffered in Mid-Victorian years', the Royal Commission recommended the decentralisation of the industrial population from large urban centres.¹⁰ A number of town and country plans, drafted during the war, followed these recommendations, including those of London and Glasgow.¹¹ From this, we can see the emergence of a political and planning culture in which the concentration of population within urban centres was seen as a significant problem.¹² Liverpool, however, was different. The *City and County Borough of Liverpool Development Plan*, published and approved in 1952, made a number of recommendations for the redevelopment of the bombed-out city.¹³ While the slow pace of house-building and slum clearance were identified as an issue which necessitated 'the movement of some sections of the population within the city boundary and the migration

⁸ Technologies of government are defined as the 'strategies, techniques and procedures through which different authorities seek to enact programmes of government'. In this sense, the census and the social survey are both technologies of government in that they enable the population to be known to these authorities; see Patrick Joyce, *The rule of freedom: liberalism and the modern city* (London, 2003), pp. 3 and 20-61. The census took place every ten years, with a number of notable exceptions. There was no census in 1941, leaving a twenty year gap between the censuses of 1931 and 1951. Further to this, there was an additional census in 1966 (quinquennial censuses were allowed in the Census Act 1920), but this was based solely on a 10 per cent sample of the population. For more on this, see Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and General Register Office, Edinburgh, *Guide to census reports: Great Britain 1801-1966* (London, 1977), pp. 23-37.

⁹ Curiously, there was little distinction drawn between 'industry' and the 'industrial population' within the report; Cmd. 6153, *Royal commission on the distribution of the industrial population: report* (London, 1940).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹¹ Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London plan 1944* (London, 1945); and Patrick Abercrombie and Robert Matthew, *The Clyde Valley regional plan 1946: a report prepared for the Clyde Valley Regional Planning Committee* (Edinburgh, 1949).

¹² As we can see, this political and planning culture stemmed from a biopolitical concern with the health of the population; cf. Foucault, *Society must be defended*.

¹³ Catherine Flinn, *'In spite of planning': reconstructing Britain's blitzed cities, 1945-54* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2011), pp. 186-201.

of others into the County area', it was hoped that this could be limited.¹⁴ As stated in the development plan:

The policy of the Council is to reduce the population overspill beyond the city boundary to the practical minimum and so make full and economic use of the services which have been built up by their enterprise in the past to serve a great city. One of the main problems, therefore, is to reconcile maximum population capacity with good living conditions.¹⁵

From the early 1950s, as a number of large cities were enacting policies of decentralisation, Liverpool was seeking to maintain much of its own population, which had been declining since the 1930s.¹⁶ There was, however, a tension between this need to maintain the population of the city and the need to ensure an adequate supply of housing.¹⁷ In order to reconcile these aims, Liverpool City Council sought to enact overspill agreements with surrounding local authorities, leading to the designation of Skelmersdale and Runcorn New Towns in 1961 and 1964 respectively.¹⁸ Within this plan, the city's population would fall from 800,000 to 700,000 by the mid-1970s.¹⁹ The 1952 plan envisaged a graded system of residential zones, each with a planned population density (see figure 1.1). The 'inner zone' was to have a net density of 140 persons per acre; the 'middle zone', 100 persons per acre; and the 'outer zone' 40 to 56 persons per acre.²⁰ In this, the plan conformed to contemporary planning culture, though with a somewhat reduced emphasis on decentralising the population. But the plan to maintain the population was ultimately unsuccessful, with the continued loss of population fundamental to Liverpool's urban crisis.

¹⁴ City and County Borough of Liverpool, *Development plan: report of the survey (written analysis)* (Liverpool, 1952), p. 7.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ There were other examples of this; while Glasgow is highlighted for the brevity of its decentralisation policy, early plans had sought to maintain the population within existing boundaries; see *First and Second planning reports to the Highways and Planning Committee of the Corporation of the City of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1947), known as the 'Bruce Report'.

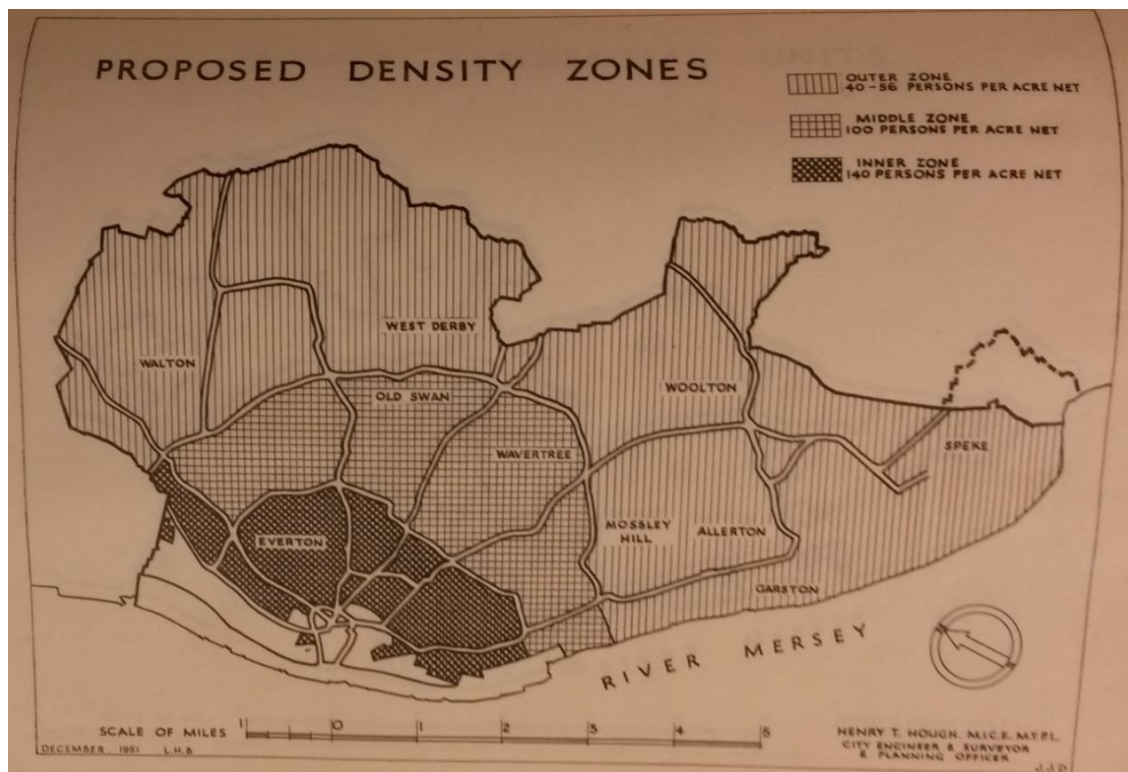
¹⁷ This aim was supported by the 1950s social studies; see Charles Vereker and John Barron Mays, *Urban redevelopment and social change: a study of social conditions in central Liverpool, 1955-56* (Liverpool, 1961), p. 1.

¹⁸ Flinn, *In spite of planning*, p. 196.

¹⁹ City and County Borough of Liverpool, *Development plan: summary of proposals (written analysis)* (Liverpool, 1952), Appendix: distribution of population.

²⁰ Projected populations: inner zone – 227,771; middle zone – 189,253; outer zone – 262,810.

Figure 1.1: Proposed population densities for Liverpool, 1952



Source: 'Plan No. 17: Proposed density zones', City and County Borough of Liverpool, *Development plan: report of the survey (written analysis)* (Liverpool, 1952).

The relationship between population and planning is more complex than maps of population density might suggest. In fact, population trends informed plans more than plans determined the population. In 1964, the city council carried out a review of its development plan which forecast a natural increase in the population of Merseyside to between 950,000 and 1,000,000. This increase was based solely on birth and death rates.²¹ Within the city boundary, the population was forecast to be 640,000 by 1981.²² This represented a decrease in the projection (down from 700,000 forecast in 1952) and reflected the realisation that the population was falling at a greater rate than planners had envisaged, as people moved to the suburbs of Merseyside seeking an improved standard of living, or to other towns and cities in search of jobs (see figure 1.2).²³ From the 1940s to the 1960s, therefore, the population of Liverpool was the subject of competing concerns, including how to reconcile the need to maintain an economically-viable population with the need to build more housing. Decentralisation also allowed areas marked by extensive bomb-damage to be

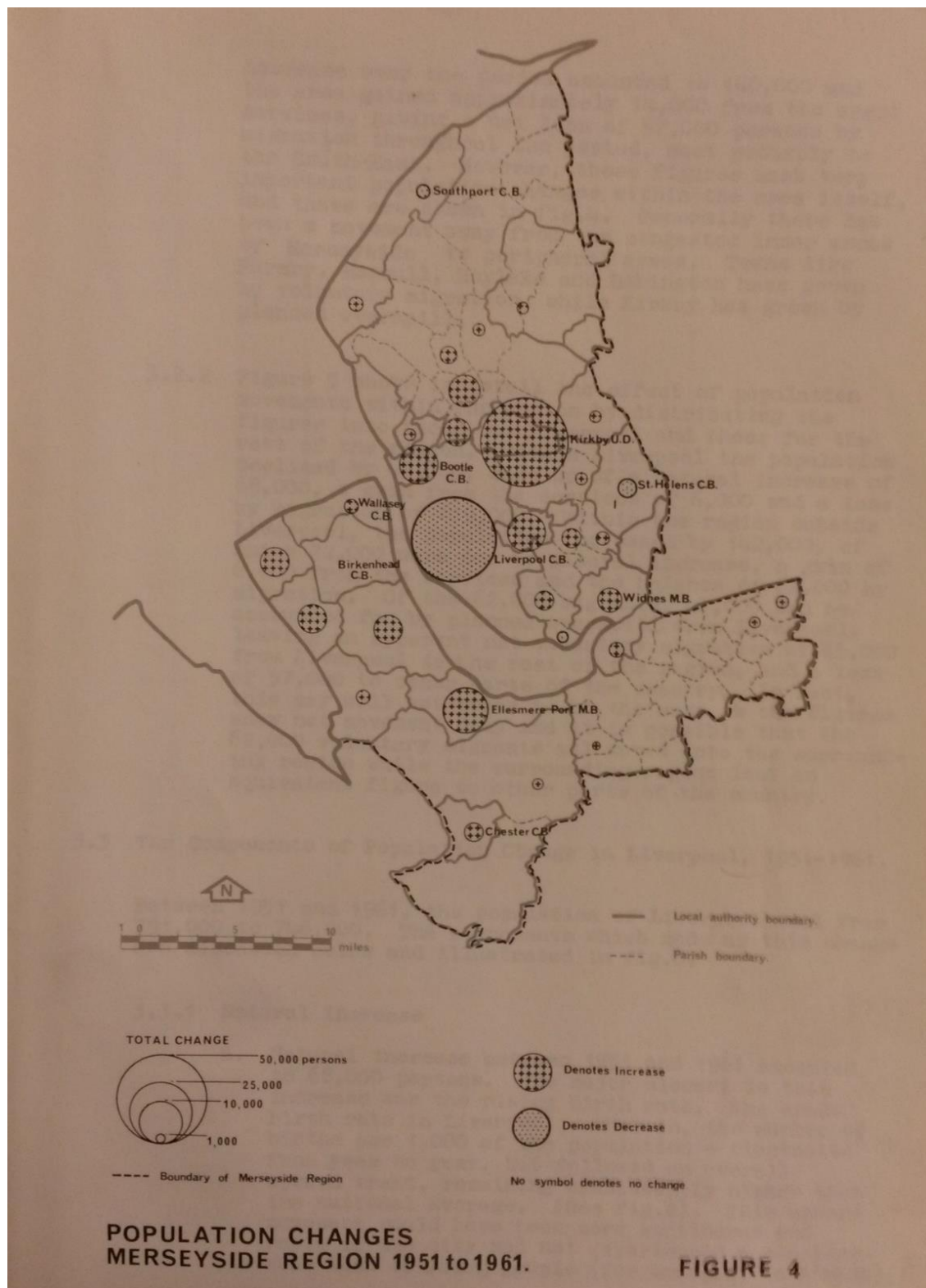
²¹ This also saw Liverpool's population conceived within a regional framework; see City of Liverpool Development and Planning Committee, *Review of the city development plan, report no. 12, population and housing: future trends and requirements* (Liverpool, 26 June 1964), pp. 2-3.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²³ City of Liverpool Development and Planning Committee, *Review of the city development plan, report no. 11: population and housing* (Liverpool, 26 June 1964), p. 3. However, as figure 1.2 shows, the town of St. Helens also lost population between 1951 and 1961.

redeveloped. Even though this damage left a large area of vacant land in the city, it was patchy and required clearance. This further necessitated decentralisation because, simply put, people needed a place to live in the intervening period. This was the case even as planners sought to minimise population loss.

Figure 1.2: Population change in Merseyside, 1951-61



Source: City of Liverpool Development and Planning Committee, *Review of the city development plan, report no. 11: population and housing: past trends and the present picture* (Liverpool, 26 June 1964).

The population of Liverpool, as evidenced in the census, reached its peak in 1931; by 1991, it had almost halved (-47.46 per cent).²⁴ This rate of decline was far in excess of that planned or forecast in the post-war years and was driven by large-scale 'voluntary migration' over which planners had no control.²⁵ As figure 1.3 shows, the population of Liverpool continued to rise until at least 1931, when it reached a peak of 855,688. Over the course of the twentieth century, however, the overall trend was one of decline. Owing to the outbreak of the Second World War, no census was conducted in 1941, with the next data point being 1951. As such, decennial measures of population change for this period are not available through the census. Nevertheless, from 1951, the population of Liverpool fell continuously; in the forty-year period between 1951 and 1991, the city's population declined by 43 per cent. The greatest rate of loss occurred between the 1961 and 1981 censuses, with a decline of 32.45 per cent and intercensal rates of -18.19 per cent and -17.44 per cent respectively (see figure 1.4). These rates of decline were far in excess of the decentralisation planned by the local authority. The 1952 plan had forecast a population of 700,000 by the mid-1970s and the 1964 review a population of 640,000 in 1981.²⁶ By these dates, the actual enumerated population was 610,112 and 503,722 respectively. The city of Liverpool was therefore undergoing significant population decline in the latter half of the twentieth century (see figures 1.3-1.5 and table 1.1, below).

As we can see from figure 1.5, the rate of Liverpool's depopulation was greater than that seen in the majority of Britain's major cities. In the intercensal periods of 1961-71 and 1971-81, Liverpool's population declined at a faster rate than any other British conurbation. Between 1981 and 1991, the rate of decline slowed, with only Glasgow evidencing a greater rate of depopulation. In England during this period, Liverpool's rate of population change was matched only by Manchester, though Liverpool began the decade exhibiting a greater rate of decline. Reflecting on this, the city's chief planning officer, Michael Hayes, reported to the city council that

Disturbingly, however, Liverpool lost a further 25,000 population between 1981 and 1985, 5% of its 1981 population. This was a much higher rate of loss than the other cities, including Manchester, which had previously been declining at a similar rate.²⁷

²⁴ However, a peak population of 867,000 in 1937 was cited in Michael Hayes, *Past trends and future prospects: urban change in Liverpool 1961-2001* (Liverpool, 1987), p. 8.

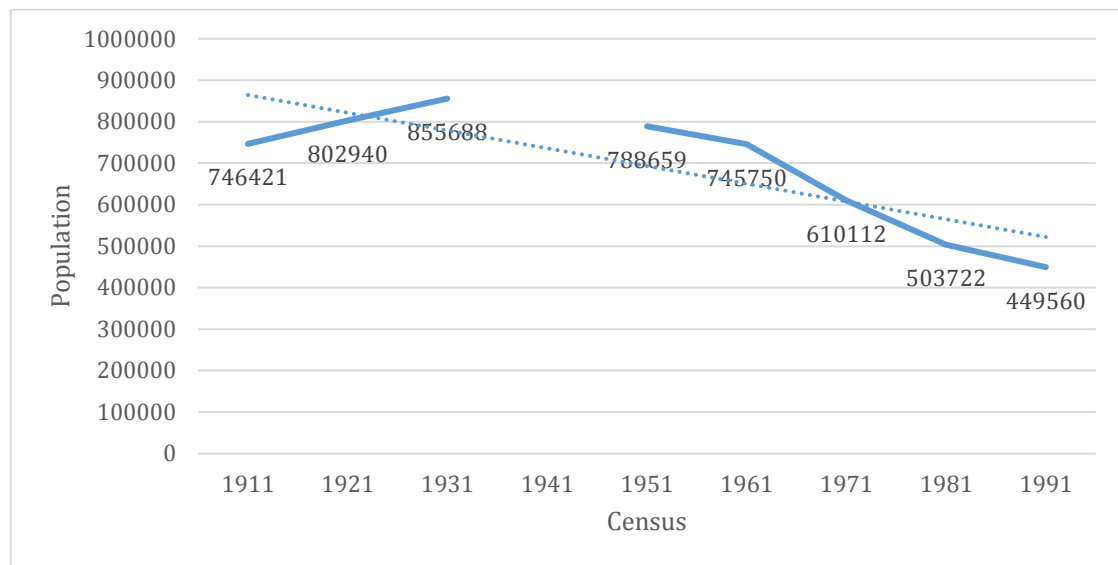
²⁵ Liverpool Development Committee, *Review report 12*, pp. 1-3.

²⁶ See City and County Borough of Liverpool, *Development plan: summary of proposals*, Appendix; and Development and Planning Committee, *Review report 12*, p. 22.

²⁷ Hayes, *Past trends and future prospects*, p. 9.

From this, it is clear that Liverpool's falling population became a problem for two reasons. Firstly, this decline came 'despite the Government's and City's urban regeneration policies' which sought to maintain population.²⁸ Secondly, Liverpool's population consistently fell at a greater rate than those of most other British cities, indicating that Liverpool's problems were either the worst, or among the worst in the country. While the continued fall of the population therefore represented a challenge for planners attempting to manage clearance and construction programmes, this continued loss of population was also problematised by politicians, policymakers, and in the findings of social scientific studies in the 1970s.

Figure 1.3: Population of the city of Liverpool, 1911-91



Sources: General Register Office, *Census county reports: Lancashire* (London, 1911-1961); Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Census county report: Lancashire* (London, 1971); Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Census county reports: Merseyside* (London, 1981-1991).

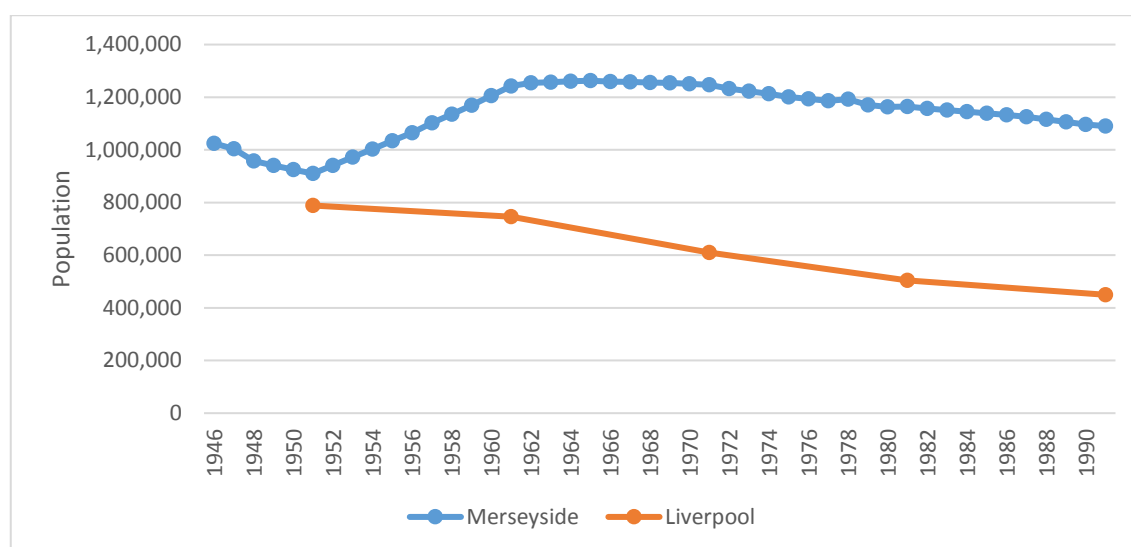
Table 1.1: Intercensal population change in Liverpool, 1911-91

	1911-21	1921-31	1931-51	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91
Liverpool	+7.57%	+6.61%	-7.83%	-5.44%	-18.19%	-17.44%	-10.75%

Sources: General Register Office, *Census county reports: Lancashire* (London, 1911-1961); Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Census County report: Lancashire* (London, 1971); Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Census county reports: Merseyside* (London, 1981-1991).

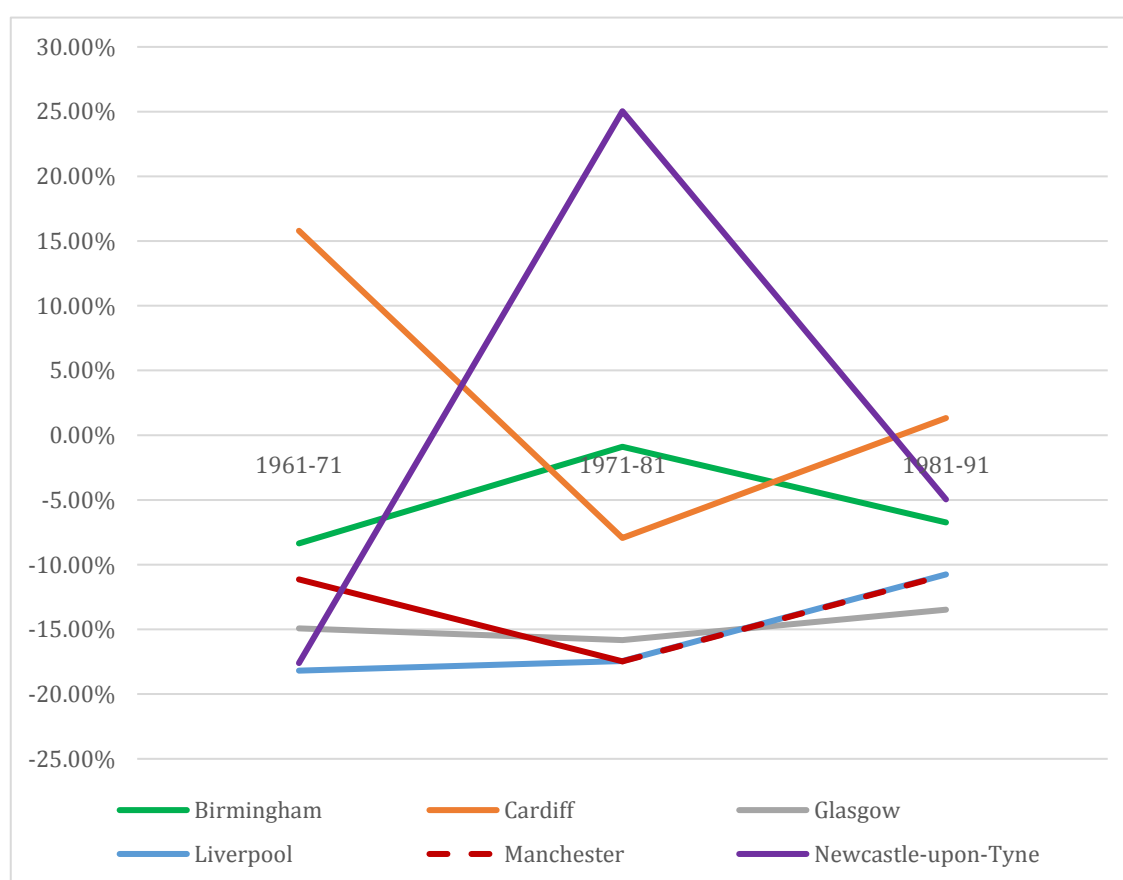
²⁸ Ibid.

Figure 1.4: Population of Liverpool and Merseyside, 1961-91



Sources: General Register Office, *Census county reports: Lancashire* (London, 1961); Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Census County report: Lancashire* (London, 1971); Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Census county reports: Merseyside* (London, 1981-1991); and R. Crouchley, R. Fligelstone and J. Wright, 'Census like area based aggregate Labour Market Statistics (unemployed, active and population) for the intercensal years, 1946-1990', *UK Data Service*, data collection SN 3539, 1997 <<http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-3539-1>> [accessed 18 March 2015].

Figure 1.5: Population change (%) in major British cities, 1961-91



Sources: 1961 Census county reports, *Vision of Britain*, 2009 <<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/>> [accessed 30 May 2017]; and Census Aggregate Data,

UK Data Service, 2012 <<https://census.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/aggregate-data>> [accessed 3 March 2015]. N.B. The data presented above is for population change using the 1971 base (population present on the night of the census). The above cities were chosen as they allowed for easy comparison over the period; changes in the definition, within the census, of London County, Greater London, and Inner and Outer London, made that conurbation's inclusion difficult.

Depopulation and local government, c. 1971-76

The Local Government Act 1972 highlighted concerns within Liverpool City Council over the effects of depopulation and demographic change on its ability to govern the city. This concern was driven by the threatened reduction of the number of city councillors. In February 1971, Edward Heath's Conservative government published its white paper on the reorganisation of local government.²⁹ While eschewing the much more radical recommendations of the earlier *Royal Commission on Local Government in England* (known as the Redcliffe-Maud report), the reforms set out to ensure the local state was properly organised to govern a society which had 'motor cars on our roads' and 'electricity in our homes'.³⁰ As part of the reform process, local authorities and other interested parties submitted evidence to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). But as the submissions of local parties on the proposals for Liverpool show, these reforms were seen to have implications beyond traffic planning or power generation. This was reflected in the proposed reduction in the number of city council wards and councillors. Prior to local government reorganisation, Liverpool City Council had 40 wards, returning some 160 members (120 elected councillors plus 40 Aldermen).³¹ After the Local Government Act 1972, this was reduced to 33 wards returning a total of 99 councillors.³² While this was a considerable fall in the number of elected representatives, it nonetheless exceeded the guidelines set out by the Home Office for the reorganisation of local government.³³ This was achieved through city councillors' arguments that depopulation and demographic change imposed particular burdens on urban governance.

Evidence submitted to the LGBCE demonstrates how city councillors articulated their concerns surrounding the effects of demographic change to lobby for cuts in the number of city wards to be limited. In a meeting with the LGBCE on 22 August 1977, representatives of Liverpool City Council, the main local political parties, and local residents

²⁹ Cmnd. 4584, *Local government in England: government proposals for reorganisation* (London, 1971).

³⁰ Ibid., p. 5; also see Cmnd. 4040, *Report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in England* (London, 1969).

³¹ Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), *Report no. 319: proposal for the future electoral arrangements for the City of Liverpool* (London, 1979), schedule 1, para. 7.

³² Ibid., schedule 1, para. 3.

³³ Metropolitan District Councils were to have between 50 and 80 elected members; see LGBCE, *Report no. 6: review of electoral arrangements* (London, 1973), para. 30.

discussed the proposed boundary changes. At the meeting, the City Solicitor, K. M. Egan, expressed the council's desire for the number of wards and councillors to be maintained, emphasising the 'scale and nature of the duties carried out by the authority and the burden such duties cast on elected members'.³⁴ Crucially, the changing demographic structure of the city was cited as evidence of having 'imposed a heavy burden on the elected members, both in terms of the committee structure and the "constituency" work of members'.³⁵ As the population continued to fall, councillors were concerned that those who remained – in particular residents of inner wards – continued to suffer from problems associated with 'deprivation'. This argument was put forward by Labour councillor and Leader of the City Council, John Hamilton.³⁶ While this case for maintaining the number of elected councillors was accepted by the LGBCE, the argument was rejected by the Conservative MP for Liverpool Wavertree, Anthony Steen. Steen argued that:

The gist of the Council's case and figures was that the population was declining. If they were right, then their case for maintaining a Council of 99 members was destroyed – they could not have the best of both worlds.³⁷

That the argument was won in favour of maintaining the number of councillors, rather than reducing it, highlights the problems caused by, or attributed to, depopulation.

Population decline, however, also imposed a fiscal burden on the city council. In developing a new structure plan, Merseyside County Council (formally established in 1974 through the Heath government's reorganisation of local government) identified the fiscal implications of a falling population. Preparing its structure plan, in 1976 the county council reported on the financial resources available for redevelopment. As the report acknowledged, the rateable value of properties in Liverpool in particular was low compared to the national average.³⁸ Liverpool's local authorities therefore already had a small tax base upon which it could draw and relied on the rate support grant from central government. The County Treasurer for Merseyside estimated that 'for each person who leaves Merseyside, the area loses around two hundred and twenty pounds grant aid by way of the

³⁴ LGBCE, *Report no. 319 on proposal for Liverpool*, schedule 1, para. 7.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Hamilton also cited the support of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities on this; *ibid.*, schedule 1, para. 11.

³⁷ Ibid., schedule 1, para. 10. This view was supported by the leader of the Conservative group on the city council, S. Airey; see schedule 1, para. 15.

³⁸ Audrey Lees, *Merseyside structure plan: draft report of survey, financial resources* (Liverpool, 1976).

needs and resources elements (particularly the latter) in the rate support grant'.³⁹ This was on top of the loss of local government rates paid by householders on properties in the city.

The financial implications of depopulation were reiterated by the Liverpool Inner Area Study (IAS) consultants in their 1977 final report. Noting the county council's report on the financial resources available for redevelopment, the consultants – from the architectural and planning firms Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, Roger Tym and Associates, and Jamieson Mackay and Partners – argued that Liverpool alone would lose £234 for every person who left the city. With the population falling by around 13,000 people a year in the late 1970s, the consultants estimated an annual loss of £3 million with 'the increasing burden of local authority expenditure [having] to be met by fewer people'.⁴⁰ The increasing burden of expenditure reflected the financial costs of urban decline located within the 'inner city'. As the next section shows, the identification of the inner city in British urban policy was underwritten by evidence of the geographical distribution of population decline and the issues of economic dependency which this raised.⁴¹

Depopulation and the inner city, c. 1976-79

This section shows that depopulation was focused in Liverpool's inner area, with those residential areas surrounding the city centre evidencing the highest rates of population decline (see figures 1.6, 1.8 and 1.9). While the methodology of the census presented certain issues – including changes to enumeration boundaries and the questions asked – census data was used by the IAS consultants, central and local government to analyse the effects of this depopulation on inner urban areas.⁴² Growing evidence of the effects of depopulation on the inner urban areas, as shown through a series of area-based studies conducted in Liverpool during the 1970s, contributed to a national shift away from policies of decentralisation to attempts to repopulate the inner city. In this, the section also draws on central government policies and evidence from other British cities.

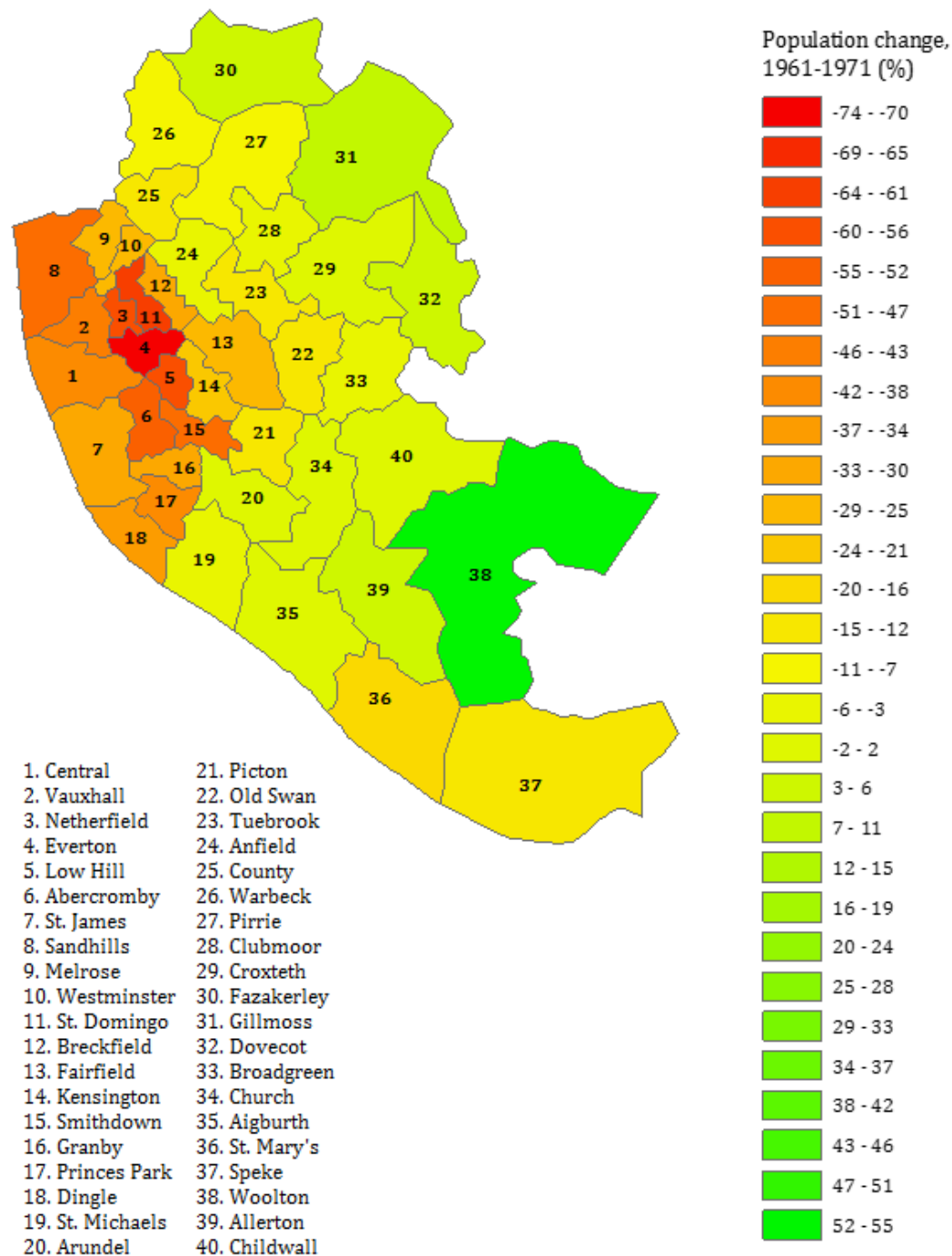
³⁹ 'Report by the County Treasurer', 17 December 1976 as cited by Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Change or decay: final report of the Liverpool Inner Area Study* (London, 1977), p. 236.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 236-7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴² Following the reorganisation of local government in the 1970s, Liverpool City Council was reduced from 40 to 33 wards. To achieve this, some wards were simply merged, while others were split between neighbouring areas (see LGBCE, *Report no. 319 on proposal for Liverpool*, schedule 3). This reorganisation complicates our ability to analyse ward-based data from the 1960s to the 1990s. As such, this analysis is divided into the intercensal periods of 1961-71, 1971-81, and 1981-91.

Figure 1.6: Choropleth map - intercensal population change in Liverpool, 1961-71



Sources: General Register Office, *Census 1961: England and Wales County Report: Lancashire* (London, 1964); Census Aggregate Data, *UK Data Service*, 2012 <<https://census.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/aggregate-data>> [accessed 3 March 2015]; Boundary Data Selector, *UK Data Service*, 2012 <<https://borders.ukdataservice.ac.uk/bds.html>> [accessed 9 May 2017]. N.B. census statistics for each of these wards and figures of intercensal change appear can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 1.6 shows intercensal population change for the period 1961 to 1971 mapped across Liverpool's city council wards. As we can see from the map, the greatest rates of decline occurred in the inner wards, located around the city centre. With the exception of the southernmost wards of Speke and St. Mary's, the geographical distribution of population change shows a clear process of decentralisation. The inner wards of the city exhibited the greatest rates of decline, with a 74 per cent fall in the population of Everton. Neighbouring wards also experienced dramatic falls in their population, with a loss of over half of the residents in Abercromby, Low Hill, Netherfield, and St. Domingo; it was these wards which were merged in 1973. Moving out from this urban core, the rate of decline fell. Away from the inner area, populations were more stable. Aigburth, Allerton, Croxteth, and Fazakerley were among the wards with population changes in the range of +/- 2 per cent. This reflected the relative stability of suburban population change at this time. While most of the city's wards had a declining or relatively stable population, Woolton was a notable exception.⁴³ Located to the southeast of the city centre, Woolton became the locus of suburban growth in Liverpool with an increase of 55 per cent in the ten years between 1961 and 1971. As the IAS consultants explained, new suburbs, of which Woolton was an important example, 'housed most of the additional households resulting from the growth of population and affluence and many of those who left the inner areas of their own accord'.⁴⁴

From this census data, we can see a definite trend in population movements in 1960s Liverpool. The population was declining at an increasing rate across the city, but this was particularly acute within the inner areas. Slum clearance was a major driver of this population trend, with the inner urban areas dominated by older housing.⁴⁵ The improvement of housing conditions had been a long-term policy aim, with the decentralisation of the inner urban population a by-product of this re-development. While this was a pattern which was repeated across urban Britain (see figure 1.5), the case of Liverpool was different, as suburban growth failed to keep pace with inner urban decline.⁴⁶ As the IAS consultants found in 1977:

Since 1921, the population of the [inner areas] has been declining at an accelerating rate whilst that of the outer areas has been rising, although at a diminishing rate in recent years. And for many years, the loss from the inner city has exceeded the gains in the outer areas so that the population of the city itself has been falling steadily.⁴⁷

⁴³ In the 1973-79 reorganisations, Woolton was the only ward to be divided in two, while others were being amalgamated.

⁴⁴ Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 1; this has long been a hallmark of the inner city, as will be explored in chapters 3 and 4.

⁴⁶ Mander, 'Old towns for new', pp. 208-27.

⁴⁷ Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 56.

The effects of inner urban population decline were therefore seen as having been worsened as a result of this overall decline.⁴⁸ Population decline was a problem for the city as a whole, but the spatial distribution of this decline meant that its effects were felt much more acutely in certain areas.

The depopulation of inner Liverpool was driven by slum clearance and urban redevelopment. Everton, an area north of the city centre, was scheduled for clearance in 1952 owing to its 'insanitary' housing.⁴⁹ Between 1961 and 1971, the area lost some 74 per cent of its population. By the early 1980s, parts of Everton were substantially de-populated and increasingly derelict. This was also the case in Vauxhall, an area of inner Liverpool to the north of the city centre which hosted a Community Development Project (CDP) from 1970 to 1975.⁵⁰ Vauxhall ward saw a 47 per cent fall in population between 1961 and 1971.⁵¹ When the CDP was established in 1970, the area had therefore undergone a rapid process of demographic change. Vauxhall's population decline had been largely driven by slum clearance, but the construction of a new tunnel under the River Mersey, known as the Kingsway Tunnel, and its attendant urban motorway system, was also a significant cause of its depopulation in the 1960s and early 1970s. The new tunnel was proposed in 1959 to complement the Queensway Tunnel, opened in 1936.⁵² Construction of the tunnel itself took 14 months,⁵³ but it was the building of the approach roads which caused the greatest upheaval.⁵⁴ In order to make way for these roads, tenement flats were demolished and the population was re-housed in overspill areas.⁵⁵ As the final report of the Vauxhall CDP explained, the effects of planned decentralisation were felt by those residents in areas

⁴⁸ Cheshire and Hay, *Urban problems in Western Europe*, p. 60.

⁴⁹ *Liverpool development plan: report*, plan numbers 8, 9 and 11.

⁵⁰ Details of the project can be found in its final report; see Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?* Overall, twelve CDPs were established in: Batley, West Yorkshire; Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Canning Town, East London; Cleator Moor, Cumbria; Glyncoirwg, Glamorgan; Hillfields, Coventry; Vauxhall, Liverpool; North Shields, Tyneside; Clarksfield, Oldham; Paisley, Renfrewshire; Saltley, Birmingham; and Southwark, South-East London. An inter-project team also compiled and published its own reports; see CDP, *The costs of industrial change* (London, 1977); CDP, *Gilding the ghetto: the state and poverty experiments* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1977); and CDP, *Limits of the law* (London, 1977).

⁵¹ The figure was given as 37 per cent in Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?* p. 21.

⁵² The decision to build a second road tunnel under the Mersey was based on concerns over traffic flows leading up to a bridge and the considerations of shipping traffic; see T. M. Megaw and C. D. Brown, 'Mersey Kingsway Tunnel: planning and design', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 51 (1972), pp. 481-2.

⁵³ A full account of the construction can be found in J. C. Mc Kenzie and G. S. Dodds, 'Mersey Kingsway Tunnel: construction', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 51 (1972), pp. 503-33.

⁵⁴ A full account of this can be found in A. A. Cairncross and S. T. Jones, 'Mersey Kingsway Tunnel: project organization, approach roads, buildings and operating organization', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 51 (1972), pp. 535-60. The planning blight and dereliction attributed to this project will be covered in chapter 3.

⁵⁵ The effects of this were presented in a series called 'urban castaways', published in the *Liverpool Echo*, 14-22 April 1972.

experiencing population decline. Lawrence Gardens was one of many blocks of interwar walk-up flats along the planned route of the tunnel's entry roads. The surrounding buildings had been demolished, but Lawrence Gardens remained 'in the middle of a huge 10 acre motorway loop, cut off from the rest of the area'.⁵⁶ The only telephone in the area had been in the local pub which closed in 1970; one resident claimed that this left the remaining residents with 'no communication with the outside world'.⁵⁷ The case of Vauxhall therefore shows how closely depopulation driven by clearance programmes was linked to planning blight, especially for those still living in the area.

Population decline was therefore an inherently spatialised process. As the IAS consultants found, the population declined through slum clearance and planned decentralisation, as well as voluntary migration to the suburbs.⁵⁸ Decline was the predominant narrative for the inner city, but the attendant crisis was produced at least in part through the comparison with other urban areas. The effects of inner city population decline were measured against the living conditions of the growing suburbs and new towns which had 'good housing in an attractive environment, new schools and social welfare services integrated with jobs, shopping centres and recreational activities'.⁵⁹ Drawing population back to the inner city therefore required some reversal of the policies which had been seen to produce the area's problems.⁶⁰ The quality of housing, along with the availability of employment, was recognised as a major factor in driving the movement of population away from inner urban areas. One solution, put forward by the IAS consultants, was the improvement of inner-city housing which, it was hoped, would introduce greater flexibility into the housing market. While families with children might still wish to relocate to suburban estates, other suburban households might choose to relocate back into the inner area. These included 'suburban couples whose children had moved away and who had more space in their council house than needed'.⁶¹ This proposed solution was accepted by central government, leading to the rejection of new towns in favour of old ones.⁶²

⁵⁶ Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?* p. 20.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 2; this can also be seen in Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker and Bor, *Unequal city: final report of the Birmingham Inner Area Study* (London, 1977), pp. 315-24. Lambeth, however, continued to show signs of congestion; in contrast with other inner urban areas, the Lambeth consultants therefore advocated continued population dispersal; see Shankland, Graeme, Peter Willmott and David Jordan, *Inner London: policies for dispersal and balance: final report of the Lambeth Inner Area Study* (London, 1977), pp. 203-21.

⁵⁹ Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 2.

⁶⁰ This point was made in an editorial in the *Liverpool Echo*, 20 July 1972, p. 6.

⁶¹ Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 216.

⁶² Cf. Mandler, 'New towns for old', pp. 208-27.

This disavowal of the new towns was first shown in the 1976 cancellation of Stonehouse in South Lanarkshire, which had been designated as an overspill area for the redevelopment of inner Glasgow.⁶³ Nationally, the shift in government policy – encouraging people to move back to inner urban areas – was indicated in the 1977 white paper, *Policy for the Inner Cities*, into which the findings of the three inner area studies fed directly. As the white paper argued:

A new balance is required between the inner cities and the surrounding region. A deliberate effort is [needed] to reduce, and possibly in some cases end, the loss of people and jobs from the cities as a whole and the inner cities in particular. This means making the cities more attractive for employers and more attractive for people to live and work in. It means taking steps to match the skills of those in inner cities with the jobs which are available and providing the sort of homes people want.⁶⁴

Policy for the Inner Cities was enacted through the Inner Urban Areas Act of 1978, implementing a number of policies, including increasing funding available to inner areas through the Urban Programme, which had been established ten years earlier.⁶⁵ While a landmark in terms of policy, and the result of an accumulation of social scientific and other evidence of the problems of inner urban areas, this also represented a new stage in the problematisation of urban spaces, including the dynamics of the urban population.

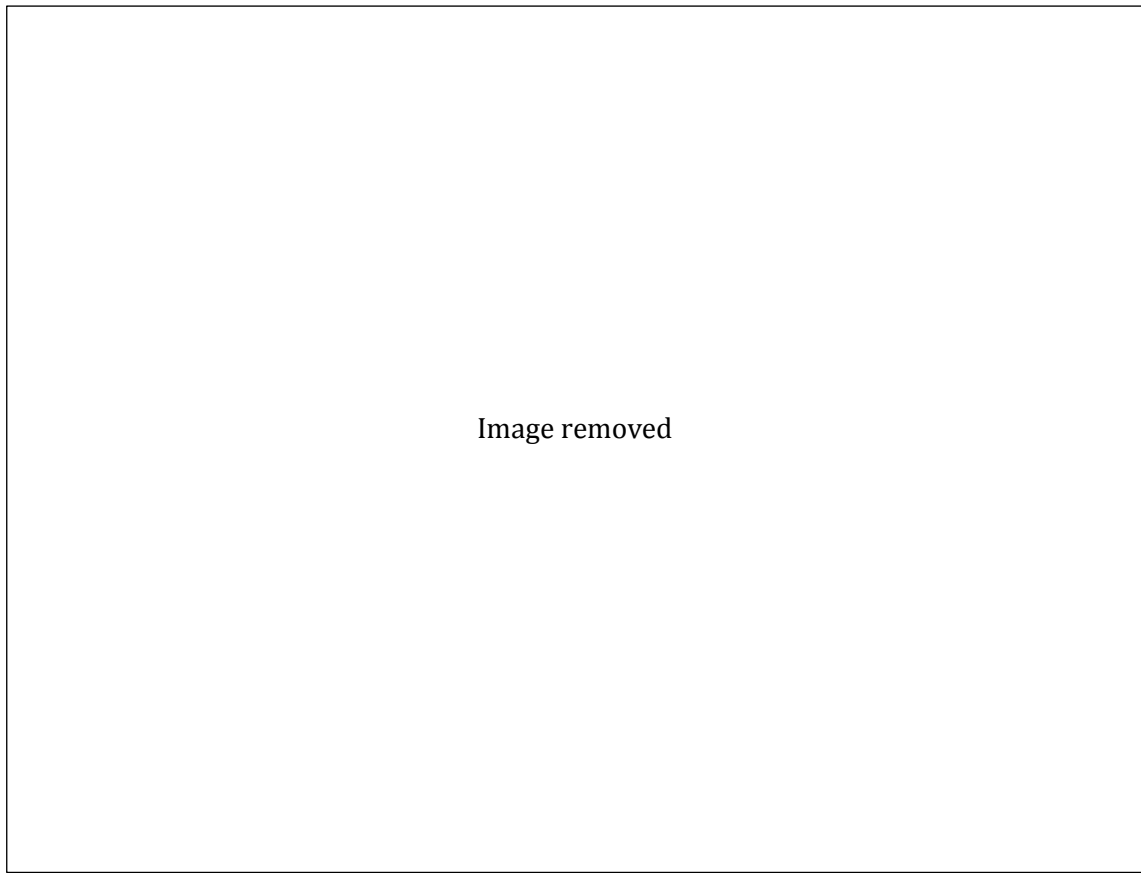
This shift was satirised in the British magazine *Punch* on 11 May 1977. In it, removal men were seen carrying an armchair towards a terraced house which, along with the modernist tower block in the background, were important markers of the built environment of the inner city. In the foreground of the cartoon, one character was depicted explaining, presumably to his new neighbour: ‘We left under a dispersal scheme and came back on an inner-city renewal programme’. While not the most biting of *Punch*’s satire, the cartoon nonetheless underscores an important sea change in central government policy.

⁶³ Cmnd. 6845, *Policy for the inner cities*, p. 16.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁵ Inner Urban Areas Act (1978), § 1-11.

Figure 1.7: Punch cartoon, 1977



Source: “We left under a dispersal scheme and came back on an inner-city renewal programme”, *Punch* 844 (11 May 1977), *Punch Historical Archive, 1841-1992* <<http://find.galegroup.com/pnch/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=PNCH&userGroupName=leicester&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=&docId=ES700162472&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>> [accessed 16 May 2016].

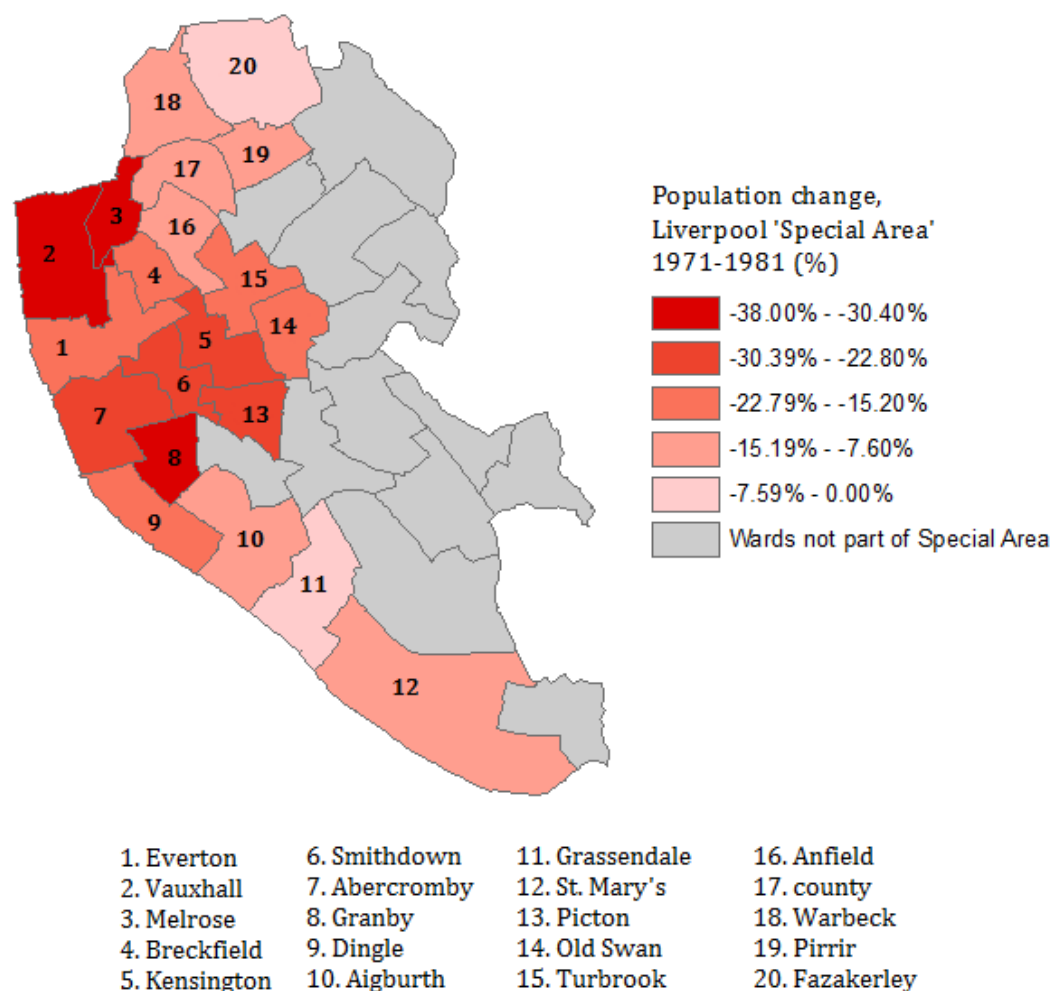
Liverpool's population decline continued during the course of the 1970s, though at a slightly reduced rate of -17.44 per cent. For the intercensal period of 1971-81, it has only been possible to analyse census data for inner wards of Liverpool as changes to local government boundaries during this period have inhibited our ability to compare the data. A special supplement to the 1981 census report for Merseyside was published, using demographic data for 20 of the city's 33 wards to analyse the 'decay and decline of those areas'.⁶⁶ These wards formed what was termed the Liverpool 'special area', designated under the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978 as being in need of special assistance, and shows how population statistics continued to be used to analyse urban problems.⁶⁷ Using this data,

⁶⁶ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Census 1981 County Monitor: Merseyside Supplement: Liverpool Special Area* (London, 1981), p. 1.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, § 1. Inner city partnerships were designated under a statutory instrument, the Inner Urban Areas (Designated Districts) (England and Wales) Order 1978; under this initial order, a total of 42 urban areas in England and five in Wales were designated. A similar instrument applied to Scotland, under which nine urban areas were designated (Cf. Inner Urban Areas (Designated Districts) (Scotland) Order 1978).

figure 1.8 shows that the intercensal rates of population change had decreased within the inner area, but still remained high in places. The rate of population decline slowed in Everton, which had exhibited the highest rate of population decline during the 1960s, from -74 per cent to -21.08 per cent. Of course, this was in the context of re-drawn boundaries, with the ward having been merged with neighbouring areas.⁶⁸ The highest rate of population decline (-37.81 per cent) was evidenced in the ward of Granby, in the area of the city known as Toxteth. The two inner wards of Vauxhall and Melrose, to the north of the city centre, also evidenced high rates of population decline (respectively -33.03 per cent and -36.52 per cent). As this analysis of available data for the period 1971-81 therefore shows, while population decline had slowed in Liverpool as a whole, inner urban areas continued to lose population.

Figure 1.8: Choropleth map – intercensal population change in the Liverpool 'Special Area', 1971-81

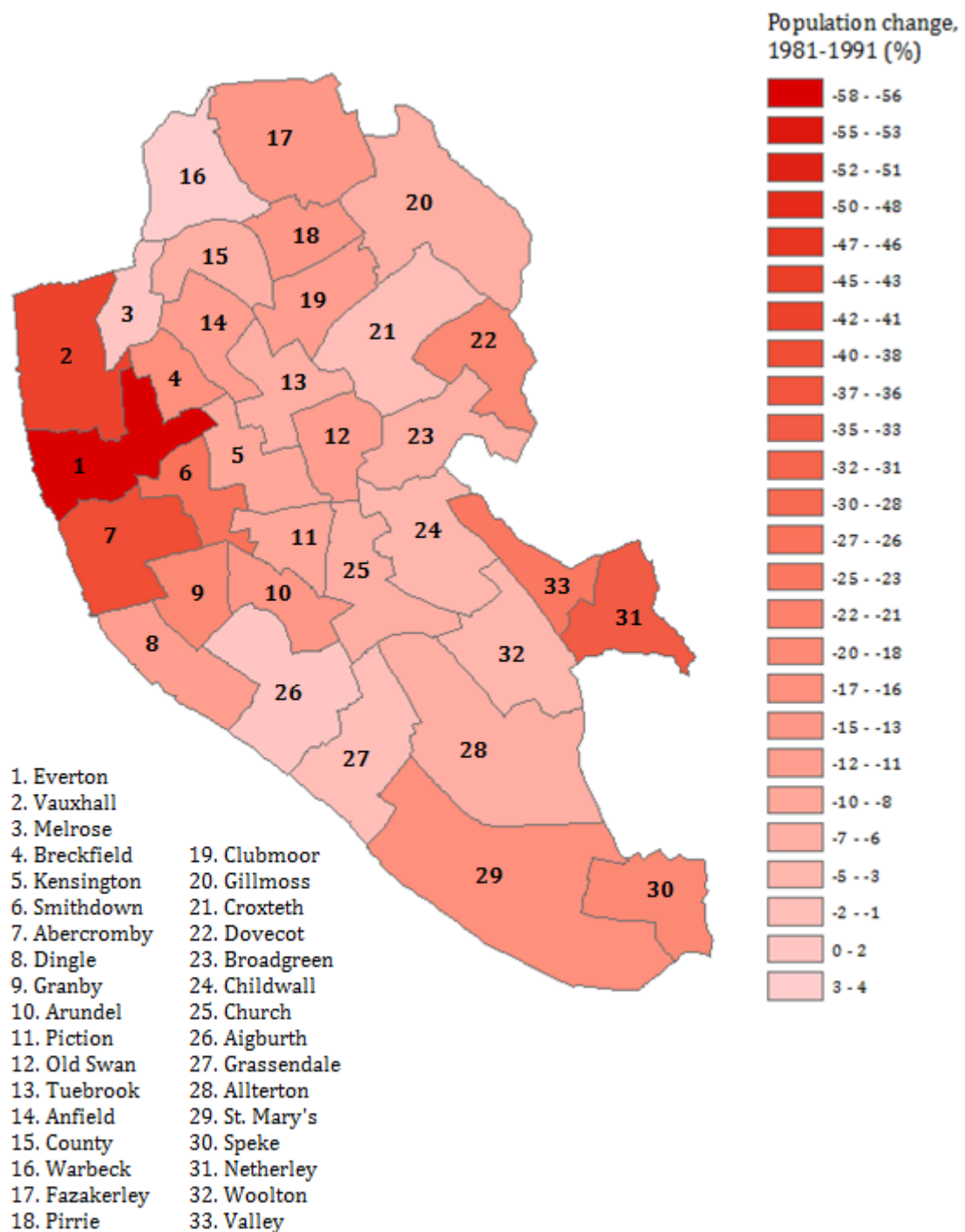


Sources: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *Census 1981 County Monitor: Merseyside*

⁶⁸ This is Everton as a named ward; the area had expanded to include part or all of the previous Central and Netherfield wards.

Supplement: Liverpool Special Area (London, 15 September 1981); Boundary Data Selector, *UK Data Service*, 2012 <<https://borders.ukdataservice.ac.uk/bds.html>> [accessed 9 May 2017].

Figure 1.9: Choropleth map - intercensal population change in Liverpool, 1981-91



Sources: Census Aggregate Data, *UK Data Service*, 2012 <<https://census.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/aggregate-data>> [accessed 3 March 2015]; Boundary Data Selector, *UK Data Service*, 2012 <<https://borders.ukdataservice.ac.uk/bds.html>> [accessed 9 May 2017]. N.B. methodological issues with the GIS software have meant that this map is based on percentages rounded to the nearest whole number; rates of population change rounded to the nearest two decimal places are presented in the Appendix. The choropleth map was produced through setting 25 classes of data at equal intervals. The colouration of these maps changes depending on the number and spacing of classes; 25 classes

were chosen to highlight the range of intercensal rates of population change evidenced across the city's wards.

Liverpool's population decline slowed during the 1980s to a rate of -10.75 per cent for the period between 1981 and 1991. But within the inner area, high rates of population decline continued to be evidenced (see figure. 1.9). Everton in particular continued to exhibit a high rate of decline, as more than half of the population left (-58 per cent), in part to make way for a new urban park.⁶⁹ Population decline remained spatially-focused on the inner area of the city, but at -34 per cent, the rate of population decline was also high in the suburban ward of Netherley in the east of Liverpool, then undergoing redevelopment.⁷⁰ While rates of depopulation in Liverpool's inner area were therefore identified as a problem, demographic data was also deployed to problematise the population remaining in these areas, as the next section shows.

Depopulation and demography: age, race, and SEGs, c. 1976-87

The advent of an inner cities policy in 1977 contributed to the identification of depopulation in Liverpool as a policy problem. As the IAS consultants found, the pattern of migration away from the city altered Liverpool's demographic structure.⁷¹ Through the categories of age, race and ethnicity, and class (understood within the framework of socio-economic groups, or SEGs, evidenced within the census), the shifting demographic structure of the city of Liverpool in general, and its inner areas in particular, became the subject of official concern by central and local government.⁷² This section focuses on these demographic categories, showing how the accumulation of statistical data on the urban population both shaped, and was shaped by, the perceptions of urban problems and demonstrates how these problems were linked to ideas of economic dependency.

In the mid-1970s, the Department of the Environment used demographic data to cast the population which had *not* left inner urban areas as a policy problem. The

⁶⁹ LRO: 352 MIN/ECD/1/1, Appendix 13, Urban regeneration strategy: report of the Chief Executive, 8 December 1983, p. 2.

⁷⁰ In 1976, Eddie Loyden, MP for Liverpool Garston, which included Netherley, had complained in Parliament about the quality of the housing there; HC Deb, 26 March 1976, series 5, vol. 908, col. 857. During the course of the 1980s, the Netherley Estate underwent significant redevelopment, including the replacement of flats and maisonettes with new houses; this perhaps explains the high rate of population decline in the area.

⁷¹ Wilson and Womersley, *Change or Decay*, pp. 56-9.

⁷² On the distinction between race and ethnicity, see Karim Murji, 'Ethnicity', in Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris (eds), *New keywords: a revised vocabulary of culture and society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 112-14; and Karim Murji, 'Race', in Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris (eds), *New keywords: a revised vocabulary of culture and society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 290-96. A number of demographic indices were problematised by the state in the 1970s and 1980s; this was especially the case in the *Census Indicators of Urban Deprivation (CIUD)* reports. These will be discussed in more detail below.

department produced a series of 13 working notes known as the *Census Indicators of Urban Deprivation (CIUD)*.⁷³ Using data collected from the 1971 census, the *CIUD* reports ranked urban areas against the prevalence of particular indicators, including issues of housing, employment, assets, proxies for low income, and what were defined as 'special needs'.⁷⁴ The *CIUD* identified the socio-economic status of sections of the population as a proxy for low income. These included: the proportion of male active or retired personal service workers (listed as SEG 7 in the census); semi-skilled manual workers (SEG 10); unskilled manual workers (SEG 11); and junior non-manual workers (SEG 6).⁷⁵ The category of 'special needs' included the percentage of the population aged 0-14, of pensionable age, and those born in (or whose parents were born in) New Commonwealth countries.⁷⁶ The results of these studies are examined below, but it is important to note how demography was deployed, through the analysis of census data, to problematise the urban population.⁷⁷ Through the analysis of demographic categories, the Department of the Environment sought to identify, 'as far as the limited nature of the census permits', the geographical distribution of deprivation.⁷⁸ These reports fed into central and local government policymaking, enabling areas of concern to be identified and funding to be targeted through the urban aid programme. In this, the *CIUD* reports were used in the selection of Housing Action Areas under the Housing Act 1974,⁷⁹ and the designation of certain districts for special assistance under the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978.⁸⁰

Through these reports, the socio-economic status of the inner-city population was therefore identified as a cause for concern by central government, located around Merseyside. The North West planning region of England was a key case study in the Department of the Environment's attempt to use census data for the identification of urban

⁷³ These reports can be found in the British Library or the David Wilson Library, University of Leicester.

⁷⁴ Department of the Environment (DoE), *Census indicators of urban deprivation (CIUD) working note no. 1: 1971 census: extraction of indicators of deprivation* (London, 1974).

⁷⁵ Ibid., Appendix A.

⁷⁶ Ibid.; the New Commonwealth was comprised of those countries which had gained independence from the United Kingdom after the Second World War.

⁷⁷ Though the rural population was also covered; see DoE, *CIUD working note no. 12: the rural districts of England and Wales* (London, 1975).

⁷⁸ DoE, *CIUD 1*, para. 2. The limitations of this approach were acknowledged in DoE, *CIUD working note no. 3: report on census indicators of urban deprivation – North West Planning Region* (London, 1974), para. 2.

⁷⁹ DoE, *CIUD working note no. 5: the use of census indicators in the selection of Housing Action Areas* (London, 1974).

⁸⁰ The reports, however, identified the 'inner area' as the local authorities 'making up the old industrial centres of the conurbations', with the 'inner city' studied through the analysis of social and economic change within the 'worst' five per cent of enumeration districts within these authority areas. See DoE, *CIUD working note no. 10: the conurbations of Great Britain* (London, 1975), p. 6.

deprivation.⁸¹ Within this, the conurbation of Merseyside received particularly close attention.⁸² Indicators of urban deprivation in Merseyside were identified as being amongst the worst in the sample.⁸³ In comparison with other urban areas, and national trends, it was stated that 'Merseyside appears worse off than [Great Britain] as a whole'.⁸⁴ Through the use of census data, a diverse range of demographic categories were constructed as the object of analysis, with their prevalence signifying potentially deep-seated urban problems. The presence of a significant immigrant population, for example, was linked to urban deprivation.⁸⁵ This close relationship between the demographic structure of Liverpool's population and the issue of housing was carried through into the findings of the IAS.

Through studies commissioned by the IAS consultants, the age structure of inner Liverpool's population was identified as a problem. The studies – undertaken by the Planning Research Applications Group (PRAG) of the Centre for Environmental Studies – developed a typology of housing in inner Liverpool, using this as the basis for its conclusions.⁸⁶ Linking Liverpool's demographic structure to its housing typology, PRAG argued that 40 years after a housing estate was built, the 'original colonising cohort' would begin dying off.⁸⁷ This was important for two reasons. Firstly, the age of an area's housing was seen to reflect the age of its occupants. Secondly, around 50 years following the deaths of the area's 'colonising cohort', an area of housing was seen to become 'structurally obsolete'.⁸⁸ At this point, 'the housing stock is liable to invasion by a process of filtration, less affluent groups replacing those for whom the original housing stock was designed'.⁸⁹ This 'invasion' included 'immigrants, the single, the rootless and the transient'.⁹⁰ As we can see from PRAG's social study, demography was used to identify areas of concern. Through

⁸¹ On planning regions, see Glen O'Hara, *From dreams to disillusionment: economic and social planning in 1960s Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 101-28.

⁸² See DoE, *CIUD 3*; and DoE, *CIUD working note no. 4: supplementary report on the North West planning region* (London, 1974).

⁸³ This observation was based on identifying the 'best' and 'worst' 15 per cent of enumeration districts; see *ibid.*, paras 22-5.

⁸⁴ DoE, *CIUD 10*, p. 3.

⁸⁵ Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, *Faith in the city: a call for action by church and nation* (London, 1985), p. 10.

⁸⁶ On the Centre for Environmental Studies, see Mark Clapson, *Anglo-American crossroads: urban research and planning in Britain, 1940-2010* (London, 2013).

⁸⁷ R. J. Webber, *PRAG technical paper 14: Liverpool social area study 1971 data: final report* (London, December 1975), p. 94.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

being linked to housing, demography was bound to the idea of the 'twilight area' which, in contrast to the 'slum', were 'potentially useful' if in need of improvement.⁹¹

Liverpool's declining population highlighted the changing age structure across the whole city.⁹² The population was bifurcating, creating a growing proportion of old and young dependents.⁹³ As the IAS consultants observed, Liverpool's population, on the whole, was slightly younger than the national average, reflecting the lower proportion of economically-active middle-aged people in the city.⁹⁴ The city's planning department explained that this was the result of the disproportionate migration of young married couples away from Liverpool in the late 1960s to find employment and better housing.⁹⁵ At the same time, the number of elderly residents was also growing. Pat Thane has shown how cultural and political fears surrounding ageing populations have long revolved around the perceived economic costs; 'increasing numbers of older people will be dependent upon a shrinking population of working age, imposing upon younger generations new and intolerable costs of pensions, health care, and personal care'.⁹⁶ This national story reflected changing patterns in natality and mortality, but the same biopolitical anxieties surrounded an ageing society produced, *inter alia*, through urban migration. The case of Liverpool, however, did not just highlight the size of the remaining population as a determinant of its ability to support a proportionately-increasing elderly population. The socio-economic status of the remaining population was also a concern. This was reflected in the pronouncement that 'it is likely that the population of the city will continue to decline and its social class composition could become ever more unbalanced, with an increasing proportion of unskilled workers'.⁹⁷ The Liverpool IAS therefore highlighted contemporary concerns surrounding the urban population, its changing composition, and its ability to support the social and economic needs of an urban area.

As well as identifying socio-economic status and age structure as an issue, central government used demographic data to problematise race and ethnicity in inner urban areas. In the early 1980s, the Inner Cities Directorate of the Department of the Environment

⁹¹ Alison Ravetz, *The place of home: English domestic environments, 1914-2000* (London, 1995), p. 75; and Alison Ravetz, *The government of space: town planning in modern society* (London, 1986).

⁹² Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 57.

⁹³ As the report explained, there a 'higher proportion of children and young adults and a lower proportion of middle aged people' than the national average; see Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 57.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ City Planning Department, *The changing social and housing structure of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1975), as cited in Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 58.

⁹⁶ Pat Thane, *Old age in English history: past experiences, present issues* (Oxford, 2000), p. 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

produced two information notes on urban deprivation.⁹⁸ Like the *CIUD* reports of the 1970s, these information notes were intended to guide the development of central government policies towards inner urban areas, including directing expenditure under the Urban Programme and the designation of areas for special assistance.⁹⁹ The analysis of 1981 data was based on eight indicators of urban deprivation, a reduction from the 52 categories analysed from the 1971 census, including the percentage of the population which was unemployed, households which were overcrowded, and households headed by a single parent. Also included were population change (as a percentage), and 'in order to provide an indication of the proportion of the non-white population', the percentage of households in which the head was born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan.¹⁰⁰ The concentration of New Commonwealth populations was not a problem in itself. However, the 'non-white population' was identified as an issue because migrant communities suffered disproportionately from deprivation. In the same year that the Department of the Environment produced its deprivation information notes, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, appointed a Commission on Urban Priority Areas. Comprising senior clerics, representatives of government, commercial, and civic organisations, and social scientists, the commission reported in 1985. As they argued in their report, *Faith in the City*, 'that ethnic origins can be used to indicate deprivation seems to us to be a deplorable comment on the society in which we live'.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, ethnic minority groups were seen to be concentrated 'in poorly paid jobs, bad housing and unemployment'.¹⁰² Indicators of urban deprivation were given standardised values to enable comparative analysis and estimate how these issues might have compounded one another.¹⁰³ Urban areas were then ranked from 'best' to 'worst' based on the prevalence of these demographic categories.

Of the seven demographic indicators subjected to statistical analysis by the Inner Cities Directorate in the early 1980s, Liverpool ranked amongst the 50 worst urban areas

⁹⁸ These can be found in the British Library, and in The National Archives, London (TNA): AT 36/381, Working group on declining urban/industrial areas and potential Economic Community funding: discussion papers, 1981-86.

⁹⁹ TNA: AT 36/381, Inner Cities Directorate, 1981 census: urban deprivation information note no. 2, c. 1983, p. 1. The information note included an important caveat, however, stating that: '[deprivation] can take many forms; economic, social and environmental and there is no completely satisfactory method of either measuring or comparing the totality of deprivation in areas'. It was also stated that, while other indicators would have aided in the identification of urban deprivation, these were not included owing to their unavailability or difficulties in interpretation.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 2. N.B. Pakistan was not a member of the Commonwealth of Nations between 1972 and 1989.

¹⁰¹ Commission on Urban Priority Areas, *Faith in the city*, p. 10.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ These standardised values, known as z-scores, denoted the standard deviation for each urban area based on all of the indicators. A z-score below zero was better than the average, while a score above zero was worse.

in six categories; of these, two were in the top ten.¹⁰⁴ By the early 1980s, Liverpool was the fifth worst urban district in terms of unemployment and had the tenth highest rate of population loss.¹⁰⁵ While the city was not ranked 'worst' for any of these indices, it was only consistently outranked by inner London boroughs, which were part of a larger urban system (Greater London). For example, in their final report, published in 1977, the Lambeth IAS consultants – Graeme Shankland, Peter Willmott and David Jordan – recommended that the decentralisation of the population from the borough continue. This reflected the consultants' opinion that 'more new housing will need to be built in the suburbs and beyond' owing to continued housing pressures in inner London.¹⁰⁶ As we can therefore see, while population decline was higher in inner London boroughs, it was the way in which Liverpool's high rate of population loss and the relatively high incidence of other demographic categories affected the city which contributed to Liverpool's urban crisis.

Liverpool had a small immigrant population. As such, the only category in which the city performed relatively 'well' was in households headed by a person born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan, ranking 146th. The short-hand term used for this demographic indicator was 'ETHNIC'.¹⁰⁷ While we can therefore see that, as with the 1971 census, New Commonwealth migrant households were problematised, this can be seen as a much more explicit proxy for issues of race and ethnicity in the early 1980s. To the extent that the ethnic structure of the urban population was an issue Liverpool's ranking once again overlooked the relatively large and well-established black and Chinese communities living there.¹⁰⁸ This issue was highlighted by the Merseyside Community Relations Council, an organisation established to represent the interests of ethnic minority communities in Liverpool.¹⁰⁹ It was not until 1991 that the census included a question specifically on ethnicity, reflecting longer-term anxieties surrounding issues of race relations in late twentieth century Britain.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ TNA: AT 36/381, Inner Cities Directorate, 1981 census: urban deprivation information note no. 2, c. 1983, tables 2 and 3.

¹⁰⁵ The majority of districts which performed worse than Liverpool were inner boroughs of London.

¹⁰⁶ Graeme Shankland, Peter Willmott and David Jordan, *Inner London: policies for dispersal and balance* (London, 1977), p. 204.

¹⁰⁷ TNA: AT 36/381, Inner Cities Directorate, 1981 census: urban deprivation information note no. 2, c. 1983, table 2.

¹⁰⁸ The methodology of the census obscured these communities within official data; as was acknowledged in John Belchem, *Before the Windrush: race relations in 20th-century Liverpool* (Liverpool, 2014), the size of these communities was unknown until the end of the twentieth century.

¹⁰⁹ 'Appendix 9: Memorandum submitted by Merseyside Community Relations Council', Race Relations and Immigration Sub-Committee (RRISC), *Racial disadvantage: minutes of evidence together with appendices, Tuesday 14 October 1980, Liverpool*, HC 610-x (London, 1980), pp. 511-12.

¹¹⁰ See Heather Booth, 'Which 'ethnic question'? The development of questions identifying ethnic origin in official statistics', *Sociological Review* 33 (1985), pp. 254-74; Máire Ní Bhrolcháin, 'The ethnicity question for the 1991 census: background and issues', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13 (1990),

In February 1987, the Chief Planning Officer for Liverpool City Council, Michael Hayes, produced a report on urban change in Liverpool.¹¹¹ Published following the establishment of the city council's Urban Regeneration Strategy,¹¹² the report represented an extension of earlier attempts to deploy social scientific knowledge to support Liverpool's urban governance through understanding the underlying causes of its urban crisis. The report sought to understand the 'inter-relationship between population, housing, and employment' given that 'the decline in population has been more marked in Liverpool than in any other British city'.¹¹³ As was shown in figure 1.5 (above), this was the case until the mid-to-late-1980s. Population was thus central to conceptions of urban social and economic change, reflecting the concern that 'migration has been selective with the loss of the younger and better qualified resulting in a more dependent population'.¹¹⁴ Once again, the problematisation of the urban population was reflected in ideas of dependency. However, whereas in the 1970s the issues resolved around both old and young dependents, this had changed by 1987. As Hayes reported: 'The elderly will comprise 20% of the population in 1991 as against 15% in 1961. Children have fallen as a proportion of the population and are forecast to comprise 21% in 1991 as against 26% in 1961'.¹¹⁵ This projected figure for elderly dependents in 1991 was slightly higher than the national figure, which saw 18 per cent of the population aged over 65 in the 1991 census.¹¹⁶ Dependency – or more accurately, need – was also reflected in other ways.

In his report, Hayes described how 'The fall in population, but not in households, has not been matched... by a proportional decline in the demand for services'.¹¹⁷ From this, we can see how concerns over the effects of population decline on need could be extended from the age structure of the remaining population; this concern was linked to the ability of the local authority to pay for the services it had to provide.¹¹⁸ But the effects of population decline on social need were also evidenced through rates of unemployment and the socio-economic make-up of the population. As such, Hayes argued that, since 1961,

pp. 542-67; Roger Ballard, 'The construction of a conceptual vision: "ethnic groups" and the 1991 census', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20 (1997), pp. 182-94.

¹¹¹ Hayes, *Past trends and future prospects*.

¹¹² The planning documents for this regeneration strategy can be found in Liverpool Record Office (LRO): 352 MIN/ECD/1/1A, Reports of the Liverpool City Council's Economic Development Committee, 1983.

¹¹³ Hayes, *Past trends and future prospects*, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹⁶ Thane, *Old age in English history* p. 478.

¹¹⁷ Hayes, *Past trends and future prospects*, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ Michael Parkinson, 'Liverpool's fiscal crisis: an anatomy of failure' in Michael Parkinson, Bernard Foley and Dennis Judd (eds), *Regenerating the cities: the UK crisis and the US experience* (London, 1989), pp. 101-16.

The number of jobs in the City fell by 43%, i.e. at a faster rate than population. The number of employed residents fell even more, by almost, reflecting the relatively unskilled structure of the City's workforce. As a consequence the number of unemployed trebled over the period.¹¹⁹

That the rate of Liverpool's population decline failed to keep pace with reductions in employment was therefore seen to heighten the effects of these issues for the city's residents. Added to this, however, were questions surrounding the socio-economic structure of the city's economically-active population. This was reflected in the census through Socio-Economic Groups (SEGs), a typology of 'class' based on employment.¹²⁰ Data for these SEGs showed a growing proportion of Liverpool's population were classed as employers or managers between 1961 and 1981 (7.5 per cent to 8.2 per cent), along with a growth in people classed as 'professionals' (2.4 per cent to 3.2 per cent), and a similar rise in semi-skilled manual employment (18.9 per cent to 20.6 per cent).¹²¹ This, however, obscured the issues raised by the chief planning officer when comparing the socio-economic structure of Liverpool against that of England and Wales:

Liverpool's socio-economic structure is relatively unskilled and the disparity is most marked at the highest and lowest skill levels. Liverpool is most underrepresented in the employers/managers/professional groups, and most overrepresented in the unskilled and undefined groups.¹²²

Through the comparison of local and national data, the improving situation in Liverpool was therefore set against an even greater national increase. As such, this was as much an issue of unequal growth as it was of absolute decline.

Conclusion

In the 1987 film *Coast to Coast*, a young Liverpool man named Richie Lee (played by Lenny Henry) and a former US soldier, John Carloff (John Shea), set up a mobile soul disco business. Discussing their mutual love of 1960s soul music and the Liverpool they used to know, Lee

¹¹⁹ Hayes, *Past trends and future prospects*, p. 5.

¹²⁰ The methodology utilised in this categorisation changed between the censuses, reflecting the shifting labour market and structure of the economy; this makes direct intercensal comparisons difficult.

¹²¹ Hayes, *Past trends and future prospects*, p. 15. There had been a fall in unskilled manual labour (15.2 per cent to 10.9 per cent), but questions were raised as to the accuracy of this measure given the use of the classification 'Armed Forces/unidentified'. Though the data is presented as economically active population, this appears to misconstrue the definition in favour of those *currently in employment* rather than everyone of working age and either *in or currently seeking employment*.

¹²² Ibid.

reminisced how 'the clubs were packed back then, everyone dead smart, even the kids'.¹²³ Forcing attendees to pay an unofficial entrance fee, under the looming threat of Lee's 6 ft. 4 in. brother, these club nights were also an easy way to make money. By the late 1980s, however, not only had the soul scene died down, the clubs were no longer filled with people. Liverpool's population decline was rarely the focus of cultural representations, but through the empty streets and derelict buildings which formed the backdrop to television series and films set in the city, the effect of depopulation was often implicit.

The population of Liverpool was in long-term decline from the 1930s to the beginning of the twenty-first century. In fact, over the course of this period, the city's population almost halved. While much of this was through migration from the city to the region of Merseyside, this too began to slowly decline from the mid-1960s. Compared with other British cities, the population of Liverpool was falling at a much greater rate, and as such was constituted as a significant problem. That population decline came to be seen as a policy problem rather than a policy aim reflected the changing biopolitical aims of the British state. Within the planning and policy framework of urban modernism, the decentralisation of the population enabled poor housing to be cleared, urban areas to be improved and, in the new housing estates, affluent citizens to be constructed.¹²⁴ But by the 1970s, these policies were increasingly seen to have failed. The decentralisation of Liverpool's population was increasingly identified as a problem. Planners and policymakers were seemingly unable to reverse the decline of the population which had occurred at a greater rate than planners had believed was economically necessary. This was especially the case in inner urban areas. This idea of economic viability was important. In losing population, local authorities in Liverpool also lost income. The smaller economically-active population was also expected to support an increasing population of dependents. People left Liverpool of their own volition. Drawn by better living standards elsewhere, or driven by the lack of opportunities available in the city, state-planned decentralisation only served to aid this long-term migration. Liverpool at this time was not simply losing people, however. As the next chapter shows, the city was also losing jobs.

¹²³ *Coast to Coast* [film], dir. by Sandy Johnson (Screen Two, 1987).

¹²⁴ Cf. Alistair Kefford, *Constructing the affluent citizen: state, space and the individual in post-war Britain, 1945-79* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2015).

Chapter 2

‘Gizza Job’: Unemployment, De-industrialisation, and Economic Decline, c. 1966-86

Introduction

Anxiety over economic decline has a long history in Britain.¹ Recent historiographical interventions, however, have sought to replace the metanarrative of economic decline with one based on de-industrialisation.² As Jim Tomlinson has argued, the loss of employment in the industrial sector – that is, manufacturing, construction, and mining – ‘has been a major force shaping post-war Britain’.³ In addition to contributing to long-standing concerns over Britain’s balance of payments, this reshaping was linked to economic welfare.⁴ Moreover, as Jörg Arnold has shown, the rising unemployment produced by de-industrialisation in Britain ‘has a cultural dimension as well as a social one’.⁵ This included the question of urban identities frequently built around their principal industries.⁶ But de-industrialisation did not simply involve economic and employment loss; women’s employment increased as the service sector boomed.⁷ Nevertheless, while the narrative of industrial decline and service sector growth reflected the national story, Liverpool was different. As this chapter shows, Liverpool had long-term and deep-seated problems of unemployment. This was primarily the result of decline in the service sector. While there was local growth in manufacturing, especially in the 1960s and early 1970s, this was somewhat short-lived in the face of

¹ See Jim Tomlinson, ‘Thrice denied: “declinism” as a recurrent theme in British history in the long twentieth century’, *Twentieth Century British History* 20 (2009), pp. 227-51.

² See Jim Tomlinson, ‘De-industrialization not decline: a new meta-narrative for post-war British history’, *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 76-99. Jörg Arnold, “De-industrialization”: a research project on the societal history of economic change in Britain (1970-90), *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 34 (2012), pp. 34-60 also offers an important entry point into the growing historiography of de-industrialisation in Britain.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁴ For example, see Alec Cairncross, ‘What is de-industrialisation?’ in Frank Blackaby (ed.), *Deindustrialisation* (London, 1978), pp. 5-17; and Tomlinson, ‘De-industrialization not decline’, pp. 84-5.

⁵ Arnold, ‘De-industrialization’, pp. 34-60.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

⁷ On these trends, see Sara Connolly and Mary Gregory, ‘Women and work since 1970’, in Nicholas Crafts, Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell (eds), *Work and pay in twentieth century Britain* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 142-77; and Stephen Broadberry, ‘The rise of the service sector’, in Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries and Paul Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge economic history of modern Britain, vol. II: 1870 to the present* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 330-61.

economic recession. Thus, while decline provides an important framework through which to understand economic change in late twentieth century Liverpool, it was not an unrelenting process, with moments in which Liverpool's economy showed signs of growth. This chapter will therefore focus on the tensions between economic growth and decline, and between the industrial and service sectors of the urban economy. Added to this was a tension between the urban and the region in terms of the scales at which unemployment occurred.

In focusing on these tensions, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first uses dock labour and the waning fortunes of the port of Liverpool as an entry point to a wider discussion of Liverpool's labour market problems. While these issues had been evident since the interwar years, unemployment in Liverpool reached new heights in the 1970s and 1980s. Liverpool was not an industrial city in the same way as, for example, Manchester or Sheffield; its economic problems were, *prima facie*, the result of the decline of the service sector, especially the port.⁸ The second section shows how, by the mid-1970s, the city had begun to replace the region as the key focal point for central government policymakers' attention. This was a result of growing disquiet at the apparent cost-ineffectiveness of regional policy and the persistence of high rates of unemployment, particularly within 'inner city' areas.⁹ Moreover, it shows how the decline of the service sector contributed to de-industrialisation in Liverpool through the collapse of manufacturing associated with the port. The final section focuses on the early 1980s as a period of de-industrialisation and economic crisis. Liverpool de-industrialised in the 1980s

⁸ On Manchester and Sheffield, see Ian Taylor, Karen Evans and Penny Fraser, *A tale of two cities: global change, local feeling and everyday life in the north of England; a study in Manchester and Sheffield* (London, 1996); on Liverpool and Merseyside, see N. J. Cunningham, 'The pattern of Merseyside employment 1949-66' in R. Lawton and C. Cunningham (eds), *Merseyside: social and economic studies* (London, 1970), pp. 149-201; and Trevor Cornfoot, 'The economy of Merseyside, 1945-1982: quickening decline or post-industrial change?' in William Gould and Alan Hodgkiss (eds), *The resources of Merseyside* (Liverpool, 1982), pp. 14-26.

⁹ On regional policy in Britain, see Peter Scott, 'The worst of both worlds: British regional policy, 1951-64', *Business History* 38 (1996), pp. 41-64; and Glen O'Hara, *From dreams to disillusionment: economic and social planning in 1960s Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 101-28. In the 1960s, regional policy was implemented through Industrial Development Certificates (IDC), advance factory-building, and a Regional Employment Premium (REP); within this policy framework, particular regions became the locus for central government intervention at different points in time. For example, the early 1960s saw central government focus on the regional economies of Scotland and the North East of England; see Scottish Council (Development and Industry), *Inquiry into the Scottish economy 1960-1961: report of a committee appointed by the Scottish Council (development and industry) under the chairmanship of J.N. Toothill* (Edinburgh, 1960); and Cmnd. 2206, *The north east: a programme for regional development and growth* (London, 1963). While the region provided the most important unit of analysis within this, particular cities were cited as being the subject of concern. For example, in 1959, while many areas were 'in sight of attaining unemployment rates not greatly higher than the national average', Liverpool and Glasgow were identified as 'blighted areas'; see O'Hara, *From dreams to disillusionment*, p. 112.

as manufacturing plants closed across the city and region, but this was to most disastrous effect in inner urban areas. The economic crisis, along with the attendant social problems, became a renewed focus for state intervention in the form of an Urban Development Corporation and an Enterprise Zone; these became the hallmarks of Thatcherite urban regeneration.¹⁰ This characterisation of crisis suggests, firstly, that Liverpool's economic decline had a material and detrimental effect on Liverpool's residents. Secondly, in identifying this economic crisis as a 'marketplace for ideas', it is possible to see beyond a simple narrative of decline in the 1970s followed by neoliberal regeneration in the 1980s.¹¹ Put another way, it was not Thatcherism which regenerated Liverpool – or at least its waterfront – but the political and economic capital which poured in to the city, stimulated by the urban crisis. As the first section shows, this urban crisis was driven by global technological and economic change, as much as it was events in Liverpool.

Dockers and the dole: unemployment and the service sector, c. 1966-72

In April 1956, a ship set sail from Newark, New Jersey, carrying 58 cargo-filled metal boxes to Houston, Texas. This journey along the eastern seaboard of the United States, Marc Levinson has contended, marked the beginning of a 'revolution', as shipping containers revitalised the global economy and reshaped ports across the world.¹² In Liverpool, shipping activity had long been based around a network of docks stretching along the Mersey waterfront, from Brunswick, located south of the city centre, to Vauxhall in the north. This network of docks extended into Bootle, a town connected to, but administratively separate from, Liverpool. From the late 1960s, the construction of Seaforth Docks near Bootle, to the north of Liverpool, shifted the locus of maritime trade, as the city's nineteenth-century port infrastructure and shallow waters were inaccessible to newer and larger container ships.¹³ The changing fortunes of Liverpool's port in the twentieth century, partly as a result of containerisation and partly through changes in the flow of international maritime trade, therefore provide an important lens through which changes in the city's

¹⁰ Recent historical accounts of Urban Development Corporations and Enterprise Zones, see Sue Brownill and Glen O'Hara, 'From planning to opportunism? Re-examining the creation of the London Docklands Development Corporation', *Planning Perspectives* 30 (2015), pp. 537-70; and Sam Wetherell, 'Freedom planned: Enterprise Zones and urban non-planning in post-war Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 266-89.

¹¹ Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, 'Introduction. The benighted decade? Reassessing the 1970s', in Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton and Pat Thane (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 1-24.

¹² Marc Levinson, *The box: how the shipping container made the world smaller and the world economy bigger* (Oxford, 2nd ed., 2016); on Liverpool, see pp. 270-79.

¹³ The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (MDHB) proposed the construction of the Seaforth Dock to the National Ports Council in 1965. This was approved in 1966 through the passing of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Act 1966; the new dock opened in 1971. See MDHB, *Annual report and review for the year ended 1st July, 1965* (Liverpool, 1965), p. 6.

economy and labour market can be understood. This was especially the case for the communities living and working along Liverpool's waterfront.¹⁴ Reflecting on this, Levinson argued,

The armies of ill-paid and ill-treated workers who once made their livings loading and unloading ships in every port are no more, their tight-knit waterfront communities now just memories. Cities that had been centers of maritime commerce for centuries, such as New York and Liverpool, saw their waterfronts decline with startling speed, unsuited to the container trade or simply unneeded.¹⁵

While the level of unemployment and poverty evidenced across the city had been markedly high since the 1920s, this section shows how the paucity of work on the docks represented a significant contribution to Liverpool's increasingly chronic unemployment situation.¹⁶ Thus, while the 'regional problem', and the attendant problematisation of the unequal distribution of unemployment across the country, emerged in the 1930s, Liverpool's experience of this became increasingly acute in the later decades of the twentieth century.¹⁷

The centrality of dockers to this narrative of economic change and rising unemployment points to an important tension. The 'strongly manual, labour intensive' male work in which dockers were engaged had many similarities with construction workers and coal miners.¹⁸ But this manual labour was officially classed as part of the service, rather than the industrial sector.¹⁹ As Robert Millward has acknowledged, the 'dividing line between services and industry is a rather grey area'.²⁰ While recognising this ambiguity, the definition of the service sector used here is based on categories set out in the British

¹⁴ Laura Balderstone, Graeme Milne and Rachel Mulhearn, 'Memory and place on the Liverpool waterfront in the mid-twentieth century', *Urban History* 41 (2014), pp. 478-96.

¹⁵ Levinson, *The box*, p. 2.

¹⁶ Charlotte Wildman, *Urban redevelopment and modernity in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918-1939* (London, 2016), p. 1.

¹⁷ Stephen Ward, *The geography of interwar Britain: the state and uneven development* (London, 1988); for a more recent account of the regional problem, see Frank Geary and Tom Stark, 'What happened to regional inequality in Britain in the twentieth century?', *Economic History Review* 69 (2016), pp. 215-28.

¹⁸ See Jim Phillips, 'Class and industrial relations in Britain: the "long" mid-century and the case of port transport, c. 1920-70', *Twentieth Century British History* 16 (2005), pp. 55-6.

¹⁹ As Jim Tomlinson has argued, there is some laxity in the definition of industry, but the most authoritative is related to the output of economic activity; see E. Wrigley, 'The PST system for classifying occupations', *The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure paper 1* <<http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/britain19c/papers/paper1.pdf>> [accessed 7 June 2017] as cited in Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization not decline', pp. 76-7. The distinction between services and industry is further complicated by the notion of the 'industrialisation' of the service sector; on this, see Broadberry, 'The rise of the service sector', pp. 342-3.

²⁰ Robert Millward, 'The rise of the service economy', in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge economic history of modern Britain, vol. 3: structural change and growth, 1939-2000* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 238.

government's Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. Introduced in 1948 and updated periodically, the SIC categorised economic activities into a series of orders and subdivisions based primarily on economic output, rather than the nature of the employment in which the workers were engaged.²¹ As such, and to use Jim Phillips's phrase again, while dock workers were engaged in 'strongly manual, labour intensive' employment, the 'loading and unloading of vessels' was categorised as a service within the transport and communication order along with, for example, omnibus crews and post office employees.²² This was distinct from manual industrial labour in that the output was not manufactured goods. Liverpool's economic decline, at least until the 1970s, was therefore understood as distinct from the process of de-industrialisation – the reduction in employment in the 'industrial sector' comprising manufacturing, construction, and mining – evidenced elsewhere. Nevertheless, as this chapter demonstrates, in terms of the effect on the labour market, there were many similarities between the decline of the service sector in Liverpool, and de-industrialisation more broadly.

Added to this issue of historicising changes in the labour market is the problem of using the claimant count – as published by the Ministry of Labour and its departmental successors – as an index of unemployment. Figures published in the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, *Employment and Productivity Gazette*, *Department of Employment Gazette*, and the *Employment Gazette* indicate the number of people within a particular jurisdictional boundary who had registered for unemployment benefits. As Christina Beatty and Steven Fothergill have shown, these measures hid a significant proportion of the unemployed. This was especially the case following changes in the 1980s which re-defined 'unemployment' and 'economic inactivity'.²³ While the claimant count obscures the 'real' rate of unemployment, it nonetheless offers the best statistical source for this study owing to the regularity of its data over the period. For example, the Labour Force Survey, instituted in 1973, was only conducted biennially until 1983 after which annual surveys were conducted. Nevertheless, while the Labour Force Survey has produced more accurate figures for national rates of unemployment, the survey's methodology, it has been noted, has not produced reliable local statistics.²⁴

²¹ For example, see Central Statistical Office, *Standard industrial classification* (London, 1968).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²³ See Christina Beatty and Stephen Fothergill, 'Hidden unemployment among men: a case study', *Regional Studies* 36 (2002), pp. 811-23.

²⁴ Christina Beatty, Steve Fothergill and Tony Gore, *The real level of unemployment 2012* (Sheffield, 2012), pp. 6-7.

Table 2.1: Number of registered dock workers, 1947-89

	National register	Liverpool
1947	79,769	-
1957	75,500	16,085
1967	56,808	11,530
1969	49,225	11,100
1971	43,645	10,427
1973	34,590	7,550
1975	31,884	7,326
1977	29,168	6,402
1979	25,770	5,202
1981	18,219	3,402
1983	13,813	2,151
1985	11,922	1,862
1989	9,400	1,100

Source: Bill Hunter, *They knew why they fought* (London, 1994), p. 135 as cited in Brian Marren, *We shall not be moved: how Liverpool's working class fought redundancies, closures and cuts in the age of Thatcher* (Manchester, 2016), p. 206.

In April 1966, as the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (MDHB) were beginning to invest in new port infrastructure in the Seaforth area of Merseyside, to the north of Liverpool, the city's official rate of unemployment stood at around two and a half per cent (see table 2.2). This was a marked improvement on the rate evidenced three years previously, when nearly six per cent of the city's population were unemployed, but remained above the level of two per cent, which one central government memorandum termed 'the upper limit nationally of tolerable unemployment'.²⁵ This measure was contentious, especially when deployed to justify special treatment.²⁶ Nevertheless, levels of unemployment in the city of Liverpool and the Merseyside region were consistently higher than the national average.²⁷ The state responded to this through the application of regional policy, a 'complex of policies designed to influence, directly or indirectly, the location of industry and employment to bring about a better balance between the more prosperous and the less prosperous regions'.²⁸ Even though there was some fluctuation, the rates of

²⁵ This upper limit was placed at two per cent; see The National Archives, London (TNA): T224/1234, Memorandum, Douglas Haddow to William Armstrong, 21 July 1966.

²⁶ For example, one civil servant argued it was 'clearly unjustifiable for Scotland to claim that 2.4% unemployment is politically intolerable if similar or higher rates in England (and Wales) go to make up the national average'; see TNA: T224/1234, Memorandum, R. F. Bretherton to G. R. Bell, 27 July 1966.

²⁷ As Sally Horrocks has pointed out, there are issues in defining Merseyside prior to the 1970s; see Sally Horrocks, 'Industrial chemistry and its changing patrons at the University of Liverpool, 1926-1951', *Technology and Culture* 48 (2007), p. 50, fn. 15.

²⁸ Cmnd. 6058, *Regional development incentives: government observations on the second report of the expenditure committee: House of Commons paper 85, session 1973-74* (London, 1975), p. 3. On the development of regional policy in Britain from the 1930s to the 1980s, see Peter Scott, 'Regional development and policy' in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge economic history of modern Britain, volume 3: structural change and growth, 1939-2000* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 332-67.

unemployment in Liverpool and Merseyside continued to rise from this point. Nonetheless, as we can see in table 2.2, this was also the case for unemployment across Great Britain. These trends in unemployment point towards an unambiguous process of economic decline as measured through the growth of joblessness. Dock workers formed an important part of this. Between 1957 and 1967, the number of registered dockers in Liverpool fell by nearly a third, from 16,085 to 11,530.²⁹ Nevertheless, there were moments during which the economic prospects of the city and region were positive.

Table 2.2: Rate of unemployment (%) based on the claimant count, 1960-72

Year	Liverpool	Merseyside	NW England	Great Britain
1960	3.9	4.0	2.2	1.8
1961	3.7	3.5	1.7	1.5
1962	4.4	5.0	2.4	2.0
1963	5.8	5.3	3.3	2.7
1964	4.7	3.9	2.3	1.8
1965	3.0	3.2	1.7	1.5
1966	2.5	2.8	1.4	1.3
1967	4.0	5.0	2.6	2.4
1968	3.9	5.0	2.5	2.5
1969	3.9	4.6	2.4	2.4
1970	4.6	4.8	2.8	2.7
1971	5.7	6.2	3.8	3.4
1972	8.2	7.1	5.3	4.2

Sources: *Ministry of Labour Gazette* vols. 68-75 (1960-67), *Employment and Productivity Gazette* vols. 76-77 (1968-69), *Department of Employment Gazette* vols. 78-80 (1970-72). The above table contains only figures for one month (April) of each year listed. Thus, while the above table cannot show annual cycles, it nevertheless provides a year-on-year indication of employment change over a long period of time as each of the statistics was taken during the same point in the annual employment cycle. Figures for Merseyside are taken from R. Crouchley, R. Fligelstone and J. Wright, 'Census like area based aggregate Labour Market Statistics (unemployed, active and population) for the intercensal years, 1946-1990', *UK Data Service*, data collection SN 3539, 1997 <<http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-3539-1>> [accessed 18 March 2015].

In September 1967, the Secretary of State for Economic Affairs appointed a committee chaired by Sir Joseph Hunt to 'examine in relation to the economic welfare of the country as a whole and the needs of the development areas, the situation in other areas where the rate of economic growth gives cause (or may give cause) for concern'.³⁰ The Hunt

²⁹ Figures taken from Bill Hunter, *They knew why they fought* (London, 1994), p. 135 as cited in Brian Marren, *We shall not be moved: how Liverpool's working class fought redundancies, closures and cuts in the age of Thatcher* (Manchester, 2016), p. 206.

³⁰ Cmnd. 3998, *The intermediate areas*. Hunt was a businessman, being the director of the Chloride Electrical Storage Co., Ltd, but had also been involved in policymaking through his former role as chairman of the West Midlands Economic Planning Council. Confusingly, Michael Stewart was named as Secretary of State for Economic Affairs at the point of the committee's establishment on 21 September 1967; see Cmnd. 3998, *The intermediate areas: report of a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Joseph Hunt* (London, 1969). Nevertheless, Peter Shore was appointed Secretary

committee opened up the possibility for re-designating areas for assistance under the 1966 Industrial Development Act.³¹ Merseyside was one such area. While the figures contained within table 2.2 indicate a worsening unemployment situation from 1966, the Hunt report suggested the obverse; set against the rest of the North West of England, Merseyside was improving.³² Merseyside, it was argued, 'is growing rapidly whilst the remainder is generally sluggish'.³³ As a result of this bifurcation between the economic growth of Merseyside and the relative stagnation of the surrounding region, the committee recommended that the area be de-scheduled. Consequently, the level of assistance the area received from central government would have been reduced, though not removed entirely.³⁴ This, it was argued, could save central government approximately £18 million a year, unless 'firms which would otherwise have gone to Merseyside switched their projects to other development areas'.³⁵ Clearly, the Hunt committee considered the economic prospects for Merseyside to be positive; what mattered most was not an arbitrary measure of unemployment, but comparisons with neighbouring areas, combined with assumptions as to the overall trend.

However, as the correspondence of local policymakers demonstrated, the recommendations were contested on the grounds that they could endanger a precarious economic situation. In July 1968, William Mather, chairman of the North West Economic Planning Council (NWEPC), wrote to Peter Shore, then Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, expressing his organisation's view that 'The future of Merseyside is inextricably bound up with that of the rest of the North West region'.³⁶ As a result of this close economic interdependence, Mather asked that Shore bear in mind the likely effects of de-scheduling Merseyside:

It can be said that development area policy has been relatively successful in Merseyside, but we would prefer to regard this success as having laid the ground work for the economic future. It is necessary now to build on

of State for Economic Affairs on 29 August 1967, his appointment thus superseding the establishment of this committee; see Martin Crick, 'Shore, Peter David, Baron Shore of Stepney (1924-2001)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2011 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76251>> [accessed 16 June 2017].

³¹ On the motives and consequences of this legislation, see O'Hara, *From dreams to disillusionment*, pp. 116-17.

³² Cmnd. 3998, *The intermediate areas*, pp. 14 and 146-7.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

³⁴ Firms would still benefit from the Regional Employment Premium (REP) and continue to receive development grants on the level agreed before the area was de-scheduled; *ibid.*, p. 154.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ TNA: EW 7/1234, Correspondence, William Mather to Peter Shore, 15 July 1968. Mather also sent similar letters to Barbara Castle (First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity), Anthony Crosland (President of the Board of Trade), and Anthony Greenwood (Minister of Housing and Local Government).

this foundation. We are quite sure that any precipitate action would be likely to retard the future progress of this important part of our Region.³⁷

In its oral evidence to the Hunt committee, the NWEPC had further suggested that ‘although the greater part of the Merseyside problem was in the past and there was already a considerable element of self-sustaining growth there, sufficient special problems remained to justify retention of its present status “for a period of years”’.³⁸ The NWEPC reasoned that ‘Success is still promised rather than fulfilled and any premature (and unsubstantiated) removal of support could be a major setback’.³⁹ While Merseyside was not de-scheduled following the Hunt committee’s recommendations, this episode remains important. Firstly, it points to the positive economic position of Merseyside in the late 1960s relative to the surrounding region. While its problems were long-term, the apparent improvement in Merseyside’s unemployment situation was taken as evidence for the benefits of regional policy and also proffered the potential for a graded system of intervention, through which support could be reduced in light of positive economic performance.⁴⁰ Secondly, however, it also pointed to the precarity of this positive economic performance. Even without the withdrawal of regional development assistance, unemployment in Merseyside continued to rise – as a relative and an absolute measure – from 1969.⁴¹ As a report compiled by Liverpool City Council’s Chief Executive and Town Clerk, submitted to the city council on 31 March explained, ‘the basic unemployment problem [in Merseyside] exists... in the Liverpool travel-to-work area’.⁴² Within this area, it was claimed, ‘the major problem is in the male unemployed and that the greatest elements of male unemployed are in the labourer class, and also in the under 40 years age group’.⁴³ In Liverpool, this included a significant number of unemployed dockers. Rising unemployment among young, unskilled men was therefore identified as the key problem within Liverpool.⁴⁴ This pattern of unemployment further highlights the similarities between the effects on the labour market of Liverpool’s declining service sector and the process of de-industrialisation evidenced across Britain.⁴⁵

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ TNA: EW 7/1234, Memorandum, M.S. Bremner to M.B. Casey, 22 July 1968, para. 1.

³⁹ Ibid., para. 3.

⁴⁰ The implementation of this graded system (of intermediate areas, development areas, and special development areas) was the rationale for the Hunt Committee.

⁴¹ TNA: EW 7/1234, Unemployment on Merseyside: report of the Chief Executive and Town Clerk of Liverpool City Council, 31 March 1971, p. 2.

⁴² Ibid., p. 4.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ As the report stated, ‘a very large number of the young unemployed are unskilled males and, in addition that they are of low educational achievement’; *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Tomlinson, ‘De-industrialization not decline’, p. 92.

Table 2.3: Membership of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, 1950-93

Year	Total Members	Manufacturing Sector (%)	Services Sector (%)	Retail Sector (%)	Other Sector (%)
1950	2,277	25	70	4	1
1960	1,989	30	61	8	1
1970	1,915	36	56	2	6
1980	1,919	32	62	6	0
1993	1,046	10	85	5	0

Source: Robert Bennett, 'Chambers of Commerce Historical Census and Benchmarking Data, 1790-2005,' *UK Data Service*, data collection SN 6878, 2011, <<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue?sn=6878>> [accessed 25 March 2015].

The apparent success of regional policy in 1968 came through the movement of manufacturing jobs to Merseyside, driven by government incentives. Mostly located outside Liverpool, these included the opening of the Vauxhall Motors plant at Ellesmere Port on the Wirral peninsula (in 1962), and the Ford Motor Company plant in Halewood, Knowsley (in 1963).⁴⁶ In contrast to other British cities, Liverpool's service sector decline thus came, if only for a relatively short period, at a time of manufacturing growth. This trend was apparent through the membership of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁷ Here, I make reference to the decline of the 'locally-active' business community; in this, I echo the Robert Bennett's work on the 'chamber voice'. As such, locally-active businesses were those which, through the Chamber of Commerce, were involved in 'lobbying, representing, informing, and making the concerns of business known to government and other agents'.⁴⁸ As can be clearly seen in table 2.3, Liverpool's locally-active business community declined across the second half of the twentieth century, though there was a slight increase (of four) in the membership between 1970 and 1980. From 1950, when the membership of the chamber stood at 2,277, to 1993, the number of members more than halved (to 1,046). These headline figures clearly show a decline in the number of locally-active businesses, but they also provide an indication of how the structure of the local economy changed over this period. Between 1950 and 1970, the proportion of the membership from the service sector declined from 70 per cent to 56 per cent. The pattern of growth and decline in Liverpool was distinct from that of other British cities.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Marren, *We shall not be moved*, p. 24.

⁴⁷ The above figures are taken from an ESRC-funded study, published in Robert Bennett, *Local business voice: the history of chambers of commerce in Britain, Ireland, and revolutionary America, 1760-2011* (Oxford, 2011).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Similar figures for Glasgow, for example, show a much more straightforward pattern of manufacturing decline (49 per cent in 1950 to 18 per cent in 1993) and service sector growth (46 per cent in 1950 to 77 per cent in 1993); see Robert Bennett, 'Chambers of Commerce Historical

As an economic assessment, undertaken by the Sussex-based accountancy firm Lithgow, Nelson & Co. and published in October 1970, made clear, 'Merseyside still depends on its Port and related industries, which have not prospered in recent years'.⁵⁰ The same report added that, 'Diversification came too late and on too small a scale to enable Merseyside to prosper as an industrial centre in its own right'.⁵¹ The report covered a number of factors contributing to Liverpool's engrained economic problems, including the city's reputation for poor industrial relations, competition with Manchester, and even the ambivalence of the 'wives of executives' towards moving to the city.⁵² These factors, to a greater or lesser degree, helped to shape patterns of economic growth and decline in Merseyside. As such it is clear that, while executives' wives cannot be held responsible for the eventual economic crisis in Liverpool, the effects of technological change in the shipping industry which increasingly made the dock labourer redundant – in both senses of the word – were compounded by other structural and locational problems.⁵³

On 6 December 1971, a cargo ship, the *Tasmania Star*, carrying meat from New Zealand became the first vessel to enter the new Seaforth Dock, located to the north of Liverpool. Over the following days and weeks, further berths opened, including space for container ships and grain ships.⁵⁴ The geography of Merseyside's maritime trade had shifted northwards, away from the docks along Liverpool's waterfront. In its annual report for 1972, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC), created from the MDHB in the previous year, listed a number of factors affecting trade through the port of Liverpool.⁵⁵ These included 'the curtailment of industrial production together with much lower wheat imports', the national dock strike of 1972, containerisation, and changes in global trade which saw Liverpool losing its market share against British and European rivals.⁵⁶ Reflecting on these 'great difficulties', the new chairman of the MDHC, J. J. Page, stated in 1972 that 'they are being tackled resolutely and we will undoubtedly gain eventually from the reduction in numbers of dock workers'.⁵⁷ As this section has shown, in spite of a brief moment of optimism in the late 1960s, unemployment was a consistent problem for

Census and Benchmarking Data, 1790-2005,' *UK Data Service*, data collection SN 6878, 2011, <<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue?sn=6878>> [accessed 25 March 2015].

⁵⁰ TNA: EW 7/1234, The future of Merseyside, 26 October 1970, para. 3d.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., paras 3a-3i.

⁵³ Scott, 'Regional development and policy', p. 344.

⁵⁴ Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC), *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1971* (Liverpool, 1971), pp. 4-5.

⁵⁵ The Mersey Docks and Harbour Act 1971 transformed the port authority from a public trust (the MDHB) to a statutory company (MDHC).

⁵⁶ MDHC, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1972* (Liverpool, 1972), p. 6.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

Liverpool and Merseyside. In the case of dock labour, rising unemployment was the result of structural changes, especially in the technologies of trade which increasingly made Liverpool's existing port infrastructure, and the large workforce of dockers, obsolete. Between 1971 and 1973, the number of registered dockers in Liverpool once again fell by nearly a third (32 per cent), from 10,427 to 7,550.⁵⁸ This was a dramatic fall over a two-year period, reflecting the transformative impact of technological change, through the increased usage of shipping containers to transport goods, on the labour market in Liverpool. But Liverpool was also increasingly poorly-located to take advantage of trade with continental Europe. Within the 'structural versus locational controversy' which has framed academic discussion of regional economic inequality in Britain, the service-based economy of Liverpool appears to have suffered from *both* structural and locational disadvantage.⁵⁹

Supplanting the regional problem, c. 1972-77

Liverpool's unemployment problems stemmed from the decline of the service sector, driven to an important extent by the waning fortunes of the port of Liverpool and its dock workers. Central government responded to these problems through the application of regional policy, which had formed the principal mechanism for alleviating structural unemployment since the 1930s. Regional policy, however, came under review in the early 1970s.⁶⁰ While the complex of policy interventions was not immediately or swiftly supplanted, the period between 1972 and 1977 represented an important shift in the state's approach. As this section demonstrates, this was partially a financial concern, but also reflected the further spatialisation of economic problems as evidenced through government-sponsored social science. The accumulation of evidence from government-sponsored social studies pointed increasingly towards the inner city as the locus of structural unemployment and economic decline. As a number of these social studies were undertaken in Liverpool, the city's economic problems fed directly into central government policymaking.

⁵⁸ Hunter, *They knew why they fought*, p. 135 as cited in Marren, *We shall not be moved*, p. 206.

⁵⁹ While this appears to have been the case for Liverpool, central government policymakers adopted the structural argument; as one policy statement concluded, the regional problem 'basically from the decline of the regions' chief industries rather than from inherent geographical disadvantages'; TNA: PREM 15/1167, Summary of regional policy discussions, February 1970, para. 1; this summation was later included in a 1972 Central Policy Review Staff document; see TNA: CAB 184/211, A new regional policy for Great Britain, 11 February 1972.

⁶⁰ Regional policy was also criticised for its inconsistency. For example, in a 1977 letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Director-General of the CBI wrote that business leaders were sceptical of the Regional Employment Premium because 'these incentives may be changed or abolished without any notice', leaving businesses operating in a part of the country they would not otherwise have chosen; see Modern Record Centre, University of Warwick (MRC): CBI MSS 200/C/3/ECO/14/1, Correspondence, John Methven to Denis Healey, 10 January 1977.

Table 2.4: Rate of unemployment (%) based on the claimant count, 1972-77

Year	Liverpool	Merseyside	North West	Great Britain
1972	8.2	7.1	5.3	4.2
1973	7.7	5.0	4.1	3.0
1974	6.5	4.7	3.8	2.9
1975	8.5	7.7	5.3	4.0
1976	10.3	12.2	6.6	5.4
1977	10.8	13.2	7.0	5.8

Source: *Department of Employment Gazette* vols. 80-85 (1972-77); and R. Crouchley, R. Fligelstone and J. Wright, 'Census like area based aggregate Labour Market Statistics (unemployed, active and population) for the intercensal years, 1946-1990', *UK Data Service*, data collection SN 3539, 1997 <<http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-3539-1>> [accessed 18 March 2015].

In a 1972 draft paper on regional policy, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) questioned the definition of the 'regional problem' in Britain, arguing that 'What is a regional problem to one person may be a healthy process of economic change to another'.⁶¹ Representing businesses across the country, this conception represented an important counterpoint to prevailing narratives of economic decline. Nevertheless, through evidence of increasing inequality in levels of unemployment, economic change in Liverpool was certainly not deemed to be 'healthy' by central government. This was most clearly shown through the production of government-sponsored social studies of the city. In 1972, as unemployment in Liverpool exceeded eight per cent, twice the national average, the Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project (SNAP) wound down its operations in the Granby area of Liverpool 8 and published its final report.⁶² SNAP had been launched in 1969 by the recently-founded homelessness charity, Shelter, to establish a General Improvement Area (GIA) under the Housing Act 1969 in agreement with Liverpool City Council. Though SNAP's remit therefore focused on housing, its final report addressed a number of problems encountered by the charity workers through their work in the area; these were deployed to draw broad criticisms of government policy and the 'urban crisis' which 'now threatens the whole quality of urban life'.⁶³ Through its conception of the urban crisis, SNAP drew attention to the decline of the inner city population.⁶⁴ This came '**AT THE SAME TIME [as] OUR OLDER CITIES HAVE EXPERIENCED A STRUCTURAL DECLINE IN THEIR TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES**'.⁶⁵ The main concern was for the decline of 'labour-intensive manufacturing industries faced with trade liberalisation and foreign competition'.⁶⁶

⁶¹ MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/3/ECO/14/2, Draft paper on regional policy for January Council, n.d.

⁶² Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project (SNAP), *Another chance for cities: SNAP 69/72* (Liverpool, 1972).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13; certain sections of the text were capitalised and printed in bold to enable the reader to scan the text, providing summary of the principal points in the 225 page text.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

Nevertheless, the service sector was also identified as an issue within inner urban areas, drawing conclusions from the experiences of inner Liverpool and other social investigations which could apply to cities across Britain.⁶⁷ The economic conclusions drawn by SNAP are important, not simply because their responsibility for implementing the GIA provided a direct link between the project's work and central government policymakers. Through social investigation of the inner city, structural unemployment was reconceptualised within an urban framework. Thus, it was claimed that

While the prospect of permanent unemployment in a post-industrial society has still to be faced as a regional problem, it is already a big city problem affecting London and the regional conurbations. In both cases the most profound effects on the social structure will be met in the inner urban areas where the fundamental problems of income maintenance combine with every other problem.⁶⁸

SNAP's report was published in the same year that the inner area studies (IAS), one of which covered Liverpool 8, were established by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Peter Walker.⁶⁹ While the IAS was crucial in identifying the inner city as the locus for social and economic problems, the findings in many ways served to support moves already underway.

Between October 1972 and July 1973, representatives of industrial firms, academics, central government departments, the European Commission, the Trades Union Congress, and the CBI gave evidence to an inquiry of the Trade and Industry Sub-committee of the House of Commons Expenditure Committee.⁷⁰ Chaired by William Rodgers, Labour MP for Stockton-on-Tees, the sub-committee reported its findings in December 1973.⁷¹ The inquiry commended the aims of regional policy, with the rousing assertion that 'Men without jobs, children without opportunities, social and environmental decay – these are properly matters of which the stuff of politics is made'.⁷² While the inquiry into regional policy did not therefore disavow its motives, it nonetheless claimed that 'Much has been spent and much may well have been wasted. Regional policy has been empiricism run mad,

⁶⁷ As such, whilst acknowledging that 'Automation also affects the service economy', these were seen as 'offering the inner urban areas new low paid service jobs'; as this chapter has shown, economic change was much more complex in Liverpool – *ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶⁹ HC Deb, 23 March 1972, series 5, vol. 833, col. 1698.

⁷⁰ See Expenditure Committee, *Regional development incentives, session 1972-73: minutes of evidence (from October 1972 to June 1973) and appendices*, HC 327 (London, 1973); and Expenditure Committee, *Regional development incentives, session 1973-74: minutes of evidence (from July 1973) appendices and index*, HC 85-I (London, 1973).

⁷¹ Expenditure Committee, *Second report from the Expenditure Committee, session 1973-74: regional development incentives*, HC 85 (London, 1973).

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

a game of hit-and-miss, played with more enthusiasm than success'.⁷³ Robert Colls has claimed that this amounted to a condemnation of regional policy, reasoning that 'if all recipients were deserving and unemployment continued to grow... then there must be something wrong'.⁷⁴ The sub-committee, however, continued to support the principle, if not necessarily the practice, of regional policy stating that 'There is never an occasion to relax'.⁷⁵ These findings were welcomed by central government.⁷⁶ As we can see, it was the cost-effectiveness of regional policy that was criticised in the early 1970s. This in part explains why central government began to focus on smaller urban areas.

The rate of unemployment in Liverpool fell between 1972 and 1974, but had once again reached 8.5 per cent by 1975. Likewise, the number of registered dock workers continued to fall, though the rate of this decline had slowed somewhat.⁷⁷ In 1975 the Vauxhall Community Development Project (CDP), based in an area to the north of Liverpool city centre, ended its operations, though it did not publish its findings until two years later.⁷⁸ As with many of the social studies of the 1970s, the CDPs were concerned with areas of deprivation. Nevertheless, its conclusions emphasised de-industrialisation; as such, industrial decline was seen to underscore communities' relationships with the legal system, with each other, and with the built environment.⁷⁹ Their conclusions contributed to the shift from structural unemployment being conceived as a regional problem, to an urban problem.⁸⁰ Vauxhall exemplified an important tension in the economic history of Liverpool during the late twentieth century. Technological and commercial change weakened the position of the port of Liverpool, leading to the obsolescence of its port infrastructure. Vauxhall, however, was also a heavily industrial area, with manufacturing having grown around its docks.⁸¹ The decline of the port meant that 'related industries have less and less reason to concentrate in Vauxhall. And they themselves in many cases have faced the need to "rationalise" or shift production to new plants'.⁸² Industries formerly concentrated in

⁷³ Ibid., p. 72; this assertion has been quoted in Robert Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford, 2001), p. 323; and Harry Garretsen, Philip McCann, Ron Martin and Peter Tyler, 'The future of regional policy', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 6 (2013), pp. 179-86.

⁷⁴ Colls, *Identity of England*, pp. 322-3.

⁷⁵ Expenditure Committee, *Second report*, p. 77.

⁷⁶ Cmnd. 6058, *Regional development incentives: government observations on the second report of the Expenditure Committee: House of Commons paper 85, session 1973-74* (London, 1975).

⁷⁷ Between 1971 and 1973, the number of registered dockers fell from 10,427 to 7,550; by 1975, it had only fallen to 7,326. Hunter, *They knew why they fought*, p. 135 as cited in Marren, *We shall not be moved*, p. 206.

⁷⁸ Phil Topping and George Smith, *Government against poverty? Liverpool Community Development Project, 1970-75* (Oxford, 1977).

⁷⁹ CDP, *Limits of the law*, pp. 6-9; and CDP, *Gilding the ghetto*, pp. 26-43.

⁸⁰ CDP, *Costs of industrial change*, pp. 42-55.

⁸¹ For example, Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?* p. 19.

⁸² Ibid.

Vauxhall included sugar refining (which remained until the early 1980s), flour milling, chemical plants, cigarette manufacturing, and warehousing.⁸³ From this fall in manufacturing employment, the CDP articulated a worsening economic and environmental situation in Vauxhall:

Between 1967 and 1972 some 20% of the jobs in the Vauxhall industrial strip disappeared, and the decline has steepened since then. There are few gains, perhaps only in warehousing and road haulage companies, which provide relatively few jobs. The local unemployment figure has remained twice the rate for Liverpool as a whole, even though this has steadily increased in the past few years, and is itself twice the national rate.⁸⁴

If, as suggested above, the 1970s marked the further spatialisation of structural unemployment and the supplanting of the regional problem by the urban problem, growing evidence of the worsening situation within inner urban areas played a central role.

The predominance of unskilled workers within this local labour market was a particular cause for disquiet.⁸⁵ In addition to absolute figures for growth and decline of unemployment, however, these studies also provide an insight into how economic change affected different groups. Using figures from the 1971 census, the Vauxhall CDP highlighted the unequal distribution of unemployment in both geographical and demographic terms. The report thus cited a rate of 17 per cent male unemployment in Vauxhall in 1971 against a rate of 9.6 per cent for Liverpool, and 4 per cent for England and Wales.⁸⁶ Focusing on these scales of economic activity, high rates of urban, and particularly inner urban, unemployment were increasingly important. Nevertheless, these figures also point towards demographic changes in the labour market. Through listing statistics, the report provided an insight into an increasingly chronic unemployment situation. Using the data from 1971 and extrapolating from national trends to 1977, it was suggested 'that up to one in every four workers is unemployed [in Vauxhall], and more than one in every three in the school leaving age group'.⁸⁷ Youth unemployment – and the transition from school to work – was therefore identified as an issue.⁸⁸ Added to this was a 1982 estimate that 40 per cent of the black community in Merseyside was unemployed, mostly concentrated in a small area to

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ 'Docking and dock-related industries required a large semi or unskilled working population living close at hand. Once these industries decline, the population remains, with a skill profile unlikely to attract new industry'; *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ For example, see John Goodwin and Henrietta O'Connor, 'Continuity and change in the experiences of transition from school to work', *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 26 (2007), pp. 555-72.

the south of Liverpool city centre, further highlighting the inequalities in the experience of economic decline.⁸⁹

Statistical abstracts included data on male and female unemployment, but contemporary reports focused on male unemployment. In addition to high rates of youth unemployment, the CDP noted the findings of a school leavers study which found that 20 per cent of participants who were fathers were unemployed.⁹⁰ In citing these figures, the authors were reflecting the idea of the male 'breadwinner', though this idea was beginning to be undermined by changes in the labour market. Research published by economist Jim Taylor and cited in the *New Society* magazine in January 1977 suggested that the increasing participation of married women in the labour market meant that 'household incomes are less affected if the man is out of work'.⁹¹ Women's employment, especially that of married women, increased during the twentieth century.⁹² But this rise in women's employment was also spatialised. As stated in a 1977 report compiled by the Liverpool inner area study consultants, 'the industrial structure in the inner areas [offered] disproportionate amounts of employment to women'.⁹³ As this section has shown, rising unemployment within inner urban areas was identified as a significant problem in the 1970s through government-sponsored social studies. Nevertheless, this was an inherently gendered process. While the services sector in Liverpool declined in the second half of the twentieth century, 'opportunities for women have been less badly affected'.⁹⁴ This was in part a function of gendered inequalities in pay – women being cheaper to employ, often working part-time in 'lousy jobs' – as much as it was a reflection of economic and industrial change.⁹⁵

These changes in the labour market were important in themselves, but they also point to similarities between the effects of de-industrialisation, and the decline of the service sector in Liverpool. From the 1970s, however, this strict dichotomy between the decline of services in Liverpool and de-industrialisation elsewhere became much less salient. As the membership structure of Liverpool Chamber of Commerce demonstrates,

⁸⁹ Trevor Cornfoot, 'The economy of Merseyside, 1945-1982: quickening decline or post-industrial change?' in William Gould and Alan Hodgkiss (eds), *The resources of Merseyside* (Liverpool, 1982), pp. 22-3; the source of the 40 per cent figure was not cited, however Cornfoot worked for Merseyside County Council at the time of publication.

⁹⁰ Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty*, p. 23.

⁹¹ Tom Forester, 'Who, exactly, are the unemployed?', *New Society* (13 January 1977), p. 54.

⁹² Helen McCarthy, 'Social science and married women's employment in post-war Britain', *Past and Present* 233 (2016), pp. 269-305.

⁹³ Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Economic development of the inner area: report by the consultants*, IAS/Li/21 (London, 1977), p. 79.

⁹⁴ Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Change or decay: final report of the Liverpool inner area study* (London, 1977), p. 100.

⁹⁵ Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization not decline', p. 91.

between 1970 and 1980, the proportion of members from the manufacturing declined from 36 per cent to 32 per cent. This was a very slight fall, but marked a turning point in the structure of the local economy. Likewise, the proportion of members from the service sector had declined from the 1950s until the 1970s; between 1970 and 1980, this increased from 56 per cent to 62 per cent (see table 2.3) reflecting the closure of branch plants and other manufacturing firms throughout the decade. This was partly driven by the early-1970s oil crisis. As will be shown below, this small shift in the industrial structure of Liverpool preceded a much more precipitous change in the 1980s.

While it was not complete, the shift from a regional to an urban focus became much more prominent through the publication of the central government white paper, *Policy for the Inner Cities*, in April 1977. The white paper contained a number of observations on social, economic, and environmental change in towns and cities across the United Kingdom. However, it also noted that ‘conditions in the inner areas vary greatly from city to city. For example, unemployment is particularly severe in inner Liverpool’.⁹⁶ The policies put forward in the white paper were enacted through the Inner Urban Areas Act (1978). The prescriptions were based largely on the findings of the inner area studies; if regional policy was ‘empiricism run mad’, it is surely ironic that its replacement was based on empirical social science and statistical investigation.⁹⁷

Liverpool’s IAS consultants published a series of 22 reports throughout the period of their study. These covered a range of issues, from housing and vacant land, to play and community care. As the consultants acknowledged, the focus was therefore on the social aspects of urban change; ‘economic questions did not loom large’, at least not at the beginning of the study.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, as the consultants found, there were a number of economic issues: high unemployment in Merseyside; the concentration of unemployment in certain areas remarkable for their social composition; and the downward trend of the city’s economy.⁹⁹ As the report reiterated, ‘The main cause of the loss of employment opportunities in inner Liverpool is the decline of the docks and associated manufacturing and processing firms’.¹⁰⁰ By 1977 the unemployment rate in Liverpool stood at around 10.8 per cent and the number of registered dockers had fallen 6,402; just a decade earlier, there

⁹⁶ Cmnd. 6845, *Policy for the inner cities* (London, 1977), p. 5.

⁹⁷ Expenditure Committee, *Second report: regional development incentives*, HC 85, p. 72.

⁹⁸ Wilson and Womersley, *Economic development in the inner area*, p. i; the only other report to directly address economic issues was Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Getting a job: report by the consultants*, IAS/Li/20 (London, 1977). By the social aspects, I mean an assemblage or network of people, practices, and objects – in this case the physical environment – and how these connect to particular phenomena, including urban deprivation.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

had been 11,530.¹⁰¹ Added to this was a reduction in employment opportunities in construction, distribution, utilities, and 'other manual services'.¹⁰² Liverpool's economic problems were identified as emanating from the decline of the port; this was the case, even as de-industrialisation began to affect the urban economy in the early 1970s. By 1977, the industrial situation had worsened, as the IAS consultants explained:

The north end [of the city centre] is crumbling and polluted but tobacco warehousing, sugar refining, brewing and food processing struggle on. But it is a precarious survival. Tate and Lyle, whose vast bulk overshadows all and in which several thousand workers are employed, has been threatening to pull out for years.¹⁰³

The British sugar company, Tate and Lyle, had operated in and around Liverpool since the mid-nineteenth century. The port was ideally-located to import sugar cane from Britain's colonies in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, after Britain's accession to the European Economic Community in 1973, this privileged position began to be eroded as the common market encouraged the importation of sugar beet from southern Europe.¹⁰⁴ In this case, Liverpool's position on the North West coast of England meant that it was no longer a suitable port through which to import sugar. Nevertheless, the economic footprint of the port of Liverpool was vast.¹⁰⁵ Its declining importance in global trade, and the fall in dock labour owing to technological change, therefore affected people and places beyond inner Liverpool. Nevertheless, through the production of social studies, inner urban areas were identified as the locus for these economic problems. The supplanting of the regional problem with the urban problem marked a political crisis, as policymakers, faced with the persistence of unemployment and the apparent inability of regional policy to bring about long-term growth, sought to focus their attention on smaller areas. As the next section shows, this looming crisis reached new heights in the 1980s and provided the impetus for government action.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Hunter, *They knew why they fought*, p. 135 as cited in Marren, *We shall not be moved*, p. 206.

¹⁰² Wilson and Womersley, *Economic development in the inner area*, p. 79.

¹⁰³ Wilson and Womersley, *Change or Decay*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Prest, 'Why sugar merchants are so bitter', *The Times*, 10 December 1980, p. 21.

¹⁰⁵ J. Kinsey, 'The economic impact of the port of Liverpool on the economy of Merseyside – using a multiplier approach', *Geoforum* 12 (1981), pp. 331-47.

¹⁰⁶ By existential, I mean that questions were raised as to the economic viability of Liverpool by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Geoffrey Howe, in the famous 1981 memo on 'managed decline'; see TNA: PREM 19/578, Memorandum on Merseyside, Geoffrey Howe to Margaret Thatcher, 4 September 1981, para. 5.

Economic crisis and regeneration, c. 1978-86

The production of government-sponsored social studies led to the identification of inner urban areas as the locus of the structural unemployment problem. These, in the words of one report compiled by the CBI, were held up as ‘disaster areas’.¹⁰⁷ The continued increase in the rate of unemployment was crucial to the process by which evidence of material economic change was interpreted and problematised by politicians, policymakers, and other agencies. Rates of unemployment into the 1980s continued to rise across all of the scales at which these statistics were measured, driven by a recession. This section uses the records of central and local government and the CBI, as well as contemporary cultural representations, to show how Liverpool’s economic decline, by the early 1980s, constituted a crisis. This crisis was real, in that it had a material impact on the lives of the city’s residents. But it also represented a ‘marketplace for ideas’, a definition of crisis which, Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton have argued, allows us to see beyond the narrative of ‘social democratic’ decline followed by Thatcherite renewal.¹⁰⁸ In this final section, Liverpool’s economic regeneration from the early 1980s is shown to have been a result of the political impetus generated by this crisis, rather than Thatcherite policies themselves.

Table 2.5: Rate of unemployment (%) based on the claimant count, 1978-91

Year	Liverpool	Merseyside	North West	Great Britain
1978	11.4	11.0	6.9	5.7
1979	11.7	11.2	6.6	5.4
1980	12.9	10.0	7.6	5.9
1981	16.7	16.2	12.9	10.4
1982	18.4	18.6	15.3	12.4
1983	19.0	20.5	16.0	13.1
1984	18.9	20.4	15.7	12.8
1985	20.8	20.7	16.2	13.3
1986	21.1	21.1	16.3	13.6
1987	20.8	18.6	15.6	12.3
1988	18.4	14.6	13.2	10.0
1989	15.2	11.0	10.4	7.4
1990	14.0	10.2	7.5	5.5
1991	15.2	13.9	9.2	7.6

Sources: *Department of Employment Gazette* vols. 86-93 (1978-85); *Employment Gazette* vols. 94-99 (1986-91); and R. Crouchley, R. Fligelstone and J. Wright, ‘Census like area based aggregate Labour Market Statistics (unemployed, active and population) for the intercensal years, 1946-1990’, *UK Data Service*, data collection SN 3539, 1997 <<http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-3539-1>> [accessed 18 March 2015]. Please note: from 1981 statistics for rates of unemployment in the April of each year

¹⁰⁷ MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/3/ECO/14/4, Aid to ‘Disaster Areas’, 12 September 1978.

¹⁰⁸ Black and Pemberton, ‘Introduction: the benighted decade?’, pp. 14-15; on how this narrative has played out in economic histories, see Tomlinson, ‘De-industrialization not decline’, p. 78, especially fn. 9.

were published in the June issues. From 1986, Liverpool was defined as travel to work areas (TTWAs), rather than administrative or council areas.

Liverpool's economic decline was largely driven by technological and commercial change. The closure of the city's docks, in particular those located to the south, contributed to rising unemployment and underwrote the decline of associated manufacturing and services, thereby deepening Liverpool's economic problems. However, added to this were issues identified by politicians, policymakers, and business leaders as stymying new investment. These included questions about whether industrial manufacturing was profitable enough to offer a return on investments made by financial institutions.¹⁰⁹ On top of this was a problem of the perception based around Merseyside's reputation for poor industrial relations. This was clearly shown through a 1978 report compiled by the director of the London office of the Merseyside Economic Development Office (MERCEDO). MERCEDO was an agency of Merseyside County Council which sought to encourage businesses to relocate to the region.¹¹⁰ Describing the image of Merseyside as seen from London, the agency noted that

In efforts to attract industry to Merseyside from other parts of the UK, as well as from overseas, resistance to the idea is encountered to a greater or lesser degree according to the degree of ignorance or prejudice which exists in each case.¹¹¹

In the same report to the county council's Economic Development Committee, the director of MERCEDO's London office noted that the 'most deterrent factors', which were 'due to misconceptions, fears and doubts', were issues of labour relations, productivity and absenteeism, the 'quality of life in the area', and crime.¹¹² Local government actors saw it as their responsibility to 'overcome... prejudices which are often based on misconceptions and

¹⁰⁹ In January 1977, former Prime Minister Harold Wilson was appointed to chair a committee to review the functioning of financial institutions in Britain, an issue which included 'the provision of funds for industry and trade'. In its evidence to the committee in August 1977, the CBI noted the conception of its member that the issue was not a shortage of external finance, 'but rather a lack of confidence that industry will be able to earn a sufficient return'. The report continued that 'in comparison with other industrial nations the UK's economic performance since the war has been poor'. While the CBI's evidence, along with the conclusions of the Wilson committee, were coloured by declinism, they point towards concerns surrounding the profitability of new industrial investment. See Cmnd. 7937, *Committee to review the functioning of financial institutions: report* (London, 1980); and MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/4/1977/14, *Industry and the city: The CBI's evidence to the Wilson committee*, August 1977.

¹¹⁰ On the role of MERCEDO, see Chris Mulhearn, 'Economic development in Merseyside: a critique of MERCEDO', *Local Economy* 1 (1986), pp. 20-32.

¹¹¹ LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/9, Appendix 29, The image of Merseyside as seen from London: report by the director of the London office, 18 October 1978, p. 1; also see LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/1, Minutes of the Merseyside County Council Economic Development Committee, 10 October 1978, p. 26, the meeting at which the report was accepted by the council.

¹¹² LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/9, The image of Merseyside as seen from London, 18 October 1978, p. 1.

misinformation'.¹¹³ These prejudices, it was contended were played out in local and national media which, 'having reported at length the start of a Liverpool dock strike, failed completely to report its end'.¹¹⁴ What is more, these stories played on the theme of 'militant Merseyside', a label which was applied to the area even before the takeover of the city council by the far-left group within the Liverpool District Labour Party of a similar name.¹¹⁵ It was this image of militancy which local actors sought to dispel, with a CBI leaflet arguing that 'Merseyside is taking some hard knocks but many of the problems are confined to a few large establishments'.¹¹⁶ As Liverpool's Inner City Partnership (LICP), set up in 1979 by the incoming Conservative government, explained, the campaign to improve Merseyside's image revolved around the message that, 'we know we have problems, but they are often exaggerated. We demand credit for the advantages which counterbalance the problems and recognition for the efforts we are taking'.¹¹⁷

That labour relations, productivity, and absenteeism were identified as significant problems for Merseyside's image was important, not least because the issues were seen to be interconnected and were linked to the persistence of unemployment in Merseyside. As one report produced by the North West Regional Council of the CBI explained, 'While a number of factors will have caused these job losses, many firms have quoted the road haulage and engineering disputes as factors'.¹¹⁸ Local authorities and non-governmental organisations devised campaigns to improve the image of Merseyside. For example, *The Spirit of Merseyside* was produced in 1978 for Merseyside County Council to publicise the benefits of locating businesses in the conurbation. The film, which featured local business leaders, emphasised the area's cultural heritage, attractive environment, and leisure pursuits as well as the facilities available in its industrial estates.¹¹⁹ In 1980, following the broadcasting of a film on West German television that was critical of the city of Liverpool, members of Merseyside's Economic Development Committee resolved to restore 'balance'. The committee therefore requested that *The Spirit of Merseyside* be shown in West Germany, and that the West German consul be informed of the council's displeasure. Moreover, the committee questioned the inaction of British diplomats in the country over the issue.¹²⁰

¹¹³ LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/1, Minutes of the MCC EDC, 10 October 1978, p. 26.

¹¹⁴ LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/9, The image of Merseyside as seen from London, 18 October 1978, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.; also see LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/10, Liverpool Inner City Partnership (LICP) programme – 1979-82 marketing and publicity proposals, 11 September 1979.

¹¹⁶ MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/4/1978/5, Innovators in the North West and Cheshire, March 1978.

¹¹⁷ LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/10, Liverpool Inner City Partnership (LICP) programme – 1979-82 marketing and publicity proposals, 11 September 1979, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/3/REG/10/1, Director-General's brief, 12 March 1980.

¹¹⁹ North West Film Archive, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester: film number 6448, *The Spirit of Merseyside* [film], dir. unknown, (UK: Television & Film Productions, Manchester, 1978).

¹²⁰ LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/3, Minutes of MCC EDC meeting, 21 October 1980, p. 23.

These promotions were not simply targeted towards diplomats, as shown through a marketing campaign known as 'Merseypride'. This involved the production of publicity material intended to improve Merseyside's image, with particular reference to industrial militancy. Nevertheless, the county council deemed the campaign to have been unsuccessful, stating that 'the bad reputation appears inescapable and as a consequence, Merseyside is not winning as much new investment as it might'.¹²¹ While local political and economic actors understandably placed a high priority on the *perception* of the problem, the very real crisis in Liverpool should not be overlooked.

Liverpool's economic decline was a long-term process, with rates of unemployment consistently well above the national average.¹²² This pattern continued into the 1980s, as recession tore into the British economy, leading to a 3.2 per cent fall in nationwide Gross Domestic Product between 1979 and 1981.¹²³ The rate of unemployment for Great Britain rose from 5.4 per cent in April 1979 to 10.4 per cent by April 1981 (see table 2.5). Unemployment continued to rise across the whole country, reaching 3.5 million in 1985.¹²⁴ In Liverpool during the same period, the claimant rate increased from 11.7 per cent to 16.7 per cent, peaking at 21.1 per cent in 1986.¹²⁵ Moreover, the rate of unemployment for Merseyside matched that of Liverpool, occasionally exceeding that of the urban core. Unsurprisingly, the effects of the early 1980s recession were far-reaching. Nevertheless, the pre-existing structural inequality in terms of unemployment meant that the effects were particularly acute in Merseyside. On top of this came the Toxteth 'riot' of 1981; an 'uprising', or act of urban disorder, which brought the city's problems to national attention and provided an impetus for state action. Liverpool's economic crisis was therefore augmented by a social crisis of law and order, deprivation, and racial discrimination.

In July 1981, several streets in Liverpool 8 were wracked by 'rioting', as the members of the local black community clashed with police. Long-term tensions, brought on by deprivation, distrust, and racial discrimination engendered by perceptions of police

¹²¹ LRO: M352 MIN/2/13/11, Economic activity on Merseyside – report by the Director of Operations and Services, 2 December 1980, p. 1.

¹²² The importance of focusing on long-term change rather than short-term shock was noted in Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization not decline', p. 87.

¹²³ Matthias Marys, 'Cycles and depressions', in Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries and Paul Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge economic history of modern Britain, vol. II: 1870 to the present* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 241.

¹²⁴ Jim Tomlinson, 'Mrs Thatcher's macroeconomic adventurism, 1979-1981, and its political consequences', *British Politics* 2 (2007), p. 4.

¹²⁵ This peak is based on the numbers in table 2.5, based on the stated methodology; the real peak may have been reached during a month other than April.

harassment, boiled over following the arrest of a young black man, Leroy Cooper.¹²⁶ The disorders were subject to an official investigation, but also produced political action led by Michael Heseltine, titular 'Minister for Merseyside' and Secretary of State for the Environment from May 1979 to January 1983. Heseltine visited Liverpool in August 1981, from which he produced a widely-circulated memorandum, provocatively-titled 'It Took a Riot', in which he made the case for increased public and private sector investment in Merseyside and inner urban areas across Britain.¹²⁷ The proposals were contentious.¹²⁸ The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Geoffrey Howe, responded by asking whether 'our aim [should] be to stabilise the inner cities – as Michael [Heseltine] and the CPRS [Central Policy Review Staff] have suggested for Liverpool – or is this to pump water uphill? Should we rather go for "managed decline"?'¹²⁹ 'Managed decline', was 'not a term for use, even privately'.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, that the Chancellor put forward the notion of 'a sustained effort to absorb Liverpool manpower elsewhere' further underlines the seriousness of Liverpool's social and economic crisis.¹³¹ Howe's memorandum intimated that Merseyside was not economically viable; the area 'is an extreme example of what happens when the labour market – amongst other things – is prevented from functioning properly'.¹³² This improper functioning was understood in terms of a lack of 'efficiency' and 'flexibility' in the labour market which was seen to make the creation of jobs too expensive for employers. To make the labour market function 'properly', a number of suggestions were made in an attached policy paper including 'putting pressure on wages and [thereby] pricing more people into jobs'.¹³³ These measures were put into three groups: an 'attack' on institutional arrangements, i.e. trade unions and wage councils, which ensure high wages; increasing the 'effective labour supply, ie the numbers on the unemployed register'; and increasing demand for labour 'without putting upward pressure on real wages'.¹³⁴ The suggestion that Merseyside's unemployment problems could be tackled through *increasing* the labour supply was the very definition of fighting fire with fire. Nonetheless, in his memorandum to Margaret Thatcher, Geoffrey Howe did not recommend increasing the labour supply.

¹²⁶ On the Toxteth 'riots', see Diane Frost and Richard Phillips (eds), *Liverpool '81: remembering the riots* (Liverpool, 2011); also see chapter 4 of this thesis.

¹²⁷ TNA: PREM 19/578, Michael Heseltine, It took a riot, 13 August 1981.

¹²⁸ Jörg Arnold, "'Managed decline"? Liverpool and the politics of the first Thatcher cabinet (1979-1981)', Centre for Urban History seminar series, University of Leicester, 24 October 2014; published as Jörg Arnold, "'Managed decline"? zur diskussion um die zukunft Liverpools im ersten kabinett Thatcher (1979-1981)', *Informationen zur Modernen Stadtgeschichte* 42 (2015), pp. 139-54.

¹²⁹ TNA: PREM 19/578, Geoffrey Howe, memorandum on Merseyside, 4 September 1981, para. 5.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., para. 8; Margaret Thatcher had underlined sections of this quotation.

¹³³ TNA: PREM 19/578, Measures to promote employment, n.d.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

Rather, he suggested 'linking job-creating public works and any additional employment subsidies to lower wage rates', thus trying to match the imperative to increase urban employment with the inflation-controlling monetarist policies enshrined in the government's Medium Term Financial Strategy.¹³⁵

In the early 1980s, Liverpool was at the centre of an urban economic crisis, with Merseyside's chronic unemployment being seen as 'only the most extreme case: similar problems are to be found in our other great cities'.¹³⁶ As the brief overview of the discussion between two senior members of Thatcher's cabinet shows, Liverpool's economic crisis – highlighted by large-scale public disorder – was instrumental in the search for a new policy response to structural unemployment. The central tenets of the Thatcher government's response were already established by the summer of 1981. The Urban Development Corporations (UDCs), for example, were seen by Keith Joseph, then Secretary of State for Industry, as a way to get around local authorities which may not have agreed with the Thatcher government's policy prescriptions.¹³⁷ Geoffrey Howe, however, in-keeping with his concern for controlling public spending and inflation, initially had 'substantial doubts' about the establishment of 'an unspecified number of Quangos, which would have considerable powers to spend public money'.¹³⁸ Liverpool and the London Docklands were identified as key sites for new UDCs, reflecting both the persistence of economic problems and the widespread dereliction associated with the closure of docks and associated industry.¹³⁹ The establishment of Enterprise Zones across Britain was announced in March 1980.¹⁴⁰ These were intended to encourage businesses to relocate to particular areas through tax breaks and decreased regulation; they were similar in aims, but divergent in method and scale, to preceding regional policies. As Sam Wetherell has shown, though a Thatcherite policy, the Enterprise Zones had their origins in left-wing political responses to urban problems, led by the geographer Peter Hall.¹⁴¹ Liverpool's Enterprise Zone was located in Speke, in the south of the city. In February 1984, 650 acres of docks, including

¹³⁵ TNA: PREM 19/578, Geoffrey Howe, memorandum on Merseyside, 4 September 1981, para. 12; on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, see Andy Beckett, *Promised you a miracle: why 1980-82 made modern Britain* (London, 2016), pp. 41-58.

¹³⁶ TNA: PREM 19/578, Michael Heseltine, It took a riot, 13 August 1981, p. 1.

¹³⁷ Plans for 'urban development corporations' had long been discussed, linked to the perceived need to override local authorities on aspects of urban policy; see TNA: PREM 19/577, Keith Joseph to Margaret Thatcher, 7 September 1979.

¹³⁸ TNA: PREM 19/577, Geoffrey Howe to Michael Heseltine, 7 September 1979.

¹³⁹ Heseltine offered a very personal narrative of this, through a story about a flight over derelict docklands and conversations with civil servants, in his autobiography; see Michael Heseltine, *Life in the jungle: my autobiography* (London, 2000), pp. 211-12.

¹⁴⁰ HC Deb, 26 March 1980, series 5, vol. 981, cols. 1487-90.

¹⁴¹ Sam Wetherell, 'Freedom planned: Enterprise Zones and urban non-planning in post-war Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 266-89.

Seaforth's shipping container berths, were declared to be a Freeport; ships docking in this area were no longer required to pay customs duties or taxes.¹⁴² Through these initiatives, the Thatcher government sought to use de-regulated and tax-free spaces to incentivise industrial relocation and economic renewal through the creation of employment. These policies, however, were backed by public funding, the demand for which was stimulated following the disorders in the summer of 1981.¹⁴³ These policies did not have an immediate economic effect, at least in terms of the city of Liverpool or the conurbation of Merseyside as a whole, as unemployment continued to grow. Undoubtedly the effects of the early 1980s recession on unemployment in Liverpool outweighed any investment in job-creation by central government.

The fears generated by the continued growth of unemployment and economic problems in Merseyside were shown through a number of economic assessments produced by the North West Regional Council of the CBI. As one assessment, for April to May 1982, read: "Optimism" is not a word I would use too readily in connection with business views in the North West. It is more a case of hoping against hope'.¹⁴⁴ It then went on to suggest that 'Any upturn will have to be clearly signalled before the troops will be prepared to come out of their trenches'.¹⁴⁵ Later in the year, the assessment was that 'For many the situation is deteriorating and a mood of quiet desperation is developing'.¹⁴⁶ Finally, the report for September-October 1982 simply read 'Curiously stoical. No fireworks. Just hanging on'.¹⁴⁷ The language used in these assessments undoubtedly points to a deteriorating situation, with the weariness of the tone underscoring the longstanding nature of the problems; these economic assessments point to a growing sense of hopelessness, a stark contrast to the optimism expressed in 1968. Added to this, the uneven geographical distribution of unemployment was no longer seen as something which could be alleviated through targeted investment. As one CBI report, produced for central government, made clear, in light of the recession

Only a general improvement in the national economy can substantially raise industrial activity in the regions and reduce levels of unemployment. Regional policy measures can at best act on the margin¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² The Freeport was officially opened on 29 November by Princess Anne; see MDHC, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1984* (Liverpool, 1984), p. 7.

¹⁴³ TNA: PREM 19/577, Merseyside and inner city issues, 10 July 1981.

¹⁴⁴ MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/3/REG/10/4, CBI North West Regional Council Monthly (NWRC) Report, April-May 1982.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/3/REG/10/4, CBI NWRC Monthly Report, May-June 1982.

¹⁴⁷ MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/3/REG/10/4, CBI NWRC Monthly Report, September-October 1982.

¹⁴⁸ MRC: CBI MSS 200/C/4/1983/8, The future of regional policy: CBI recommendations to government, May 1983.

Statistics and economic assessments highlight the extent to which Liverpool and the wider Merseyside conurbation suffered during the early 1980s recession. While the recession affected the whole country, the rhetoric surrounding Liverpool at this time suggested that its suffering was particularly acute.

Even after the early 1980s recession ended, Liverpool continued to struggle. In April 1984, the city's rate of unemployment stood at 18.9 per cent. Between 1983 and 1985, the number of registered dockers fell from 2,151 to 1,862.¹⁴⁹ As a section of the labour force, dock work was increasingly insignificant. Nevertheless, the effects of the decline of the port continued to be felt within the communities surrounding the docks through the accelerating pace of de-industrialisation. In 1984, Tate and Lyle closed down its sugar refinery in Liverpool, Merseyside with a loss of 2,600 jobs.¹⁵⁰ Other manufacturers were also closing, including United Biscuits and British American Tobacco. Nevertheless, as the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, Derek Worlock, and Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, David Sheppard, explained in their jointly-authored tome, *Better Together*:

When, in response to pressing invitations, we visited the threatened factories, more to show sympathy and to raise morale than in any realistic hope of changing decisions already taken, we would meet brothers, sisters, brothers- and sisters-in-law, mothers, sons and daughters – five from one family in one afternoon visit. Nearly a quarter of Tate and Lyle's production workers walked to work from the Vauxhall area, where even before that closure unemployment was already forty-six per cent.¹⁵¹

The source for this figure of 46 per cent unemployment was not made clear. Nonetheless, the closure of Tate and Lyle's plant in Bootle demonstrates the importance of considering microeconomic spaces, and the social effects of economic change within them. De-industrialisation wracked Liverpool's economy, but its effects were particularly acute for communities in the inner areas which bordered the docks.

Conclusion

Boys from the Blackstuff, a follow-on from the 1980 television play, *The Black Stuff*, aired on the BBC in October and November 1982.¹⁵² The popular television series¹⁵³ followed a group

¹⁴⁹ Figures were not readily available for 1984; see Hunter, *They knew why they fought*, p. 135 as cited in Marren, *We shall not be moved*, p. 206.

¹⁵⁰ '2,600 jobs down the road', *Scottie Press* 112, April 1981, p. 1.

¹⁵¹ Worlock and Sheppard, *Better together*, p. 146.

¹⁵² *The Blackstuff* [television programme] BBC, 2 January 1980; *Boys from the Blackstuff* [television programme] BBC, 10 October - 7 November 1982.

¹⁵³ The series was listed as number 7 on a list of the greatest television shows; see 'BFI TV 100', *BFI* (2000),

of five unemployed tarmac-layers as they negotiated the travails of unemployment during the early 1980s recession. The pleas of Yosser Hughes, played by Bernard Hill, to 'gizza job' encapsulated this struggle and entered the social lexicon of Liverpool's urban crisis.¹⁵⁴ Hughes' experiences, his troubled marriage and mental ill-health, pointed towards the effects of unemployment – and by extension, de-industrialisation and service sector decline – on masculine identities. The men's strategic use of informal work to supplement their income, which did not always allow them to support their household expenses, provided viewers with an insight into the problems of everyday survival on the dole. This included cash-in-hand work on the construction of an office for the Department of Employment, which led to the death of a plasterer as the labourers fled undercover officers investigating benefits fraud. *Boys from the Blackstuff* should not be read as a direct representation of the experiences of Liverpool's unemployed. Rather, the series, along with other cultural representations centred on the city, played an important role in a structure of feeling through which Liverpool was located as a site of social and economic crisis.¹⁵⁵

Liverpool's economic crisis was understood and experienced through rising unemployment and the closure of businesses. The state, via the accumulated evidence of social science and the claimant count, problematised this structural unemployment. Whereas rising unemployment pointed towards a straightforward narrative of de-industrialisation in other British towns and cities, Liverpool was different. This chapter has therefore identified, and sought to resolve, a number of tensions in this economic history: between services and industry; between growth and decline; and between the scales at which unemployment was measured. Liverpool's economic crisis was driven by the decline of the port as a result of technological and commercial change. This accounted for much of Liverpool's structural unemployment throughout the twentieth century. But as the 1970s progressed, the closure of port-related manufacturing hastened the economic decline of Liverpool's inner areas. This was a crisis in that existing policy frameworks were increasingly seen to have been ineffective, most clearly demonstrated through the gradual supplanting of the regional problem by the urban problem and the advent of more localised policy initiatives. Through contemporary film and television, Liverpool was further located as a site of social and economic crisis beyond central and local government. Nevertheless, while the decline of the docks and the onset of de-industrialisation across inner Liverpool led to increasingly chronic levels of unemployment, economic change also affected the built

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20110911083558/http://www.bfi.org.uk/features/tv/100/list/list.php>> [accessed 3 July 2017].

¹⁵⁴ For example, it was as a chapter title in Derek Worlock and David Sheppard, *Better together: Christian partnership in a hurt city* (London, 1989), pp. 141-64.

¹⁵⁵ On 'structures of feeling', see Raymond Williams, *The long revolution* (London, 1961).

environment. As the next chapter shows, this industrial dereliction contributed to existing problems of urban decay in Liverpool.

Chapter 3

'Behind the Imposing Façade of the Boulevard': Urban Decay, Dereliction, and Regeneration, c. 1968-86

Introduction

The decentralisation of the population, the decline of the services sector, and the onset of de-industrialisation underpinned the urban crisis in Liverpool. These processes of urban change were evidenced through the statistical abstractions of central and local government reports and social studies, as well as through cultural representations in television programmes and films. But as this chapter shows, the urban crisis was also experienced through changes to the built environment.¹ Post-war reconstruction and the architectural styles and planning methods of urban modernism transformed the built environment. The apparent successes and failures of 'slum' clearance and social housing, shopping centres and community centres, and 'new towns for old' have therefore dominated histories of urban Britain in the second half of the twentieth century.² The demise of this urban modernist approach to the built environment has been seen through the partial collapse of the Ronan Point tower block in East London in 1968, social and political activism, and the failure of the 'meliorist belief that planning by experts could engineer into place a bright new world'.³ The end of urban modernism has been seen as a process brought about for two reasons: first, through the actions of urban modernist planners themselves.⁴ Second as a result of a political project from within Margaret Thatcher's government which recognised the

¹ By 'experience', I mean 'an interpretation *and* something that needs to be interpreted'. However, in contrast to Joan Scott's insistence on the 'discursive nature of "experience" and on the politics of its construction', we must also pay close attention to the materiality of the built environment and its position within 'the social', taking the lead from Actor-Network Theory, and therefore its role in the construction of 'experience'. See Joan Scott, 'The evidence of experience', *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991), pp. 773-97; and Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the social: an introduction to actor-network theory* (Oxford, 2007).

² This literature is extensive; for an introduction and an overview of these themes, see the essays published in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds), *Moments of modernity: reconstructing Britain, 1945-1964* (London, 1999).

³ Simon Gunn, 'The rise and fall of urban modernism: planning Bradford, circa 1945-1970', *Journal of British Studies* 49 (2010), pp. 868-9. Also see Christopher Klemek, *The transatlantic collapse of urban renewal: postwar urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago, 2011).

⁴ Otto Saumarez Smith, 'The inner city crisis and the end of urban modernism in 1970s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 578-98.

centrality of the new towns and certain approaches to the built environment as ‘the spatial dimension of the welfare state’.⁵ While the historiography of the built environment has therefore focused on the technocracy and idealised visions of urban planning, it had greater significance than these suggest. This was especially the case from the late 1960s.

As Kieran Connell has shown, photographs of the Balsall Heath area of Birmingham in the late 1960s captured ‘the ambiguities and contradictions of navigating a rapidly-changing inner-city area’.⁶ Moreover, Jörg Arnold has shown how Margaret Thatcher’s walk through the ‘wilderness’ of a derelict former chemical works in Teesside in 1987, which was intended to show her government’s renewed commitment to stemming urban and economic decline, actually became the subject of media criticism and ridicule. The problems, symbolised by the derelict landscape, which Thatcher had promised to alleviate were, contemporaries argued, the product of her own policies.⁷ In these accounts, the built environment was central to people’s experience of social and economic change. Nevertheless, as Matthew Gandy has shown in his study of New York City, the built environment cannot be separated from urban nature.⁸ This chapter therefore highlights the centrality of the physical environment – i.e. the built (human-made) and unbuilt (natural) environments – in Liverpool’s urban crisis. Rather than advancing what Gandy called a ‘crudely materialist interpretation of urban process’, or viewing the physical environment as a metaphor for urban change, it will advance a ‘mutually constitutive interpretation’ of the material and the semiotic.⁹ Where this chapter refers to the social, it denotes an assemblage or network of people, practices, and objects – in this case the physical environment – and how these connect to particular phenomena, for example urban deprivation or prostitution.¹⁰ As this chapter shows, contemporaries viewed urban decay and dereliction as both a symptom of urban decline and a barrier to regeneration. The physical environment was therefore an ‘actant’ within the urban crisis, contributing to the process of social and economic decline in Liverpool.¹¹

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first focuses on the Granby area of Liverpool 8, highlighting the links drawn by contemporaries between physical and social

⁵ Guy Ortolano, ‘Flat roofs in the forest city’ (unpublished paper given at King’s College London on 18 January 2016).

⁶ Kieran Connell, ‘Race, prostitution and the New Left: the postwar inner city through Janet Mendelson’s “social eye”’, *History Workshop Journal* 83 (2017), p. 334.

⁷ Jörg Arnold, ‘“De-industrialization”: a research project on the societal history of economic change in Britain (1970-90)’, *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 34 (2012), pp. 34-6.

⁸ Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and clay: reworking nature in New York City* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ Latour, *Reassembling the social*, pp. 1-17; 247-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; and Bert de Munck, ‘Reassembling actor-network theory and urban history’, *Urban History* 44 (2017), pp. 111-22.

decay. This was evidenced through contemporary political and social discourses, most importantly through the reports produced by agencies involved in the governance of Liverpool. In these accounts, the physical environment was both materially and symbolically important. The second section turns to the urban economy, demonstrating the importance of de-industrialisation and the decline of the port in the spread of dereliction across the city. It shows how land falling out of productive use was constituted as an economic problem. This dereliction was seen to contribute to further industrial and economic decline in a vicious circle. The third section uses available data to show how falling property values and high inflation affected local government financial income. Finally, this chapter uses the definition of 'crisis' as a 'market place for ideas' to historicise the role of Thatcherite urban policy in 'regenerating' Liverpool's waterfront.¹² Throughout it focuses on the interaction between the 'natural' and the human-made in defining approaches to urban regeneration. Furthermore, it does not view urban regeneration in the 1980s as an endpoint, but as a continuation of long-term processes of problematisation and government intervention.

Urban decay and the social, c. 1968-75

The problematisation of the social and the physical environment by the British state in the late 1960s occurred within the context of racialised discord following Enoch Powell's notorious 'Rivers of Blood' speech in Birmingham in April 1968.¹³ On 5 May 1968, also speaking in Birmingham, Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced the establishment of an 'urban spending programme'.¹⁴ The Urban Programme was administered by the Home Office, and provided funding to local social and community groups. This also included some investment in the built environment. The programme operated on the basis of a 75 per cent grant, with central government providing three quarters of the funding for approved projects. This system of grants was on top of the Rate Support Grant (RSG), a key concern within the Home Office having been that urban aid be provided in addition to established revenue streams, and not as a redistribution of existing funds.¹⁵ Requests for funding under the Urban Programme were submitted to the Home Office by local authorities, with the budget of the programme decided each year in negotiations with the Local Authority

¹² Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, 'Introduction: the benighted decade? Reassessing the 1970s', in Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton, and Pat Thane (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 1-24.

¹³ See Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the making of postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, 2013).

¹⁴ 'Race-problem towns to get funds for social needs', *The Times* (6 May 1968), p. 1.

¹⁵ See John Edwards and Richard Batley, *The politics of positive discrimination: an evaluation of the urban programme 1967-77* (London, 1978), pp. 34-68. *The politics of positive discrimination* was the result of a Home Office-commissioned study into the effectiveness of the programme.

Association.¹⁶ The Urban Programme therefore represented an *ad hoc* approach to the social and physical environment, and provided the basis upon which more geographically-focused projects were initiated.¹⁷ While these were established across Britain, Liverpool was a locus.

Liverpool hosted an example of nearly all such initiatives, providing a valuable insight into changing conceptions of urban problems.¹⁸ The Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project (SNAP) was one such project, established in June 1969 by the homelessness charity, Shelter. Operating as a General Improvement Area under the Housing Act 1969, and working in cooperation with local and central government, SNAP's foundation reflected Shelter's decision to 'expand its concern from the literally homeless to those parts of the inner city where homelessness principally occurred', as well as the charity's broader focus on the condition and availability of housing in general.¹⁹ The project's remit was wider than the improvement of the physical environment and was intended to engage in the 'promotion of society [in] deprived areas'.²⁰ In this, the renewal of the built fabric of the city was closely bound to other efforts geared towards 'community development'.²¹ The project's focus on housing conditions within an area typified by 'multiple deprivation', joblessness, and a concentrated black and Chinese population provides an important account of the physical

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 70. As Edwards and Batley suggested, this funding mechanism was criticised for being too narrowly-focussed, thereby closing off funding for many worthwhile projects. Conversely, the UP was also criticised for offering local authorities 'a source of finance for programmes for which they would otherwise not be able to find money'; see Leader, 'Complex needs of the cities', *The Times* (6 April 1972), p. 13.

¹⁷ This included the Brunswick neighbourhood scheme, established in the south of Liverpool in 1972 as an experiment in concentrating UP resources on a specific geographic area; see Richard Batley, *The neighbourhood scheme: cases of central government intervention in local deprivation* (London, 1975).

¹⁸ Chris Couch, *City of change and challenge: urban planning and regeneration in Liverpool* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 3-4.

¹⁹ Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project Committee, *Another chance for cities: SNAP 69/72* (London, 1972), p. 5.

²⁰ 'Liverpool Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project', *Charity Commission* (15 April 1970) <<http://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=500012&subid=0>> [accessed 17 November 2016].

²¹ 'Community development' had both colonial/postcolonial and metropolitan forms. On post-colonial community development, see Central Office of Information, *Community development* (London, 1966). In Britain, 'community development' emerged in the late 1960s as a method of intervening in deprived urban areas. This approach was influenced by the claim that 'it was the "deprived" themselves who were the cause of "urban deprivation"', and as such, the best way to alleviate the problem was through mobilising deprived urban communities; see Community Development Project (CDP), *Gilding the ghetto: the state and the poverty experiments* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1977), p. 4. For more on the CDPs, see Sarah Banks and Mick Carpenter, 'Researching the local politics and practices of radical Community Development Projects in 1970s Britain', *Community Development Journal* 52 (2017), pp. 226-46; and Peter Shapely, *Deprivation, state interventions and urban communities in Britain, 1968-79* (Abingdon, 2017), pp. 173-208.

and social fabric in one area of inner Liverpool.²² On their first night in the city, the project workers walked along Princes Avenue, Granby Street, and Upper Parliament Street, an account of which was published in SNAP's final report in September 1972.²³ This 'Granby triangle' marked part of the project area's boundary (see figure 3.1). Through following the charity workers' steps along these particular streets, we can see how changes in the social and physical environment were linked in contemporary discourse. This, of course, was not a new idea.²⁴ But while urban actors had long focused on the effects of urban growth, by the late 1960s this was being replaced by issues associated with urban decline. Firmly linked to the loss of population and employment covered in the previous two chapters, 'urban decay' involved 'despoiled and abandoned land', failing infrastructure, and poor or derelict housing as well as vandalism, littering, and fly-tipping.²⁵ Through the close reading of the account of the walk along the boundaries of the SNAP project area, it is therefore possible to see how particular groups engaged in urban governance conceived the problems of a particular declining urban area. Furthermore, the account complicates our understanding of the urban crisis, showing these areas to be spaces of hope as much as they were spaces of distress.

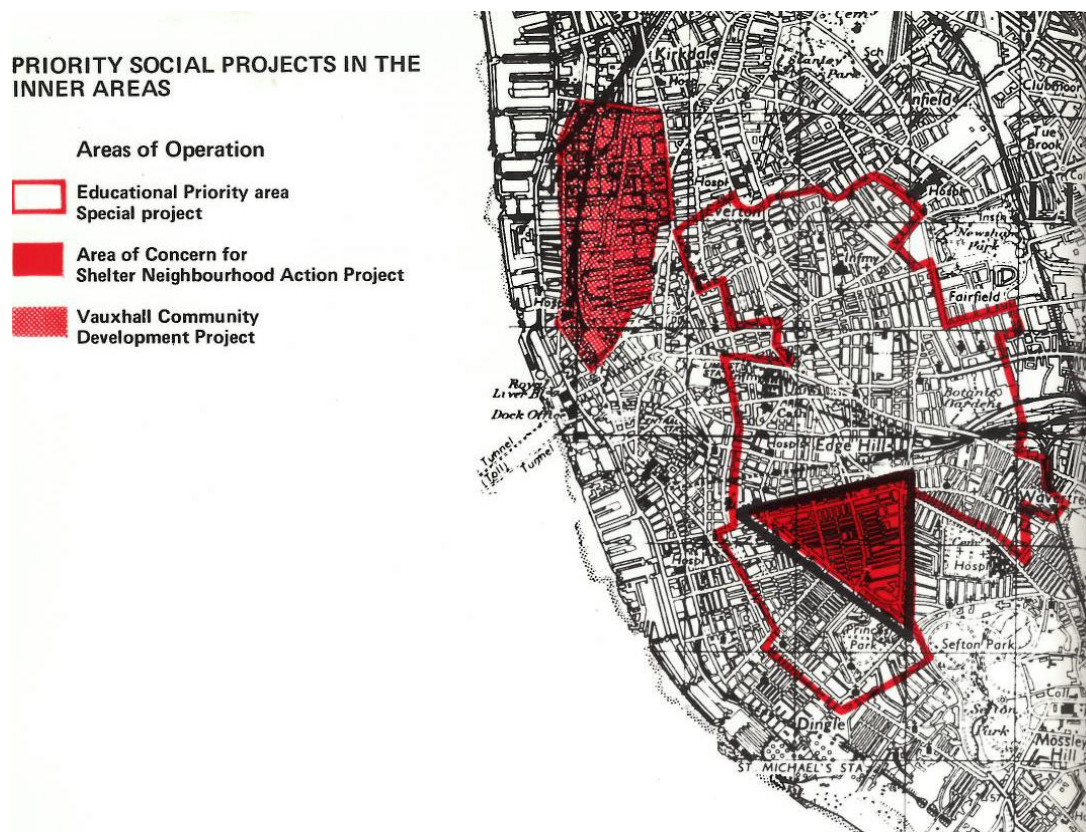
²² See *Tenth report with evidence taken before the Environment and Home Office Sub-Committee in Session 1972-73, Appendices and Index: Volume II - Evidence (1972-73: House Improvement Grants)*, HC 349-II (London, 1973), p. 265; and Home Affairs Select Committee, *Racial disadvantage: minutes of Evidence (Liverpool) 14 October 1980*, HC 424 (London, 1980). p. 560.

²³ SNAP, *Another chance for cities*, pp. 53-5.

²⁴ Cf. James Donald, *Imagining the modern city* (Minneapolis, MN, 1999); and Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: a study in the relationship between classes in Victorian society* (London, 4th edition, 2013).

²⁵ Brian Robson, *Those inner cities: reconciling the social and economic aims of urban policy* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 35-7.

Figure 3.1: Map of area-based projects active in Liverpool in 1972



Source: SNAP, *Action for cities: SNAP 69/72* (London: Liverpool Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project, 1972), p. 65.

The residents of Granby were said to suffer ‘multiple deprivation’, an idea which developed during the course of the 1970s.²⁶ In this, the urban poor were not just materially impoverished, but suffered additional hardships including a poor environment, a lack of access to government services, and a lack of political agency brought about by effective and affective distance from the machinery of urban governance.²⁷ This hardship was not unrelenting, as shown through the themes expressed in the account of that first walk around the streets of Granby. Nevertheless, the physical environment showed signs of decay. The SNAP workers described walking along Princes Avenue as ‘still a very stimulating experience even if many large houses facing the Avenue are now derelict and windowless’.²⁸ Granby therefore exhibited a curious mix of dereliction, deprivation, and

²⁶ See Geoff Norris, ‘Defining urban deprivation’, in Colin Jones (ed.), *Urban deprivation and the inner city* (London, 1979), pp. 17-31.

²⁷ It was, for example, argued that **“THE “URBAN CRISIS” IS NOT REALLY A CRISIS OF THE MUNICIPALITY, BUT RATHER A CRISIS OF TECHNOLOGY** and the public often feel they are governed by technocrats and the administrators who deploy the professionals’ (emphasis in original); see SNAP, *Another chance for cities*, p. 35. This sense of physical and figurative distance between the governors and the governed – ‘them and us’ – was also articulated in the final report of the Liverpool IAS; see Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Change or decay: final report of the Liverpool Inner Area Study* (London, 1977), pp. 167-8.

²⁸ SNAP, *Another chance for cities*, p. 53.

respectability. 'Behind the imposing façade of the boulevard', the streets were described as 'bearing all the marks of blight, poverty and despair'.²⁹ As the account continued:

Roads are patched, and patched again, until recklessly uneven. But even among the smallest houses, especially among the smallest houses, there are polished knockers and often bright front doors painted in a variety of colours, more exciting and more successful than anything dreamed of by architects and planners.³⁰

In the streets off Princes Avenue, however, there were signs of greater problems:

some houses become boarded up and sometimes two or three are missing and the spaces filled with rubble. Eventually a whole terrace has disappeared. Everywhere there is litter; it blows along the pavements and sometimes seems to fill the air.³¹

The air was also filled with a 'stink' between the rows of houses, a result of accumulated rubbish and blocked drains.³² Princes Avenue was a diverse assemblage of urban life in which residents' material poverty was compounded by the material decay of the physical environment.

In SNAP's report, this account of the physical environment was complemented by photographs, taken by Nick Hedges. Hedges spent four years working for Shelter, from 1968 to 1972, documenting poor housing conditions in towns and cities across Britain. His work formed part of a larger genre of urban photography which sought to capture images of everyday life in poor areas.³³ The photographs included images of derelict buildings, cramped housing, and a panoply of depictions of everyday life. They conveyed Hedges' 'social eye', representing 'an exploration of how [processes of urban change] were experienced by those who were most affected by them'.³⁴ The photographs had an important function. The director of the project, Des McConaghy, was worried that the report would not be accessible, and therefore sought to find ways to convey their findings. One such method was through images – graphic representations of data as well as photographs – which McConaghy hoped 'will overcome many of the communication and other difficulties which are bound to occur'.³⁵ Hedges' work was therefore part of a larger project,

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

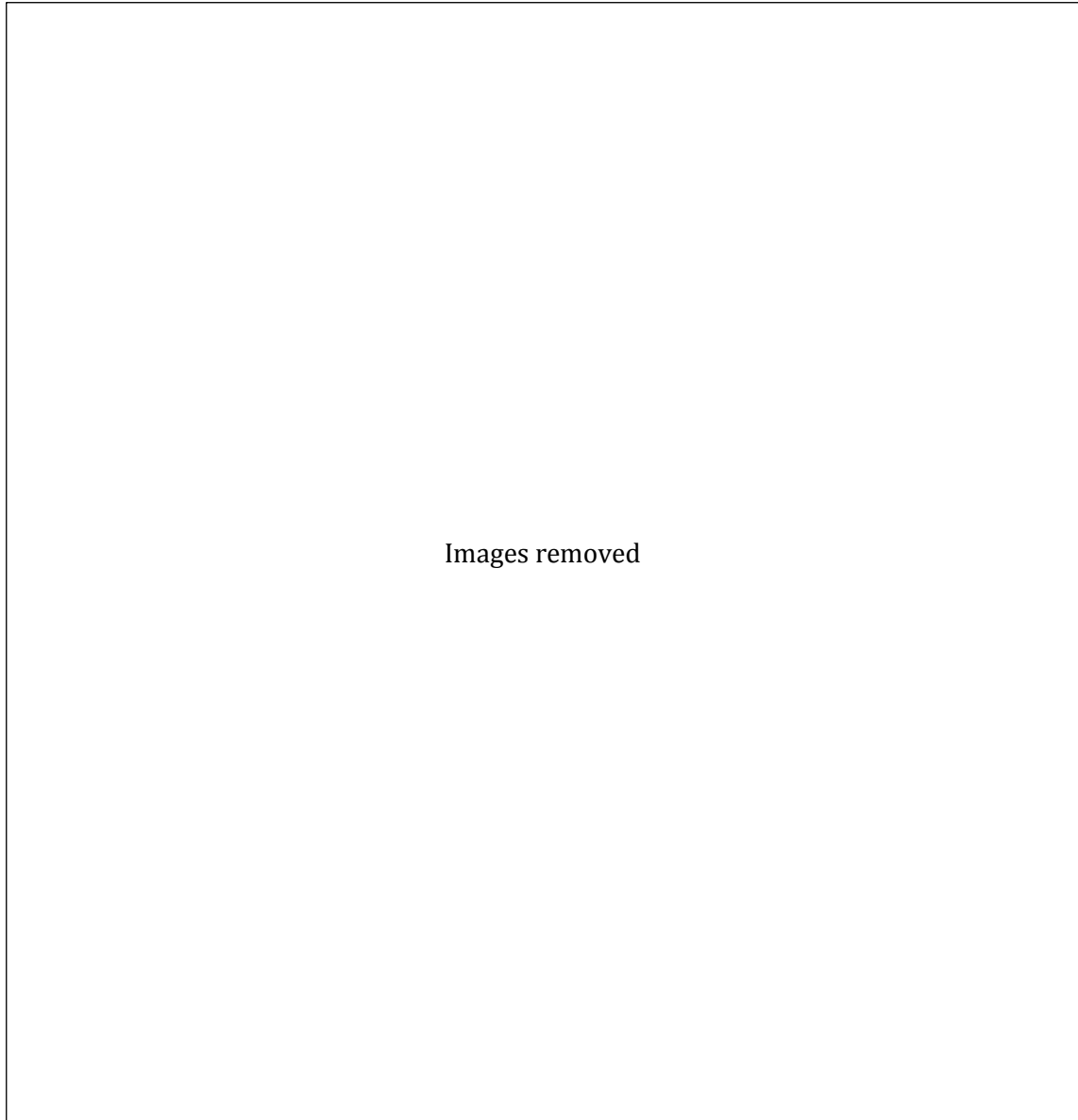
³³ See Richard Dennis, *Cities in modernity: representations and reproductions of metropolitan space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 52-79.

³⁴ Connell, 'Race, prostitution and the new left', p. 301.

³⁵ SNAP, *Another chance for cities*, p. 5.

exemplified through the production of government-sponsored social studies, to understand and explain processes of urban change and their effects on communities.

Figure 3.2: Selected images from 'A walk round Granby'



Source: SNAP, *Action for cities: SNAP 69/72* (London, 1972), pp. 52-6.

Towards the end of Princes Avenue, the group turned left, up Granby Street. Bisecting Granby ward, the SNAP committee described a 'new type of cosmopolitan brilliance', typified most pointedly by the availability of exotic vegetables in the shops.³⁶ These shops, however, 'wear heavy protective metal grilles at night which are rarely taken down during the day' as a physical marker of the crime encountered within the area.³⁷ In

³⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 53 and 55.

Granby, 'setting fire to derelict buildings is a sport for bored children'.³⁸ Prostitution, drunkenness, and domestic violence were all problems encountered by local police.³⁹ It was the condition of the housing, however, which most caught the charity workers' attention:

To the north of Granby Street large houses become increasingly derelict, and to the east also, properties have clearly gone beyond the point of any repair. One reaches the condemned areas where the worst off families are housed in avenues with noble names: "Upper Parliament Street".⁴⁰

On Upper Parliament Street, 'people are just "holding on"'. Once more, this was evidenced through the physical environment, with the SNAP workers describing

net curtains pulled together with safety pins, children hanging around the steps or playing in the rubble. Some houses are without water and sanitation and, as night falls, a single electric bulb can light up many scenes of miserably furnished bedsits.⁴¹

From these descriptions, it is apparent that the physical environment encountered by the SNAP workers was showing signs of significant physical and social decay. This social decay was reflected in moral concerns with prostitution and crime, as much as it was in concern over the poor living conditions experienced by the area's residents.⁴² Nevertheless, while the built environment underwrote SNAP's understanding of the social assemblage in Granby from 1969 to 1972, there were other actants, including non-human animals.⁴³ Dogs were used to 'defy intruders, scraping and barking behind rotten back doors'.⁴⁴ SNAP's headquarters was to be based in a derelict police station in Granby. When the workers arrived in 1969, a 'wild' dog had been shut in the building by a contractor, 'a familiar technique since empty buildings are quickly stripped of lead and copper'.⁴⁵ Though 'culprits' later smashed the windows to allow the animal to escape, so they were not only then able to 'strip' the building, but 'there is the added problem of catching or destroying a dangerous

³⁸ Ibid., p. 55.

³⁹ Police encounters were fraught, on both sides, in part reflecting poor relations between the local multi-ethnic population and the authorities. As such, when the 'nice young copper' had 'identified his enemy', it was, in his words, 'some half-castes [who] were on a rampage'; *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ibid.; for several nights in July 1981, Upper Parliament Street was the locus of significant urban disorder, known as the Toxteth 'riots'.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² On residents' concerns over the 'effect of vice on innocent by-standers', see SNAP, *Another chance for cities*, p. 101.

⁴³ Keith Thomas, *Man and the natural world: changing attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London, 1983) provides an authoritative account of human interactions with non-human animals in early modern England. However, Thomas's assertion that, by the 19th century, the importance of animals had dwindled within urban society has been challenged; see Harriet Ritvo, *The animal estate: the English and other creatures in the Victorian age* (Cambridge, MA, 1987). This continued into the twentieth century; see Chris Pearson, 'Dogs, history, and agency', *History and Theory* 52 (2013), pp. 128-45.

⁴⁴ SNAP, *Another chance for cities*, p. 53.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

dog'.⁴⁶ While their presence was contingent on the actions of people within Granby, these dogs nevertheless formed an important part of the urban environment through the attempt to guard against petty crime thought to be engendered through dereliction and urban decay.

Nature was also integral. The 'great tree-lined boulevard of Princes Avenue' remained a poignant symbol of the area's past role as the home of Liverpool's merchant class. Behind the boulevard, however, these trees contributed to the decay of Granby's physical environment; 'unfortunately for the smaller streets, forest trees which have become too large, pushing up pavements, filling gutters and, in the summer, cutting out the remaining sunlight'.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, trees also pointed to social stability within the inner city. In a leaflet précising the work undertaking by SNAP, a photograph taken by Nick Hedges of a woman washing her pavement outside her home was used to highlight the continued resilience of the area. The photograph, which also appeared in SNAP's final report,⁴⁸ was captioned:

A SNAP Resident does not stop at her front door. The economic base of the inner city has been eroded but hope remains. Of the scores of trees planted in SNAP, only two have been vandalised. Can the same be said of the "New Jerusalems" of the architects and planners?⁴⁹

The fact that 'only' two trees had been vandalised, along with the efforts of the woman to keep her neighbourhood clean, were used by SNAP to convey the sense that Granby, in spite of its problems, remained viable. The acts of washing the pavement and of *not* vandalising trees formed an important part of the social; along with the brightly-painted front doors and recently-polished door knockers, they provided a counter to the decay and despair emblemised by crooked pavements, wild dogs, and 'miserably furnished bedsits'. Added to this was a juxtaposition between night and day:

Our first walk through the area ended as service workers were already on their way to the bus stops. One night's siege was over and it was impossible to avoid a feeling of relief similar to the arrival of daylight on 14th Street, Washington D.C. or in South Bronx.⁵⁰

This 'feeling of relief' following the 'siege' was again shown through the assemblage of people, objects, and acts which together comprised the social in inner Liverpool. This included the 'owner of a large house in Ducie Street [who] was painting his wooden fencing post-office red and canary yellow', door knobs being polished, a Wendy House being erected

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 53.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴⁹ SNAP, *The new Granby Centre & SNAP Liverpool: Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project July 1969-June 1972* (London, 1972), p. 34.

⁵⁰ SNAP, *Another chance for cities*, p. 55.

for local children, and that same woman ‘working her way with bucket and scrubbing brush across the pavement outside her house.’⁵¹ It is unclear whether the events described above genuinely took place over the course of one evening, or whether the project workers’ account was itself an assemblage of encounters, memories, and impressions. To an extent, however, this is less important than the insight the accounts provides into social change in inner Liverpool.

The SNAP report offers perhaps the most evocative account of the physical environment in inner Liverpool around the beginning of the 1970s, demonstrating the manner through which the social was inexorably linked to the physical environment. As part of the city’s ‘sailortown’,⁵² Granby was acutely affected by the decline of the port during the second half of the twentieth century. There were other areas of the city, however, in which similar problems were exhibited. Located to the north of the city centre, Vauxhall hosted a Community Development Project (CDP) from 1970 to 1975.⁵³ At the time of the CDP’s founding, the area was said to have ‘reached its lowest point – at least visually, as unemployment rose steadily over the next few years’.⁵⁴ ‘Slum clearance’ had left large areas derelict; these areas were used to park lorries and were susceptible to vandalism. Shops were ‘boarded up’ during the day while public buildings were ‘grilled, barred and draped in barbed wire against intruders’.⁵⁵ Housing was ‘scarred’, courtyards ‘full of rubble’, and the area ‘dug in against assault from official and unofficial demolition’.⁵⁶ These allusions to combat, which had similarities with other denunciations of modernist planning, suggested that the area was under severe threat from comprehensive redevelopment.⁵⁷ The day after an unnamed woman had been re-housed, her old flat was vandalised:

[The] windows had been broken, old furniture smashed, water tank removed, stone fireplace heaved out of the chimney stack and smashed on the floor – it looked as if it had been deserted for months.⁵⁸

In Vauxhall, as in Granby, the physical fabric was closely bound to the social. In Vauxhall, the blighting effects of large-scale clearance represented the most significant issue, whereas in Granby, it was the slow decay of a deprived area. The physical environment encountered

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² John Belchem, *Before the Windrush: race relations in 20th-century Liverpool* (Liverpool, 2014), p. 21.

⁵³ Details of the project can be found in its final report; see Phil Topping and George Smith, *Government against poverty? Liverpool Community Development Project, 1970-75* (Oxford, 1977).

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ For example, a cartoon depicting architects, planners, the government, and speculators as warplanes dropping bombs on an ‘inner city’ area appeared in *Built Environment* in 1978; see Saumarez Smith, ‘The inner city crisis’, pp. 578-80.

⁵⁸ Topping and Smith, *government against poverty?* p. 20.

by the SNAP and CDP workers, however, was not a terminus; urban decay and dereliction were seen to reinforce the decline of the built environment, creating a vicious circle.

Dereliction and the urban economy, c. 1975-78

Vacant and derelict land was a consistent problem in Liverpool as post-war reconstruction failed to remove bomb damage.⁵⁹ However, in the 1960s and early 1970s, central government conceived the issue of derelict land within the framework of regional policy. A definition of 'derelict land' was enacted through the Local Employment Acts 1960 and 1972 wherein the Board of Trade had the power to improve and acquire land that was 'derelict, neglected or unsightly, and likely to remain so for a considerable period'.⁶⁰ This circular definition of dereliction prioritised economic issues through a focus on de-industrialised spaces and prospective employment opportunities. Development Districts were therefore provided financial assistance for the clearance of derelict sites with the 'necessary condition that clearance of the dereliction in question would promote employment within the area'.⁶¹ This was seen to lead to the 'arbitrary' rejection of several clearance schemes, as the Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Douglas Jay, explained to the President of the Board of Trade, Richard Crossman, in 1965.⁶² Nevertheless, it was reasoned that 'The ugliness caused by widespread dereliction is a deterrent to incoming industry, which it must continue to be our aim to attract to these places'.⁶³ Within this framework, dereliction in the North West of England was seen to affect 'the old colliery areas where pit heaps have been supplemented by the wastes from chemical and other plant'.⁶⁴ As a 1967 survey of derelict land conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government made clear, dereliction in the 1960s was not an urban problem *per se*. The categories of derelict land – spoil heaps, excavation and pits, and the remnants of collieries and quarries – were not a feature of Liverpool's landscape. As such, the total acreage of derelict land in the city was listed as 'NIL'.⁶⁵ While categories of dereliction were therefore geared toward the fallout of de-

⁵⁹ See Catherine Flinn, *'In spite of planning': reconstructing Britain's blitzed cities, 1945-54* (unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2011), pp. 186-201; and Catherine Flinn, 'The city of our dreams? The political and economic realities of rebuilding Britain's blitzed cities, 1945-54', *Twentieth Century British History* 23 (2012), pp. 221-45.

⁶⁰ Similar wording was adopted through the Local Employment Act 1960, § 5 (1); and Local Employment Act 1972, § 8.

⁶¹ The National Archives, London (TNA): EW 7/292, W. Guy, Note on dereliction, 11 May 1965.

⁶² TNA: EW 7/292, Douglas Jay to Richard Crossman, 27 October 1965.

⁶³ *Ibid*; emphasis in original MS.

⁶⁴ TNA: EW 7/294, Philip Chantler to Aaron Emanuel, 15 March 1968.

⁶⁵ TNA: EW 7/1250, Results of derelict land survey, 3 October 1968; the acreage of derelict land for the years preceding and succeeding 31 December 1967 was simply given as '—'.

industrialisation, the decline of Liverpool's port also contributed to the spread of vacant and derelict land in Liverpool.

With a move to containerisation, located around a new system of docks to the north of Liverpool, the city's South Docks were increasingly regarded as obsolete. Setting out the rationale for their closure, the Chairman of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, J. G. Cuckney, said at a meeting on 26 April 1971 that 'Assets and resources must earn their keep or be eliminated. In the situation in which we find ourselves there is simply no alternative to such a policy'.⁶⁶ Discussions on the closure of the docks involved members of Liverpool Corporation with the aim of redeveloping the site. Nevertheless, at the first annual meeting of the newly-established Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) the following year, Cuckney acknowledged that 'Having regard to the present state of the market for land on Merseyside... the profitable redevelopment or disposal of this site will probably be achieved only in the long term'.⁶⁷ The South Docks were finally closed in September 1972, as trade relocated to the north of the city.⁶⁸ The sale of the docks was a vital aim for the MDHC which intended to use the proceeds from selling the Albert Dock to support the repayment of an unsecured loan taken out in 1973.⁶⁹ In fact, this repayment plan had been ordered by the High Court in 1974.⁷⁰ Progress was slow, attributed to the 'worsened' economic climate and a central government tax on property developers.⁷¹ Problems persisted, with the 'depressed' property market accounting for the low sales of MDHC land in 1975 which provided only £33,250 for the company's coffers. During the 1970s, there were a number of proposals to redevelop and reuse the South Docks. For example, plans for the sale of the Albert Dock to the city council, under discussion in 1974 and 1975, would have provided additional accommodation for Liverpool Polytechnic and, it was hoped, raise £2 million for the company.⁷² There was also the possibility that the neighbouring Canning Dock could be sold 'for a Government Office scheme'.⁷³

⁶⁶ Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1970* (Liverpool, 1971), n.p.

⁶⁷ Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC), *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1971* (Liverpool, 1972), p. 5.

⁶⁸ MDHC, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1972* (Liverpool, 1973), p. 7.

⁶⁹ MDHC, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1974* (Liverpool, 1975), p. 3.

⁷⁰ MDHC, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1979* (Liverpool, 1980), p. 3.

⁷¹ MDHC, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1973* (Liverpool, 1974), pp. 4-5.

⁷² 'Statement of the advisory committee in respect of 1975', MDHC, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1975* (Liverpool, 1976), n.p.

⁷³ MDHC, *Annual report 1975*, p. 3.

These sales never came to fruition.⁷⁴ Increased taxes and continued economic problems were seen to have inhibited the company's ability to sell off surplus land, and in 1977 it was only able to raise £3,000 through the sale of a single property in the South Docks.⁷⁵ Moreover, the Community Land Act 1975 was claimed to have significantly reduced the value of the MDHC's surplus land, falling by £4,282,000 in real terms between 1971 and 1974.⁷⁶ The buildings owned by the MDHC in its South Docks system were not derelict in the 1970s, with small business units and storage spaces available for rent.⁷⁷ This continued use therefore partially explained the decision not to sell the docks 'until the funds are available for re-development' after plans were mooted in 1976 for the area to be given "New Town" status'.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, a depressed market meant that the land which was to be used to pay off the company's debt became something of a burden, at least on the MDHC's balance sheet.

While the buildings remained in use, the South Docks were not immune to dereliction. Following the closure of the docks, the berthing infrastructure, and the river water itself, became the locus for concerns surrounding environmental decline and dereliction. The opening of the South Dock gates meant that the water level was tidal, and with no maintenance, silt which had been 'contaminated' by sewage was allowed to flow in and settle.⁷⁹ As shown through the later writings of Peter Walker, Secretary of State for the Environment from October 1970 to November 1972, and his eventual successor, Michael Heseltine, the environmental conditions of urban rivers were seen to constitute a significant problem in terms of social welfare and economic performance.⁸⁰ Dereliction, however, was not confined to the docks, as can be seen through local government and voluntary organisations' approaches to the physical environment in the late 1970s.

In 1977, a series of reports compiled by voluntary organisations, local authority planners, and the central government-sponsored inner area consultants identified vacant land as a significant issue in Liverpool. In April 1977, Liverpool City Council approved the

⁷⁴ The sale of the Albert Dock to Liverpool City Council to provide additional accommodation for the polytechnic was officially dropped in October 1975; see Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool (LRO): 352 MIN/FIN II/23/1, Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Review and Financial Control sub-committee, 29 October 1975, p. 86.

⁷⁵ 'Statement of advisory committee in respect of 1977', MDHC, Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1977 (Liverpool, 1978), n.p.

⁷⁶ MDHC, *Annual report 1975*, p. 3.

⁷⁷ MDHC, *Annual report 1976*, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ This issue will be discussed in more detail below; see Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC), *Initial development strategy* (Liverpool, 1981), p. 5.

⁸⁰ See Peter Walker, *The ascent of Britain* (London, 1977), pp. 124-5; and Michael Heseltine, *Life in the jungle: my autobiography* (London, 2000), pp. 211-12.

inner area district statements (IADS) which had been produced by the City Planning Officer, E. S. P. Evans, in December 1976.⁸¹ The IADS identified the extent of Liverpool's 'land resource', defined as the area of land and buildings as 'currently vacant'; land that was 'interim treated' but required further investment; and land or buildings which were 'likely to become vacant in the next 5-7 years'.⁸² The statements' focus on the inner areas covered the majority of Liverpool's housing built prior to the First World War, much of which had been scheduled for clearance or improvement.⁸³ As the statements made clear, the land resource was integral to the 'overall strategy needed for tackling the problems of the inner areas'.⁸⁴ These problems were multifarious, but Evans claimed that 'The importance of utilising the land resource... is self-evident by its scale and the aura of dereliction and decline which it presents'.⁸⁵ Within this vein, Evans stated that the scale of vacant and derelict land was such that

not only does it detract from the physical appearance of the inner areas, but it is a positive deterrent to attracting private investment and retaining a "balanced" population structure.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, in categorising vacant or derelict land as a resource, Evans indicated that land was something 'the City has at its disposal to help arrest this decline and it can, therefore, be regarded as a positive asset'.⁸⁷ While Liverpool's was not the most concentrated tract of vacant land – the East End of Glasgow comprised 20 per cent derelict land – the scale was still important.⁸⁸ At 457.1 hectares (1143 acres or 4.571 km²) – or approximately 15 per cent of the total area of inner Liverpool – the scale of vacant land in the city was high.⁸⁹ The land resource therefore represented a problem, but was also seen as part of the solution. With some 60 per cent of the land resource owned by the city council, 'every vacant and potentially vacant site' was assigned to a particular department or agency depending on its allotted future use.⁹⁰ The IADS, however, were not simple planning documents setting out

⁸¹ These statements built on a previous report submitted to the council's Planning and Land Committee in June 1976; see E. S. P. Evans, *The city's land resources* (Liverpool, 1976).

⁸² E. S. P. Evans, *The inner area district statements: proposals for the development of the land resource* (Liverpool, 1976), p. 1.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸⁷ Though, Evans continued, 'there are a number of sites included in the land resource which would be "difficult to develop" and cannot be considered positive assets'; *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁸ Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal project, *The future for GEAR: key issues and possible courses of action* (Glasgow, 1978), p. 28.

⁸⁹ Evans, *Inner area district statements: land resource*, p. 6; also see appendix 2, table 8 for a breakdown of land use allocations.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 13; uses included housing, highways, education, and open space. On the plans for each planning district, see *ibid.*, appendix 1.

the city council's policies regarding land use. While Liverpool had an abundance of land, it was lacking in financial resources. The statements formed part of a concerted attempt to leverage greater investment from central government, with Evans describing the report as 'advocacy material'.⁹¹ Vacant land, therefore, represented a significant issue for Liverpool; the land itself was seen to offer a way out of these problems, even if some of it was beyond repair. But land alone could not achieve this and as such, in conceiving dereliction as a resource, the IADS were an attempt to turn a problem into a solution.

Figure 3.3: Cartoon satirising the problem of dereliction in Liverpool, 1977



Source: Liverpool Council of Voluntary Service, *Vacant land: an Enterprise Merseyside ginger paper* (Liverpool, 1977).

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 1.

In May 1977, the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Service (LCVS), which brought together, and advocated for, many of the city's locally-based voluntary organisations, responded to the IADS through its committee on urban poverty, known as 'Enterprise Merseyside'. In its so-called 'ginger paper', owing to the colour of the paper on which it was printed, Enterprise Merseyside reiterated the conclusions drawn by Evans that the redevelopment of vacant and derelict land represented a means through which to manage the city's economic problems. Nevertheless, there were some differences. Whereas the IADS sought to draw additional public finance, Enterprise Merseyside argued that

Inner city decline could be partially offset by encouraging residents and possible employers to utilise vacant land and buildings for community facilities and by the sheltering of embryonic business initiatives, at little or no extra cost to the City Council.⁹²

More than simply offering space for people and employment to move back into inner areas, however, vacant land was seen as the most important issue for people living and working in Liverpool. As Enterprise Merseyside reasoned, 'the conspicuous areas of vacant land seem the most pressing of such problems which the City needs to solve if Liverpool is not to continue down the spiral of decline'.⁹³ This assertion was further reinforced through the report's cover which featured a cartoon satirising the 'empty offices', 'wasteland', 'disused docks', and 'demolition' which greeted visitors on their arrival in Liverpool, a place in which redevelopment was 'prohibited for 20 miles' (see figure 3.3). Enterprise Merseyside proposed that a land bank be established, overseen by an interdepartmental unit of Liverpool City Council, rather than having vacant land apportioned to different departments based on its intended use. Officers from a number of departments would be seconded to this unit which would be based within the City Solicitor's Department. This, it was argued, would allow for a more consistent approach to dereliction.⁹⁴ A number of future land uses were set out, including housing, amenities, and enterprise, i.e. small businesses. The scale of the problem, however, meant that these uses could not be achieved immediately. Enterprise Merseyside thus proposed that voluntary organisations could occupy properties for a rent-free tenancy period of up to two years, thereby ensuring the buildings' continued usage and maintenance as well as providing space for 'a wide range of social welfare and community facilities'.⁹⁵ While the proposals put forward by the LCVS committee privileged voluntary organisations, the approach to the built environment set out in the report also intended to

⁹² Liverpool Council of Voluntary Service (LCVS), *Vacant land: an Enterprise Merseyside ginger paper* (Liverpool, 1977), p. 1.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

redefine dereliction to better suit Liverpool's needs. In the face of the severe problems evidenced in the city, it was argued that 'Derelict sites on the Wirral should not be a priority when central Liverpool is blighted by vacant areas'.⁹⁶ Turning its attention to Merseyside County Council, created following the reorganisation of local government in 1974, it argued that the authority's Derelict Land Team 'should be asked to focus its efforts on securing 100% grant aid for Liverpool vacant land'.⁹⁷

The IADS was followed, in September 1977, by the publication of the final reports of the three inner area studies (IAS). The IAS represented a rejection of urban modernist approaches to the built environment through their criticism of the effects of planning, and other processes of urban change, on the inner areas.⁹⁸ In Liverpool, the consultants utilised land use surveys published in March 1975 and October 1976 as the basis for its conclusions, citing figures of 56 hectares of vacant land within the project area covered by the IAS (approximately 11 per cent of the total) and 500 hectares across the city as a whole.⁹⁹ The impact of this widespread dereliction on inner Liverpool was said to be 'incalculable' as the land

attracts vandalism and contributes to an atmosphere of obsolescence, dilapidation and decay. It is not only that people living nearby have their home environment blighted, but that attempts at regeneration through attracting private investment are stultified whether it be in housing or jobs; and little private investment is likely to come to the inner areas of its own volition.¹⁰⁰

Liverpool's acres of vacant land were attributed to the 'social development programmes of the last twenty years', primarily slum clearance and the slow pace of redevelopment which followed rather than the remnants of Second World War bomb damage.¹⁰¹ Through the analysis of case studies, focused on individual sites located around clusters of vacant buildings, the consultants concluded that any progress in redeveloping the land would be slow.¹⁰² As alluded to above, this vast tract of vacant land constituted a problem from both a social and an economic standpoint. As the consultants claimed, the 'environmental

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁹⁷ Ibid.; this would have been under the terms of the Local Employment Act 1972 which, as explained above, had enacted a definition of dereliction which did not prioritise Liverpool's extensive vacant land.

⁹⁸ Saumarez Smith, 'The inner city crisis', pp. 578-98.

⁹⁹ Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Vacant land: report by consultants*, IAS/LI/11 (London, 1976), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 5-17 and 26; similarly, the IADS concluded that, were funding available, it would take between four and a half and eight years to redevelop all of Liverpool's vacant land, assuming the work was undertaken concurrently – see Evans, *Inner area district statements*, figure 2.

damage' brought through vacant or derelict land 'gives the surrounding area an air (and often smell) of depression which could not but discourage activity and enterprise on other, adjacent land'.¹⁰³ This sensory barrage, attributed to derelict land, was one means through which vacant land was seen to discourage investment; as the consultants continued:

it implies a significant loss of people, activities, purchasing power that once both supported and depended upon the remaining area. That subtle economic interdependability has been disrupted, and the effects manifest themselves in areas not so far directly affected by [clearance] schemes.¹⁰⁴

Vacant land, therefore, was seen to have a negative impact on areas which had not been cleared by planners.¹⁰⁵ What is more, this was seen as a waste of resources; communities suffered 'by being deprived of houses or industry or open space' and lost "productive" public spending' on maintaining vacant land on top of losing land value in their area.¹⁰⁶ The conclusions of the consultants' survey of vacant land were supported by their environmental care project, which ran from 1973-77, though this focused more on the social than the economic effects of urban decay and dereliction.¹⁰⁷

Community groups and charities from across the city responded to the IAS in a report titled *In our Liverpool Home*.¹⁰⁸ In their report, the community groups ridiculed the notion that people still wished to live in the 'brick strewn, massacred wastelands open to the Mersey winds'.¹⁰⁹ On top of this concern for the state of housing in Liverpool, the community groups described 'a form of environmental anarchy' as the urban fabric of inner Liverpool crumbled in the wake of economic decline.¹¹⁰ The reports and responses produced around 1977 pointed towards an important tension in contemporary approaches to the physical environment. Derelict land was constituted as a problem. It blighted the

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Alistair Kefford, 'Disruption, destruction and the creation of "the inner cities": the impact of urban renewal on industry, 1945-1980', *Urban History* 44 (2016), pp. 492-515.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Environmental care project: report by consultants*, IAS/LI/19 (London, 1977).

¹⁰⁸ The response was organised by the Community Development Section of Liverpool City Council, the Liverpool Council for Voluntary Service, the Workers' Educational Association and the Institute of Extension Studies of the University of Liverpool. 17 community groups were also involved in forming the response, including community/neighbourhood councils, the Merseyside Community Relations Council, and the Amalgamated Institute of Antiquarian Crafts. The response was produced from a brief summary of the conclusions of the IAS, rather than the complete final report; this apparent lack of detail, along with the short timespan afforded for these responses, was criticised by the community groups.

¹⁰⁹ Community Development Section of Liverpool City Council et al., *In our Liverpool home: a collective response by community organisations to the publication of the inner area study summary report* (Liverpool, 1977), Appendix B.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

urban landscape and impeded economic investment. Vacant land, on the other hand, was seen as a resource which could be used to bring investment into the city. It was the same land, but contemporaries attached different meaning to it depending on a number of factors, including environmental amenity and associations made with other social and economic problems within the area. In response to the inner area study, community organisations in Liverpool therefore described how de-industrialisation and the closure of docks ‘adds up to a form of environmental anarchy so overwhelming that normal controls and standards have to be abandoned’.¹¹¹ Highlighting the link between the decline in inner-city employment and the built environment, the response also contended that ‘artificially high land values and high rents – a result of speculative values created by the development industry – prevent the reoccupation of premises that stand idle’.¹¹² As the next section shows, the link between land and property values, local government finance, and the amenity physical environment represented a barrier to regeneration.

Local government finance and the physical environment, c. 1970s and 1980s

Urban decline was evidenced in the urban fabric. The physical environment, however, was also crucial in terms of local government finance. Over the course of the twentieth century, an increasing proportion of local government finance came through grants provided by central government.¹¹³ In the financial year 1976/77, this amounted to 69 per cent of ‘relevant expenditure in Liverpool and Merseyside as a whole’.¹¹⁴ In particular, the rate support grant was a key source of funding for the local authorities.¹¹⁵ These grants supplemented income through the system of rates. Rates were set by councils and levied on the nominal rental value of a residential property, known as the rateable value. Legislation required the revaluation of properties every five years, but the General Rate Act 1975 postponed the 1978 revaluation until 1980. This was further delayed until 1982, before being cancelled. As such, the 1972-73 revaluation was the final exercise of this kind before the abolition of the rates in England and Wales in 1990.¹¹⁶ This section uses the streets traversed by the SNAP workers on their first night in Granby in 1969 – Princes Avenue, Granby Street, and Upper Parliament Street – to suggest how urban decay and dereliction affected local government finance. As the figures in table 3.1 show, the income which could

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ See Richard Jackman, ‘Local government finance’, in Martin Loughlin, M. David Gelfand and Ken Young (eds), *Half a century of municipal decline, 1935-1985* (Abingdon, 2007), pp. 144-68.

¹¹⁴ Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 236.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Environment Select Committee, *Enquiry into methods of financing local government: Environment Select Committee second report (in 3 vols)*, HC 217 (London, 13 September 1982), pp. xviii-xix.

be drawn from properties on these streets was eroded by inflation.¹¹⁷ By 1989, when the rates were abolished, the purchasing power of the 1972 rateable values had fallen by over 80 per cent.¹¹⁸ For example, the purchasing power of the rateable value of properties fell from £83,231 in 1972 to £15,690 in 1989. This fall represented a significant problem for Liverpool, but the corrosive effects of inflation on local government finance were felt across Britain. In 1974, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Anthony Crosland, appointed a committee of inquiry, chaired by the planning lawyer Frank Layfield, to investigate local government finance.¹¹⁹ In its report, published in May 1976, the committee noted that

It is perhaps not surprising in the circumstances, particularly of unprecedented rates of inflation, that the year 1974 should have seen a crisis in local government finance. That crisis was serious and complex, symptomatic of lasting problems.¹²⁰

In Liverpool, the fall in the purchasing power of the 1972 valuation fed into a financial crisis in the 1980s.¹²¹ The valuation list contains a running total of the rateable values for individual properties calculated at the bottom of every page with a further total for each street. The un-amended values provided the basis for these totals, suggesting that they were of the initial valuation, with the amendments a much later addition.

Table 3.1: Rateable values for properties on selected streets, 1972-89

Street	Total rateable value, 1972 (£)	Purchasing power in 1989 (£)
Princes Avenue	23,961.00	4,528.00
Granby Street	40,140.00	7,569.00
Upper Parliament Street	83,231.00	15,690.00

Sources: Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool (LRO): 352 RAT/4/1/14, 1972 valuation list, postal district L8, vol. 2, Fe-North, pp. 369-75; and LRO: 352 RAT/4/1/15, 1972 valuation list, postal district L8, vol. 3, North-end, pp. 764-73, 909-22.

While the fiscal effects of inflation were compounded by political decisions – the level at which the rates were set by the city council and the repeated decisions to delay and then abandon revaluations – rateable values also fell in real terms, reflected in the amendments made to the valuation list. There was no further revaluation after 1972, but rateable values for properties were amended during this period. These amendments to the

¹¹⁷ On inflation in the 1970s, see Jim Tomlinson, 'British government and popular understanding of inflation in the mid-1970s', *Economic History Review* 67 (2014), pp. 750-68.

¹¹⁸ The purchasing power was calculated by multiplying the 1972 valuation by the increase in the Retail Price Index (RPI) from 1972 to 1989. The calculation was made using the *Measuring Worth* website <<https://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php>> [accessed 13 August 2017].

¹¹⁹ 'Obituary: Sir Frank Layfield', *The Times*, 11 February 2000, p. 27.

¹²⁰ Cmnd. 6453, *Local government finance: report of the committee of inquiry* (London, 1976), pp. xxiii

¹²¹ Michael Parkinson, *Liverpool on the brink: one city's struggle against government cuts* (Hermitage, 1985).

rateable value were made, in green pen or faint pencil, to Liverpool City Council's valuation list.¹²² Many properties were crossed through, in red pen, with an assigned reference number to provide detail of the changes made. However, the supporting volume in which these changes were explained has not survived. What remains, therefore, is circumstantial evidence of declining rateable value. For example, a shop at number 47A Granby Street was given a rateable value of £186 in 1972, but this was amended, on an unknown date, to £182. The ground floor flat at number 8 Princes Avenue was initially valued at £102, later reduced to £94. 66 Upper Parliament Street, a house, was given a valuation of £66 in 1972 and amended to £60. The loss of the supporting volume to the 1972 valuation list inhibits our ability to historicise these changes. Moreover, as it is unclear when the changes occurred, it is not possible to measure the change in the purchasing power. Nevertheless, they are cited here as evidence that, at some point from the 1972 valuation to the end of the system of rates, the rateable value of properties in inner Liverpool fell in absolute as well as relative terms.

As can be seen in table 3.2, the rateable value of Liverpool's built environment was eroded by inflation between revaluations. The total rateable value for properties in Liverpool fluctuated annually. However, through calculating the purchasing power of these values (the original value multiplied by the increase in inflation (RPI), between the original and the base year, in this case 1971) the total rateable value fell in real terms. While revaluations led to an increase in the rateable value of all property in the city, Michael Parkinson has shown how this had little effect on the city council's budget, which drew an increasing proportion of its income from central government grants.¹²³ The final report of the IAS drew attention to this problem of financial resources encountered by Merseyside County Council in the preparation of their Structure Plan.¹²⁴ In a 1976 report, Merseyside was shown to have 'below average rateable bases and above average rate levies, giving an inherent lack of buoyancy in the capacity to raise resources locally'.¹²⁵ In recognising that Merseyside did not have the resources to finance urban regeneration through the rates, the structure plan did not represent a significant shift; Liverpool had long relied on central government to support its income. The details of the 1979 structure plan, however, confirm the circumstantial conclusions which can be drawn from available local government finance statistics. Liverpool's decaying physical environment represented a hindrance to planners.

¹²² The 1972 valuation list is available in 39 volumes. Valuations are listed on a street-by-street basis in alphabetical order; see LRO: 352 RAT/4/1/1-39.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹²⁴ Audrey Lees, *Merseyside structure plan: draft report of survey, financial resources* (Liverpool, 1976).

¹²⁵ Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 236.

Not only did its ageing urban fabric require significant investment, the physical environment was unable, under the system of local government finance then in operation, to provide the financial resources needed to regenerate the physical environment.¹²⁶

Table 3.2: Total rateable value of properties in Liverpool, 1959-76

Financial year	Total Rateable Value (£)	Purchasing power, 1971 base (£)
1959-60	10,222,215	16,650,000.00
1960-61	10,318,299	16,810,000.00
1961-62	10,472,136	16,490,000.00
1962-63	10,554,853	15,930,000.00
1963-64 (Revaluation)	26,083,822	38,640,000.00
1964-65	26,367,800	37,800,000.00
1965-66	-	-
1966-67	28,030,300	36,940,000.00
1967-68	27,154,800	34,870,000.00
1968-69	27,288,300	33,480,000.00
1969-70	27,663,700	32,210,000.00
1970-71	27,847,000	30,470,000.00
1971-72	27,727,900	27,727,900.00
1972-73	27,898,800	26,040,000.00
1973-74 (Revaluation)	71,348,300	52,610,000.00
1974-75	70,634,600	41,920,000.00
1975-76	71,188,400	32,280,000.00

Source: Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *Rates and Rateable Values in England and Wales* (London, 1959-69); Department of the Environment, *Rates and Rateable Values in England and Wales* (London, 1969-76). N.B. The total rateable value of property in Liverpool increased dramatically in the April 1963 valuation. This was the result of a revaluation of properties in England and Wales; this national figure, for example, increased from £736,616,000 in 1962-63 to £2,039,980,000 in 1963-64.

As this section has shown, the condition of the physical environment had important implications for local government finance. In Liverpool, this link was particularly important owing, firstly, to the scale of regeneration required. Secondly, the value of properties was identified as being low in comparison to other British cities. As such, while Liverpool's chief planning officer identified vacant land as a 'resource' in 1976, this section has suggested that the value of this resource was an issue. Liverpool had land, but that land did not generate the revenue required to maintain and improve the physical environment. As the next section shows, this link between land and resources was crucial in the development of Liverpool's urban crisis in the 1980s.

Urban crisis and regeneration, c. 1979-86

This section focuses on the urban policy initiatives of the Thatcher government. By showing how the regeneration of Liverpool's waterfront was stimulated by a real sense of crisis, it

¹²⁶ Audrey Lees, *Merseyside structure plan: draft written statement* (Liverpool, 1979), p. 151.

destabilises the narrative of physical decline followed by property- and private sector-led urban regeneration in the 1980s which has dominated urban studies literature.¹²⁷ The Toxteth 'riots' of 1981 formed the apex of this crisis, stimulating governmental action, even if many of the initiatives with which this action was associated were already in an embryonic stage.¹²⁸

In their final report, tellingly-titled *Change or Decay*, the Liverpool IAS consultants likened the social and economic problems of the inner areas to a series of 'images'. Inner-city residents, they said, 'live their lives amid derelict industrial sites, abandoned docks, disused railway sidings, boarded up shops, empty warehouses and factories and vacant land'.¹²⁹ The inner city was therefore constituted as the place in which social and economic decline had a very real, material resonance through the physical environment. Regeneration, the IAS consultants argued, would bring disused buildings and unemployed people 'into productive use'.¹³⁰ In their attempt to develop what was termed a 'total approach' to the inner city, it appears that all resources, whether human or otherwise, were placed on a roughly equal footing, at least superficially. Nevertheless, the physical environment remained an important barrier to regeneration an investment. As the central government white paper, *Policy for the Inner Cities*, stated in 1977,

This shabby environment, the lack of amenities, the high density remaining in some parts and the poor condition of the older housing in the inner areas contrast sharply with better conditions elsewhere. They combine together to make these areas unattractive, both to many of the people who live there and to new investment in business, industry and housing.¹³¹

As the white paper showed, the regeneration of the physical environment was linked to many other issues:

Without better housing, better education, health and personal social services in the inner areas it will be harder to stem the tide of decentralisation, and retain and attract the more skilled workers required in inner city firms. A progressive improvement of the

¹²⁷ On this, see Phil Jones and James Evans, *Urban regeneration in the UK* (London, 2nd ed., 2013), pp. 2-3.

¹²⁸ On the Urban Development Corporations, see Susan Brownill and Glen O'Hara, 'From planning to opportunism? Re-examining the creation of the London Docklands Development Corporation', *Planning Perspectives* 30 (2015), pp. 537-70; and on the origins of Enterprise Zones, see Sam Wetherell, 'Freedom planned: Enterprise Zones and urban non-planning in post-war Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 266-89.

¹²⁹ Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Change or decay*, p. 1.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹³¹ Cmnd. 6845, *Policy for the Inner Cities* (London, 1977), p. 3.

environment is needed, both for the sake of the present residents and to attract new investment.¹³²

While this link between the physical environment and the social had a long history, in the 1970s and 1980s, the problems with which planners, policymakers, and other urban agencies sought to ameliorate were the problems of urban decline rather than rapid urban growth.¹³³

Liverpool was one of six urban areas in which 'partnership' agreements were established following the publication of *Policy for the Inner Cities* in 1977. The agreements involved 'the joint preparation of inner area programmes in order to secure a coherent across-the-board approach to their problems'.¹³⁴ Crucially, the central government minister assigned to chair the Liverpool partnership during the first Thatcher ministry was the Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Heseltine. Funded through an expanded Urban Programme, the Liverpool Inner City Partnership published draft proposals for the improvement of the physical environment in 1979.¹³⁵ The plan, in line with the programme report for the period 1979-1982, allocated a budget of £2,932,000 for the improvement of the physical environment through three area-based initiatives.¹³⁶ At £2 million of capital spending, Environmental Improvement Areas (EIAs) formed the largest part of this budget and were to be established 'where total environmental upgrading and enhanced maintenance was to be introduced with the intention of establishing higher environmental standards than would normally be the case in the inner city'.¹³⁷ These were supplemented by Opportunity Improvements outside of the EIAs 'where isolated and serious problems could be identified and tackled'.¹³⁸ Finally, Partnership Area Improvements involved 'ground surface cleansing, graffiti and fly tipping removal, and improved refuse collective facilities' and was the only part of the programme funded through revenue, rather than capital spending.¹³⁹ As shown through this financing structure, the inner city partnership was primarily focused on directing capital investment to specific areas which 'present a wide range of environmental problems frequently found in the Inner City'.¹⁴⁰ A reduced budget was allocated for the 1980-81 financial year, but owing to the slow recruitment of

¹³² Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹³³ For example, Donald, *Imagining the modern city*; and Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*.

¹³⁴ HC Deb, 6 April 1977, series 5, vol. 929, col. 1228.

¹³⁵ City Planning Department, *Inner city partnership: 1979/80 draft urban programme (physical environment)* (Liverpool, 1979).

¹³⁶ City Planning Department, *Inner city partnership programme 1979-82* (Liverpool, 1978).

¹³⁷ City Planning Department, *Inner city partnership 1979/80*, p. 1.

¹³⁸ The budget for these improvements was set at £250,000 of capital spending; *ibid.*

¹³⁹ Partnership Area Improvements were allotted £54,000 in capital spending and £628,000 in revenue; *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

technical staff, only three of the four EIAs were instituted. The fourth, located around Scotland Road in Vauxhall, was finally established in 1980.¹⁴¹ In 1981, Liverpool planners judged the inner city partnership programme a success. As they explained, 'From the outset it has given a high priority to improving environmental conditions and positive results from this approach can now be seen on the ground'.¹⁴² While the annual budget allocation changed, the approach remained largely the same: the improvement of the built environment within politically-defined areas.

The unrest in Toxteth in July 1981 turned what had been a problem throughout the long 1970s into a crisis. Following the 'riots', local and central government sought to identify the underlying causes of the disorder, which ranged from discriminatory police practices to engrained poverty.¹⁴³ In a memorandum to his Cabinet colleagues after the disturbances, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Heseltine, highlighted the role of the physical environment in Merseyside in contributing to the outbreaks of violence. The area around the port of Liverpool was especially concerning, with Heseltine noting that 'Well over 1,000 acres along both banks of former industrial land lie idle and rotting'.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, he claimed that 'The river is an open sewer' which inhibited the development of 'water-based amenities' to stimulate employment.¹⁴⁵ Vacant and derelict land remained both a barrier to economic and physical regeneration, and a resource which could be leveraged, given enough investment, for renewal.¹⁴⁶ This was in addition to the 'grand architectural heritage' of the city centre.¹⁴⁷ The attention Heseltine paid towards the physical environment was important, representing a continuation of earlier approaches to urban policy by Margaret Thatcher's first government; 1979 was not a breakpoint. This approach also marked the limits of the private sector's involvement in urban regeneration. As Heseltine acknowledged, 'the private sector can, and I believe is willing to, play a large part'.¹⁴⁸ However, he also recognised that 'There are critical problems on Merseyside, and

¹⁴¹ City Planning Department, *Inner city partnership: 1980/81 urban programme (physical environment)* (Liverpool, 1980), p. 1.

¹⁴² City Planning Department, *Inner city partnership: 1981/82 urban programme (physical environment)* (Liverpool, 1981), p. 1.

¹⁴³ For example, see Cmnd. 8427, *The Brixton disorders 10-12 April 1981: report of an inquiry by the Rt. Hon. The Lord Scarman* (London, 1981); Kenneth Oxford, *Public disorder on Merseyside, July-August 1981: report to the Merseyside Police Committee* (Liverpool, 1981); and TNA: PREM/19/578, Michael Heseltine, It took a riot, 13 August 1981.

¹⁴⁴ TNA: PREM/19/578, Michael Heseltine, It took a riot, 13 August 1981, p. 2

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

elsewhere... that only the public sector can tackle'.¹⁴⁹ Heseltine listed a number of these 'critical problems' in his memorandum:

The old dock areas will have to be reclaimed to eliminate the present negative value. The Victorian sewers will need to be mended or replaced. The Mersey will have to be cleaned up. Derelict sites and buildings must be cleared.¹⁵⁰

In addition to representing the limits of the private sector, civil servants in the Department of the Environment also indicated that the emphasis on the physical environment in Liverpool the boundaries of Heseltine's ministerial jurisdiction.¹⁵¹ Heseltine used his position as chair of the Liverpool inner city partnership to justify his close attention to the problems of the area.¹⁵² Urban regeneration efforts in the early 1980s saw the proliferation of more area-based initiatives and organisations.

During his time as the region's eponymous minister, Heseltine was supported by the Merseyside Task Force (MTF). The MTF comprised civil servants drawn from central government departments as well as secondees from companies based in Merseyside. The task force worked with local government, private sector, and voluntary organisations 'with a view to promoting the best use of the resources which the central Government commits to Merseyside'.¹⁵³ It was also charged with advising central government, 'generating new initiatives', and 'developing longer term proposals' while taking account of 'the need to promote good community relations and reduce disadvantage among ethnic minority groups'.¹⁵⁴ While the MTF was initially only intended to operate for twelve months, the task force remained in operation until 1993, supporting government policies in Merseyside, including guiding the work of the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC).¹⁵⁵ The MDC was formally established on 25 March 1981, the first of the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) to be established under the terms of the Local Government Planning

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.; phrases were underlined in pen by the reader, presumably Margaret Thatcher.

¹⁵¹ As one memorandum explained, 'On the understanding that the Secretary of State is likely to confine his initiatives to programmes for which he is himself responsible we identified likely items as housing, urban programme, derelict land, and more doubtfully the Merseyside UDC and the North West Water Authority'. TNA: AT/81/239/1, D. J. Burr, Minute on Merseyside, 16 July 1981, n.p.

¹⁵² As Heseltine stated in his remarks on leaving the city in July 1981, 'Why was Merseyside chosen? [...] the problems of Merseyside are as acute as any in England; and I am the Chairman of the Liverpool Inner City Partnership Committee'. Furthermore, he reasoned that 'general lessons' drawn from Merseyside would be applicable to other urban areas. See TNA: AT/239/1, Michael Heseltine, Statement on leaving Liverpool, 1981, n.p.

¹⁵³ Environment Committee, *The problems of management of urban renewal (appraisal of recent initiatives in Merseyside): minutes of evidence, Tuesday 9th November 1982. Merseyside Task Force*, HC 18-i, (London, 1982), Annex F, p. 33.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Chris Couch, *City of change and challenge: urban planning and regeneration in Liverpool* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 114-17.

and Land Act 1980.¹⁵⁶ Though its establishment therefore preceded the Toxteth ‘riots’ by just over three months, the MDC was the most important agency involved in the regeneration of inner Liverpool in the early 1980s. In August 1981, the MDC set out its initial development strategy.¹⁵⁷ In defining its role, the strategy document stated that

New private investment will have to be attracted to supplement the programme of physical improvement necessary to deal with the effects of the declining economy and a contracting port. The Corporation will have a pump priming role: its major task is to create the climate of confidence necessary to attract private investment and development into the area.¹⁵⁸

This ‘pump priming’ took the form of physical regeneration through intervention and investment in the built environment. The establishment of the MDC therefore marked the institutionalisation – at least through its much more exclusive focus – of the link between the decline of the urban economy and the problem of dereliction. In recognising the importance of the role of the state in this project, the MDC institutionalised the boundary between public and private sector investment, acknowledging the latter’s limitations in regenerating the physical environment.

The regeneration of the South Docks, which were said to ‘present the most difficult engineering and accessibility problems in the whole development area’, formed the centrepiece of the MDC’s intervention in Liverpool’s physical environment.¹⁵⁹ The Albert Docks were the locus of this regeneration, with the opening of the Tate Liverpool in 1983 and expansion of the Merseyside Maritime Museum marking an important step in attempts at culture-led regeneration.¹⁶⁰ However, the MDC’s work on the South Docks, along with other regeneration projects, also pointed to the continued importance of the natural environment to the urban economy. The South Docks occupied a liminal space between the land and the river; the natural and the human-made. While the buildings which comprised the South Docks were not left wholly empty, the maritime infrastructure had fallen into a state of dereliction.¹⁶¹ The opening of the dock gates meant that the water level within the docks was contingent on the tide. As the report explained, ‘The docks are filled with silt to a

¹⁵⁶ The Secretary of State for the Environment had the power to establish an urban development corporation ‘For the purposes of regenerating an urban development area’. Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, §§ 134-72 (§ 135); also see Employment Committee, *Employment creation: memorandum by the Department of Employment*, HC 443 (London, 1981), pp. 28-9.

¹⁵⁷ MDC, *Initial development strategy*.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁰ Franco Bianchini and Michael Parkinson (eds), *Cultural policy and urban regeneration: the West European experience* (Manchester, 1994).

¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, the MDC argued that the buildings’ use was not optimal, and sought to find permanent tenants; see MDC, *Initial development strategy*, p. 6.

depth of 25 to 35 feet. The silt is heavily contaminated with raw sewage and other organic material'.¹⁶² These tidal surges made for a poor environment, but it was argued that 'The most effective single action to up-grade the physical environment is to restore water permanently to the docks'.¹⁶³ This, it was reasoned, would also have enabled jobs to be created in leisure and services, most importantly through water sports.¹⁶⁴ The links drawn between natural and human-made environments were important in social and economic regeneration. This was of greater importance within the context of the urban crisis, stimulated by the 1981 Toxteth 'riots'.

Beyond the boundaries of the MDC area, urban regeneration was carried out by the local authority. On 27 July 1983, Liverpool City Council 'committed itself to a new Urban Regeneration Strategy which will tackle the severe problems of decay and dereliction in Liverpool'.¹⁶⁵ The strategy (URS) was implemented through 17 'priority areas'.¹⁶⁶ In contrast to other regeneration efforts, the URS covered inner-city areas, as well as suburban council estates such as Cantril Farm in the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley – and curiously, therefore, not situated within Liverpool City Council's jurisdiction – which had been built in the 1960s as an overspill area for slum clearance.¹⁶⁷ Of the projects initiated through the URS, the development of Everton Park stands out. Plans for the development of a park in Everton emerged in 1972.¹⁶⁸ But it was not until 1983 that, what was described as 'The most ambitious of the Parks proposed', became realised.¹⁶⁹ Everton Park, it was stated,

will be a substantial parkland and recreational area in the northern end of the City. This is an exciting and challenging initiative for the Council and represents the first attempt ever to create out of urban dereliction extensive parkland with many of the features of a traditional park.¹⁷⁰

The significance of Everton Park was reflected in its size – some 50 acres – and the use of a 'natural' landscape to redevelop an area which had previously been dense housing. Given the land values in Liverpool, this was seen as the most economically and fiscally viable

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁶⁴ MDC, *First annual report and financial statements for the period ended 31 March 1982* (Liverpool, 1982), p. 13.

¹⁶⁵ LRO: 352 MIN/ECD/1/1, Appendix 13, Urban regeneration strategy: report of the Chief Executive, 8 December 1983, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶ Copies of the 17 urban regeneration strategy documents can be found in LRO: 352 MIN/ECD/1/1A.

¹⁶⁷ LRO: 352 MIN/ECD/1/1A, Urban regeneration strategy: declaration of priority area 11, Cantril Farm, 1983.

¹⁶⁸ 'Sixty streets to be closed', *Liverpool Echo*, 15 August 1972, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ LRO: 352 MIN/ECD/1/1, Appendix 13, Urban regeneration strategy: report of the Chief Executive, 8 December 1983, p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

use.¹⁷¹ Everton Park, however, was not the only example of significant parkland being created through the regeneration of a derelict area.

From 2 May to 14 October 1984, Liverpool hosted Britain's first International Garden Festival, organised by the MDC.¹⁷² Drawing on similar events organised in Germany in the 1930s, the International Garden Festival was situated on an area of formerly derelict land, which had been used to dump rubble and industrial debris, by the river in the south of the city.¹⁷³ The festival was heralded as a success, not least by Margaret Thatcher, who had a rose named after her by the German Horticultural Association.¹⁷⁴ Speaking to the *Liverpool Echo* in October 1984, Thatcher said of the festival: 'I found it absolutely fantastic! Fantastically warm! In the Garden Festival hundreds and hundreds of people came up to me and said "Carry on with your good work"'.¹⁷⁵ Within the article, this apparent success story was entwined with narratives of a lasting crisis: a baby, named Tracy, born addicted to an unspecified drug which drew the reaction of Thatcher 'the mother, not the Prime Minister'; and the ongoing dispute between the city council, controlled by a group of far-left Labour councillors, and central government.¹⁷⁶ The regeneration of derelict land, no matter how significant, did not bring an end to the series of crises affecting life in Liverpool during the early 1980s. Nevertheless, this approach to the physical environment, which placed an important focus on urban nature, became a cornerstone of central government regeneration policy. As explained in a 1987 Department of the Environment document, 'the spiral of decline has been accelerated by increased awareness of environmental conditions that has led both people and business to shun extensive areas of our cities'.¹⁷⁷ But, the document argued, 'the picture is by no means all gloomy'.¹⁷⁸ The regeneration of derelict spaces through 'greening', or more generally, through improving the natural environment, became a crucial tool through which planners and policymakers sought to intervene in processes of

¹⁷¹ See LRO: 352 MIN/ECD/1/1A, Urban regeneration strategy: declaration of priority area 16, Netherfield, 1983.

¹⁷² On the festival, see Sandra Higgins, 'Green towns and cities: fantasy or necessity?', *Town Planning Review* 55 (1984), pp. 261-4.

¹⁷³ Rodney Beaumont, 'Garden festivals as a means of urban regeneration', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 133 (1985), pp. 405-21; also see MDC, *Initial development strategy*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁴ 'Speech on a rose named "The Margaret Thatcher"', 30 August 1984, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation* (n.d.) <<http://www.margareththatcher.org/document/105741>> [accessed 4 August 2017].

¹⁷⁵ Chris Oakley, 'Drugs, jobs, Liverpool people... and Derek Hatton: what does Mrs. Thatcher think about them all?', *Liverpool Echo*, 3 October 1984, p. 4.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Department of the Environment, *Greening the cities: good practice in urban regeneration* (London, 1987), p. 1.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

urban social and economic decline.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, the approach was politically-acceptable to Thatcher's government. Through replacing extensive derelict land with green space, policymakers hoped that land values would increase and businesses would no longer be put off by the poor environment. Nature therefore became the means through which the seeds of urban economic growth might be sown.

Conclusion

In Willy Russell's 1983 drama series *One Summer*, two 16 year-old students, Billy Rizley (played by David Morrissey) and Icky Higson (Spencer Leigh), leave Liverpool for the Welsh countryside.¹⁸⁰ In constructing an idyllic image of North Wales, which they had visited on a school trip several years before, they contrast the beauty and solitude of the countryside with their lives in broken homes amidst derelict sites in Liverpool's inner city. The everyday travails they faced, including violent gangs and warring families, were therefore mediated through the physical environment. As this chapter has shown, the physical environment had both material and metaphorical significance. Through poor housing and the visual markers of crime and other social problems, the decaying urban fabric became the locus for government and voluntary interventions in Liverpool's social problems. These interventions took many forms, including a tacit disavowal of urban modernism in favour of 'urban regeneration'. But while the persistence of social problems underlay this disavowal, the physical environment also became the locus of economic concerns. As this chapter has shown, a key concern was based around the notion that a poor physical environment represented a barrier to economic regeneration. Put simply, potential employers were put off by the sensory barrage presented by derelict sites. As the case of Liverpool shows, the official definition of dereliction was somewhat elastic. State and non-state actors in Liverpool consistently tried to push this definition in order to improve the physical fabric of the city. This was necessary because Liverpool's urban fabric was as much a fiscal problem as it was a physical one. The physical fabric required substantial investment, but under the system of local government rates, the built environment was unable to provide the required financial resources.

These trends represented a significant challenge for planners and urban policymakers. The physical environment was seen to both reflect Liverpool's urban decline, but it also represented a barrier to regeneration. What is more, interventions in the physical environment repeatedly failed to alleviate these deeply-engrained social and economic

¹⁷⁹ This was shown through a number of case studies which sought to identify 'good practice'; see *ibid.*, pp. 7-15.

¹⁸⁰ *One Summer* [television series], Channel 4 (August-September 1983).

problems. SNAP had improved housing in Granby in the early 1970s, but by the early 1980s, the area was the site of substantial urban disorder. From the late 1970s, the physical environment was the locus of a particular kind of crisis, as central and local government sought means through which they could intervene more effectively to solve the persistent problems which the urban fabric presented.¹⁸¹ This was compounded by a crisis of governability in the summer of 1981, stimulating concerted central government action. This intervention took the form of spatialised regeneration projects through extensive interaction between the state and the private sector, and put the natural on an equal footing with the human-made environment. As the next chapter shows, this focus on the physical environment was supported by the production of social studies and evidence of spatialised deprivation and disadvantage.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Black and Pemberton, 'Introduction: the benighted decade?', pp. 14-15.

Chapter 4

An Unholy Trinity: Deprivation, Discrimination, and Disorder, 1968-86

Introduction

Issues of race and inequality are fundamental in the historiography of urban crisis in the United States. Population decline, understood as ‘white flight’, was the primary driving force; as people and employment left the cities of what would become the North American ‘rust belt’, impoverished black communities remained.¹ As this thesis has shown, these same processes had different outcomes in the British city. However, urban deprivation and racial disadvantage remained key concerns for politicians, policymakers, and contemporary commentators. These problems were all the more relevant following a spate of public disorder across urban Britain in the summer of 1980 and 1981.

As this chapter shows, social surveys were crucial in re-defining poverty in the 1970s. From the late nineteenth century, a prevailing explanation for poverty had been based on eugenicist claims that there existed a social ‘residuum’ or ‘underclass’.² By 1945, however, this explanation had fallen out of favour, replaced with a psychological approach. This approach, Selina Todd has argued, emphasised the apparent ‘lack of adjustment’ of working-class mothers to the conditions of affluence among other factors.³ This explanation of poverty seemingly accounted for the persistence of the ‘problem family’ in the post-war affluent society.⁴ Poverty, however, did not go away and was ‘rediscovered’ in the 1960s.⁵

¹ See Thomas Sugrue, *The origins of the urban crisis: race and inequality in Detroit* (Woodstock, revised ed., 2005).

² John Welshman, *Underclass: a history of the excluded, 1880-2000* (London, 2006), pp. 1-20.

³ Selina Todd, ‘Family welfare and social work in post-war England, c. 1948-c.1970’, *English Historical Review* Vol. CXXIX, no. 537 (2014), pp. 362-87.

⁴ See, Welshman, *Underclass*, 67-86; John Welshman, ‘Ideology, social science, and public policy: the debate over transmitted deprivation’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 16 (2005), pp. 306-41; and John Welshman ‘From the cycle of deprivation to troubled families: ethnicity and the underclass concept’ in Catherine Cox and Hilary Marland (eds), *Migration, health and ethnicity in the modern world* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 174-94. However, these explanations were not generally accepted by many social workers who often preferred to take a ‘pragmatic’ approach on the cases to which they were referred; see Todd, ‘Family welfare and social work’, pp. 372-73.

⁵ The publications which marked the rediscovery of poverty are, by now, well known but key texts include: Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, *The poor and the poorest: a new analysis of the Ministry of Labour’s Family Expenditure Surveys of 1953-54 and 1960* (London, 1965); and Ken Coates and Richard Silburn, *Poverty: the forgotten Englishmen* (Nottingham, 4th ed., 1983; first published

The 'rediscovery of poverty' during that decade appeared to undermine the post-war consensus that the welfare state had alleviated, in William Beveridge's terms, the 'Giant Evils' of 'want, disease, ignorance, squalor, and idleness' and provided the catalyst for a re-thinking of approaches to social issues.⁶ Thus, while behaviour remained a key part of the emerging concept of 'multiple deprivation', it was increasingly seen as the result of structural and spatialised inequality, rather than individual psychology. To an extent, this focus on space was not new; urban spaces had been pathologised in the nineteenth century, and as Susan MacGregor and Ben Pimlott have noted, urban poverty, typified by specific spatial loci, has been a perennial issue.⁷ This renewed interest in spatialised problems reflected an almost concurrent 'spatial turn' within a number of fields of academic study.⁸ The spatial turn followed the growth of sociology a decade earlier, thus providing the epistemological basis for the inner city becoming a 'known' entity.⁹ The significance of multiple deprivation and the inner city, then, was not in their 'newness', but in their emergence at a critical juncture in twentieth century British history.¹⁰

The concept of multiple deprivation meant that there was no single 'experience' of poverty. As this chapter shows, black and Asian communities – especially migrants from the 'New Commonwealth' – were seen to suffer from additional hardships on top of those experienced by white Britons. Toxteth had formed part of Liverpool's 'sailortown', the location for global cultural interactions between the city's 'amazingly polyglot and

1970). On the rediscovery of poverty more generally, see Rodney Lowe, 'The rediscovery of poverty and the creation of the child poverty action group, 1962–68', *Contemporary Record*, 9 (1995), pp. 602–11.

⁶ Cmd. 6404, *Social insurance and allied services* (London, 1942), p. 6.

⁷ Susan MacGregor and Ben Pimlott, 'Action and inaction in the cities', in Susan MacGregor and Ben Pimlott (eds), *Tackling the inner cities: the 1980s reviewed, prospects for the 1990s* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 1–21. Also see James Donald, *Imagining the modern city* (Minneapolis, MN, 1999); and Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: a study in the relationship between classes in Victorian society* (London, 4th edition, 2013).

⁸ As Simon Gunn has shown, the category of 'space' became an increasingly important category for academic analysis in the late 1970s; see, 'The spatial turn: changing histories of space and place', in Simon Gunn and Robert Morris (eds), *Identities in space: contested terrains in the western city since 1850* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 1–14. However, Andrew Kirby has suggested that this consensus around the importance of space was short-lived, at least for academic geographers; see 'Geographic contributions to the inner city deprivation debate: a critical assessment', *Area* 13 (1981), pp. 177–81.

⁹ See Mike Savage, *Identities and social change in Britain since 1940: the politics of method* (Oxford, 2010).

¹⁰ The 1970s are frequently taken as a moment of crisis in Britain, but recent histories have sought to dispel some of the orthodox narratives pervading the decade. See Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton and Pat Thane (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013); and 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 (2017), pp. 268–304.

cosmopolitan population'.¹¹ But as John Belchem has argued, this picture of heterogeneous harmony masked significant 'race relations' issues.¹² While these race relations issues were vital in defining the urban crisis in Liverpool from the 1970s, it is important to note how, as Kennetta Hammond Perry has argued, black Britons' 'everyday experiences of racism, discrimination, inadequate police protection, and violence worked to animate and redefine Black political life in Britain'.¹³ As Rob Waters has shown, these everyday experiences often took place within a transatlantic cultural and political framework, in which ideas were primarily spread through television.¹⁴ In Liverpool, as in other British cities, the everyday experiences of racism led to the establishment of a number of groups which sought to record – and resist – the seemingly ingrained problems of racial discrimination and disadvantage. What marked Liverpool out, however, was the identification of its black population as 'indigenous', rather than 'immigrant'.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first uses the products of government-sponsored social surveys to chart the emergence of the concept of 'multiple deprivation' in the 1970s. This definition implied that material poverty was linked to, and compounded by, a number of other factors. Space was an important category here, and as such multiple deprivation was integral to the definition and identification of the 'inner city' in the 1970s. The second section expands on this understanding, demonstrating how the experiences of Liverpool's sizeable black population were understood in terms of the racial disadvantage and discrimination which served to multiply the effects of deprivation. It does this through analysing the conclusions of social studies, as well as the accounts offered by community groups in the city. Finally, it shows how the 'riots' in Toxteth in July 1981 were a key moment in which debates surrounding multiple deprivation and racial disadvantage became critical in determining responses to Britain's urban crisis. More than this, however, the urban disorders of the early 1980s seemed to confirm long-held concerns surrounding

¹¹ Ramsay Muir, *A History of Liverpool* (London, 1907), p. 305 as cited in John Belchem, *Before the Windrush: race relations in 20th-century Liverpool* (Liverpool, 2014), p. xviii.

¹² Belchem, *Before the Windrush*, pp. 1-12. This included sectarian divisions between Protestants and Catholics in Liverpool which continued into the 1970s and 1980s; Daniel Warner, 'A Godless landscape? Exploring religion as lived experience in post-war Liverpool, 1965-1982', (paper given to the Social History Society conference, Lancaster University, 22 March 2016).

¹³ Kennetta Perry, 'Black Britain and the politics of race in the 20th century', *History Compass* 12 (2014), pp. 651-63. Here, Perry was specifically referring to the experiences of New Commonwealth migrants, but Liverpool's long-standing 'indigenous' black population raises the same issues.

¹⁴ Rob Waters, 'Black power on the telly: America, television, and race in 1960s and 1970s Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 54 (2015), pp. 947-70.

the late twentieth-century city, and linked the experiences of urban Britain firmly to the United States.¹⁵

Deprivation and 'social malaise', c. 1968-79

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Liverpool was the site of a number of social studies which, as Mike Savage and Selina Todd have shown, highlighted the extent to which poverty continued to shape working-class people's lives.¹⁶ This social investigation continued into the 1970s. What marked these later studies, however, was the increasing centrality of 'space' as a category of analysis, and the gradual redefinition of 'poverty' and 'deprivation'. In December 1967, members of Liverpool City Council attended a conference at which they met with Professor Arthur Dunham of the University of Michigan.¹⁷ Dunham, a social welfare administrator and community organiser, had written a number of monographs and articles on community work, and was cited as a direct influence on the councillors' decision to conduct a study into what were termed 'problems of community welfare' in Liverpool.¹⁸ In 1968, the Liverpool City Planning Department initiated a study to 'identify areas in the city with large numbers of social problems'.¹⁹ These 'social problems' included poverty, crime, and unemployment.²⁰ Where this section uses the term 'social problems', it refers to these phenomena. Two reports into what was termed 'social malaise' were published in 1970: the first was an interim report on social problems and their distribution, and the second, termed the 'principal component analysis', contained the results of the planners' statistical investigations.²¹ While an evocative term, implying stagnation within a particular area, the categories of 'social malaise' were not defined at the outset.²² Rather, the surveyors

¹⁵ See Mark Clapson, 'The American contribution to the urban sociology of race relations in Britain from the 1940s to the early 1970s', *Urban History* 33 (2006), pp. 253-73; and Mark Clapson, *Anglo-American crossroads: urban research and planning in Britain, 1940-2010* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

¹⁶ See Mike Savage, *Identities and social change in Britain since the 1940s: the politics of method* (Oxford, 2010); and Selina Todd, 'Affluence, class and Crown Street: reinvestigating the post-war working class', *Contemporary British History* (2008), pp. 501-18.

¹⁷ For a brief biography of Arthur Dunham, see 'Arthur Louis Dunham', *University of Michigan Faculty History Project* (2011), <<http://www.lib.umich.edu/faculty-history/faculty/arthur-louis-dunham/classroom-profile>> [accessed 13 July 2016]; and 'Dunham, Arthur', *Social Welfare History Project* (2011) <<http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/people/dunham-arthur/>> [accessed 16 August 2017].

¹⁸ Francis Amos, *Social malaise in Liverpool: interim report on social problems and their distribution* (Liverpool, 1970), p. 1.

¹⁹ Amos, *Social malaise: interim report*, p. 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Amos, *Social malaise: interim report*; and Francis Amos, *Social malaise in Liverpool: principal component analysis* (Liverpool, 1970).

²² 'Social malaise' was also used by authorities in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in their own study; see City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Planning Department, *Social malaise and the environment* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1965) as cited in National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh: SEP 10/30, J. A. Brand, *The uses and politics of social indicators in British cities*, 1973.

sought to identify indices of malaise, which were 'defined loosely in practical terms where data is accessible', and where the indicator 'involves a cost to the local or central authority'.²³ The availability of data was especially important in terms of measuring 'social problems' on an 'areal basis', as researchers sought to identify 'areas of special need'.²⁴ As such, *Social Malaise in Liverpool* marked a turning point between behavioural and spatial explanations of poverty.

Fourteen 'malaise items' – five of which were linked to crime – were used to identify social problems in Liverpool. In pointing to crime as a key category, the planning department measured the incidence of theft, assault, burglary, malicious damage, and other 'miscellaneous' crimes.²⁵ Further indices related to socio-economic conditions. They included rates of unemployment, job instability, debtors, welfare conference cases, and entry warrants granted for the electricity board, as well as what might be categorised as health and welfare indicators. The proportion of children who had been deloused, the prevalence of adult mental illness, and the number of 'educationally sub-normal' children were identified as core indicators of health and welfare.²⁶ Other indicators were also studied, including additional categories of crime, health, and education, but were not considered essential indices of malaise. While these indicators were not included as they showed no correlation to what was termed the 'core group', it was stated that 'this in no way diminishes the importance of the problems they present'.²⁷

Many of these indicators were similar to those identified by the Seebohm report in July 1968. Chaired by Frederick Seebohm, the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services was established to 'review the organisation and responsibilities of the local authority personal social services in England and Wales and to consider what changes are desirable to secure an effective family service'.²⁸ The Seebohm committee played an important role in the 'rediscovery of poverty' in the 1960s, and made a number of recommendations which contributed to the development of social work in Britain.²⁹ These recommendations stemmed from its findings that

There are some needs (or certain groups of people with needs) for which no service has a clearly defined responsibility. This is particularly true of

²³ Amos, *Social malaise: interim report*, pp. 1-2.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ These included education grants for clothing, hospital admissions, and grants for higher education; see *ibid.*, pp. 7-25.

²⁸ Cmnd. 3703, *Report of the committee on local authority and allied personal social services* (London, 1968), p. 11.

²⁹ Todd, 'Family welfare and social work', pp. 384-7.

newly recognised or newly emergent problems and ones which do not fit neatly into the conventional categories.³⁰

Many of the social needs identified by the Seebohm committee, including mental ill health and special educational needs, were congruent with the definition of social malaise. The problem of social malaise therefore combined the needs of the individual, the requirements of urban governance, and, as shown through the methodology adopted by the planners, location.

The fourteen malaise items were quantified and rated based on their incidence in each of the city's forty local government wards. Wards were given a ranking for each indicator, with the worst as '1' and the best as '40'.³¹ This ward-based system allowed for the emergence of a spatial understanding of urban social problems. As the analysis indicated, there was a concentration in the incidence of social malaise 'in and around the city centre'.³² This 'compact' area was bounded by 'Sandhills ward [at] its northern extremity, Westminster, Everton and Smithdown wards... in the east and Dingle ward is the southernmost extension', (see figure 4.1) and became the locus for local and central government attempts to tackle urban social problems.³³ While this focus on inner urban areas emanated from the analysis of statistical data, it was claimed that 'It has long been apparent to many social workers that the inner residential areas contain a large proportion of the city's social problems'.³⁴

³⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

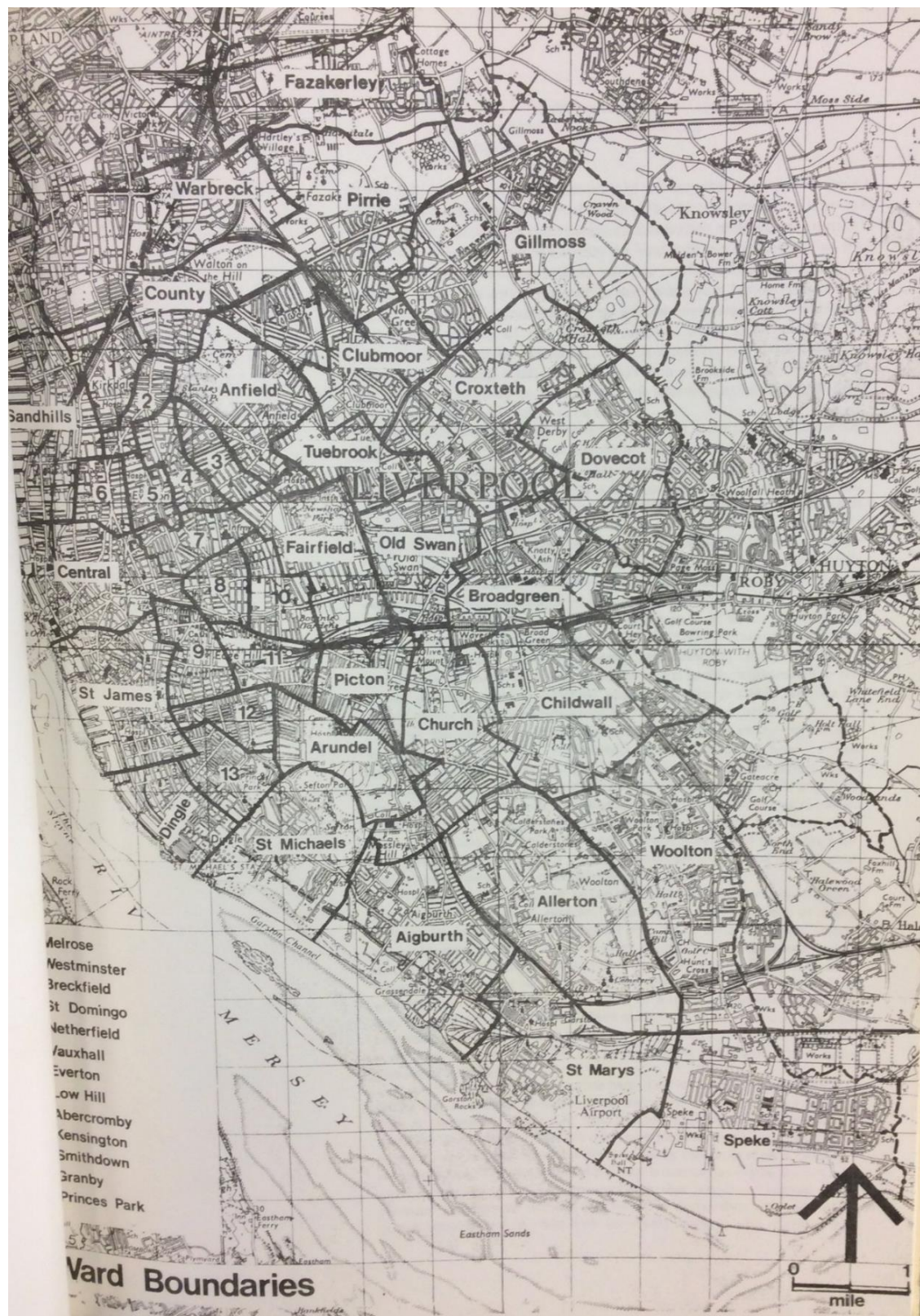
³¹ Amos, *Social malaise: interim report*, pp. 33-6; this, of course, was unless two or more wards had the same incidence, in which case they would receive equal ranking.

³² Ibid., p. 4.

³³ However, it was also noted that 'away from the central block social malaise rates decline only to rise again in the Council housing estates on the extreme outskirts of the City at Speke, Dovecot and Gilmoss'; *ibid.*

³⁴ Amos, *Social malaise: interim report*, p. 5.

Figure 4.1: Map of Liverpool City Council Wards, 1970



Source: Francis Amos, *Social malaise in Liverpool: interim report* (Liverpool, 1970), n.p.

As we saw in chapter 3, the physical markers of crime were a key feature of the urban fabric in the inner city. In identifying criminality as a marker of social malaise, however, planners in Liverpool placed crime at the centre of the social assemblage of the inner urban area. In December 1971, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool commissioned a group of local officials, civic and church leaders, voluntary sector workers and 'prominent citizens' to investigate the causes of a recent rise in crime and vandalism.³⁵ The group produced a report, published in 1974, entitled *Crime in the City*. In this report, the rise in crime was linked with the 'particular difficulties' of the inner areas, including poor housing, a lack of amenities including youth clubs and educational facilities, poor relations with the police, and 'the lack of worthwhile employment opportunities'.³⁶ In many ways, the listed difficulties typified the problems of deprivation with which local policymakers were preoccupied.

As part of the project, the steering group for *Crime in the City* established a project team composed of unemployed (or precariously employed) residents of the inner city. Ten or twelve members were recruited, though not all were active throughout, as four members gained full-time employment during the project.³⁷ The project team conducted interviews with local residents, aiming to address the 'communications gap' between the 'establishment' and the 'citizen'.³⁸ Detailing different experiences of crime and deprivation, and focussing on three specific areas of the city, the project team produced a report, *We Live There*, in which

Theft is related to need and, need is related to envy. Society's wealth is distributed unfairly and crime, or at least most of it, is a protest. People who rob don't need their heads reading, it's the people who think they do, who think they're just being ignorant or bad that don't see things properly.³⁹

The project team therefore advanced an explanation of crime and poverty which problematised social inequality, rather than the individual. However, by linking this to joyriding in the inner-city ward of Everton, crime and poverty were also linked to space.

³⁵ Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool (LRO): 352 CTY/1/1, *Crime in the city: report of the steering group*, November 1974, p. 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁷ Sources differ as to the number of members recruited, and it was stated that the number of active members was reduced over the course of the project as, among other things, the members gained employment; see LRO: 352 CTY/1/1, *We live there: a report from some residents on crime and vandalism in the inner city*, November 1974, p. 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ LRO: 352 CTY/1/1, *Crime in the city: report of the steering group*, November 1974, pp. 3-4.

One important example of this allegedly need-driven theft was the rising incidence of joyriding in the city. In post-war Britain, the motor car was an important symbol of rising affluence, and with the re-making of the urban fabric in order to accommodate it, automobility was an increasingly central part of everyday life.⁴⁰ The ownership of a car in the city provided freedom, even where this ownership was attained through theft, and provided status akin to the middle-class suburban resident.⁴¹ As the project team explained, 'The car represents a whole series of possibilities for all age groups in Soho Street [in Everton]... For the joyriders whilst it has petrol the car opens up a whole series of possibilities for excitement and status'.⁴² Responding to *Crime in the City* and *We Live There*, the Chief Constable of Merseyside Police recognised that 'It is no coincidence that the large majority of criminals emanate from areas of the inner city which traditionally suffered from social deprivation of one kind or another'.⁴³ The Chief Constable nonetheless refuted the link between joyriding and ideas of middle-class affluence:

I cannot, however, accept the suggestion that local children and youths are attracted to only the "posh" cars which they see as belonging to the middle class. There is little discrimination in this respect, any car being fair game providing the rewards are lucrative enough.⁴⁴

While the explanation of joyriding was subject to disagreement, the link between crime, deprivation, and the inner city remained crucial.

In the ten years after 1968, central government-sponsored social studies of Liverpool contributed to the development of a spatialised conception of urban deprivation. This spatialised understanding of deprivation was critical in the identification of the 'inner city', most pointedly following the establishment of the inner area studies (IAS) in September 1972. In 1974, the Liverpool IAS consultants commissioned the Planning Research Applications Group (PRAG) of the Centre for Environmental Studies to conduct a study based on a typology of housing areas in the city.⁴⁵ In line with the aims of the IAS, the social area study was intended to 'discover by study a better definition of inner areas and

⁴⁰ See Simon Gunn, 'People and the car: the expansion of automobility in urban Britain, c. 1955-70', *Social History* 38:2 (2013), pp. 220-37.

⁴¹ As the residents argued, social norms were contingent on place, with a normalising of theft and delinquency in the inner city; see LRO: 352 CTY/1/1, *We live there: a report from some residents on crime and vandalism in the inner city*, November 1974, November 1974, p. 26.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ LRO: 352 CTY/1/1, *Crime in the city: comments of the Chief Constable of the Merseyside Police on "we live there"*, November 1974, p. 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁵ The Centre for Environmental Studies was established in 1967 with funding from the US-based Ford Foundation and the British government; see Clapson, *Anglo-American crossroads*, pp. 41-8.

their problems'.⁴⁶ As this shows, in 1974 policymakers had not yet agreed upon the definition of the 'inner city'. Building on the conclusions of the social malaise study, but also criticising its methodological approach, PRAG's social area analysis emphasised the spatialised link drawn between the social and physical environments.⁴⁷ In developing its housing typology, the social area analysis sought to 'understand the nature of the (inner) urban system as a totality'.⁴⁸ This aim was in line with Peter Walker's call for a 'total approach' to urban policy and the inner city.⁴⁹ This totality was understood through housing types, as already stated, but also included an understanding of the welfare system as a series of 'markets', i.e. 'education, housing, employment or accessibility'.⁵⁰ Totality was achieved through the understanding of the interconnectedness between these different markets, and their relationship to different housing types throughout the city. Moreover, this system was in flux, as the social and physical environment changed over time. This flux was attributed to a number of changes, including in 'technology or social mores, the introduction of electricity, the decline of domestic service, containerisation and earlier marriage'.⁵¹

Through its analysis, the social area study emphasised the category of space, as defined by a five 'family' typology of housing. This typology included: (1) 'high status' owner-occupied areas with 'stable families'; (2) areas of subdivided housing with young people; (3) 'inner/older council estates'; (4) 'outer/more recent council estates; and (5) areas of Victorian terraced housing, 'much of it lacking an inside wc'.⁵² The geographical distribution of these housing families can be seen in figure 4.2. Of the housing 'families', the second was particularly important, covering the 'rooming house area of the city'. Though comprising 'only' 9 per cent of the city's population, this area was key in the developing geography of concern within Liverpool.⁵³ The rooming house area was 'associated with the decline of the Victorian merchant classes', and its social trajectory was apparently set from this point.⁵⁴ As such, its residents were

⁴⁶ D. Cullingworth, P. Flynn and R. Webber, *PRAG technical paper TP9: Liverpool social area analysis (interim report)* (London, 1975), p. 17. This study also criticised the methodology of *Social Malaise in Liverpool*: 'There was no conceptual basis to the study nor were the techniques adequately understood by those who were to interpret the results'; see p. 9.

⁴⁷ These included its 'unidimensional' and 'one-off' nature, the proportionality of its findings to available funding, and the lack of inter-departmental involvement; *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁸ R. Webber, *PRAG technical paper TP14: Liverpool social area study 1971 data: final report* (London, 1975), p. 8.

⁴⁹ Peter Walker, *The ascent of Britain* (London, 1977), pp. 124-46.

⁵⁰ Webber, *PRAG TP14*, p. 9.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 39; the city itself was divided into 25 'clusters', defined areas of the city in which one of the housing forms outlined in the typology dominated.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

the various groups who have been traditionally neglected by the local authority and the building societies, students, the transient immigrants, single parent families and elderly single people, many of them women, and the young, single rootless population always attracted to the bright city lights.⁵⁵

One area of subdivided housing, located around Upper Parliament Street in Liverpool 8, was noted for its 'very high concentration of New Commonwealth immigrants, ten times the city average'.⁵⁶ While, as noted in chapter 1, Liverpool did not have a significant immigrant population relative to other British cities, their presence here led to the claim that the area 'function[ed] as a residual housing area for a transient population'.⁵⁷ This transience was important, as 'Only those who are unable to or who reject the more established values of other types of area remain and so contribute to the exceptionally high rates on all measures of deviance'.⁵⁸ This problematisation of subdivided housing was a hallmark of the political construction of the 'inner city'. However, the social area analysis also problematised council estates located in inner urban areas. These inner council estates were seen to exhibit similar concentrations of unskilled and unemployed residents.⁵⁹ While housing was used as a key determinant of social conditions, the inner urban area was therefore identified as a problematic space in itself, with inner council estates described as 'dumping grounds for the poor, homeless or difficult families'.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 68.

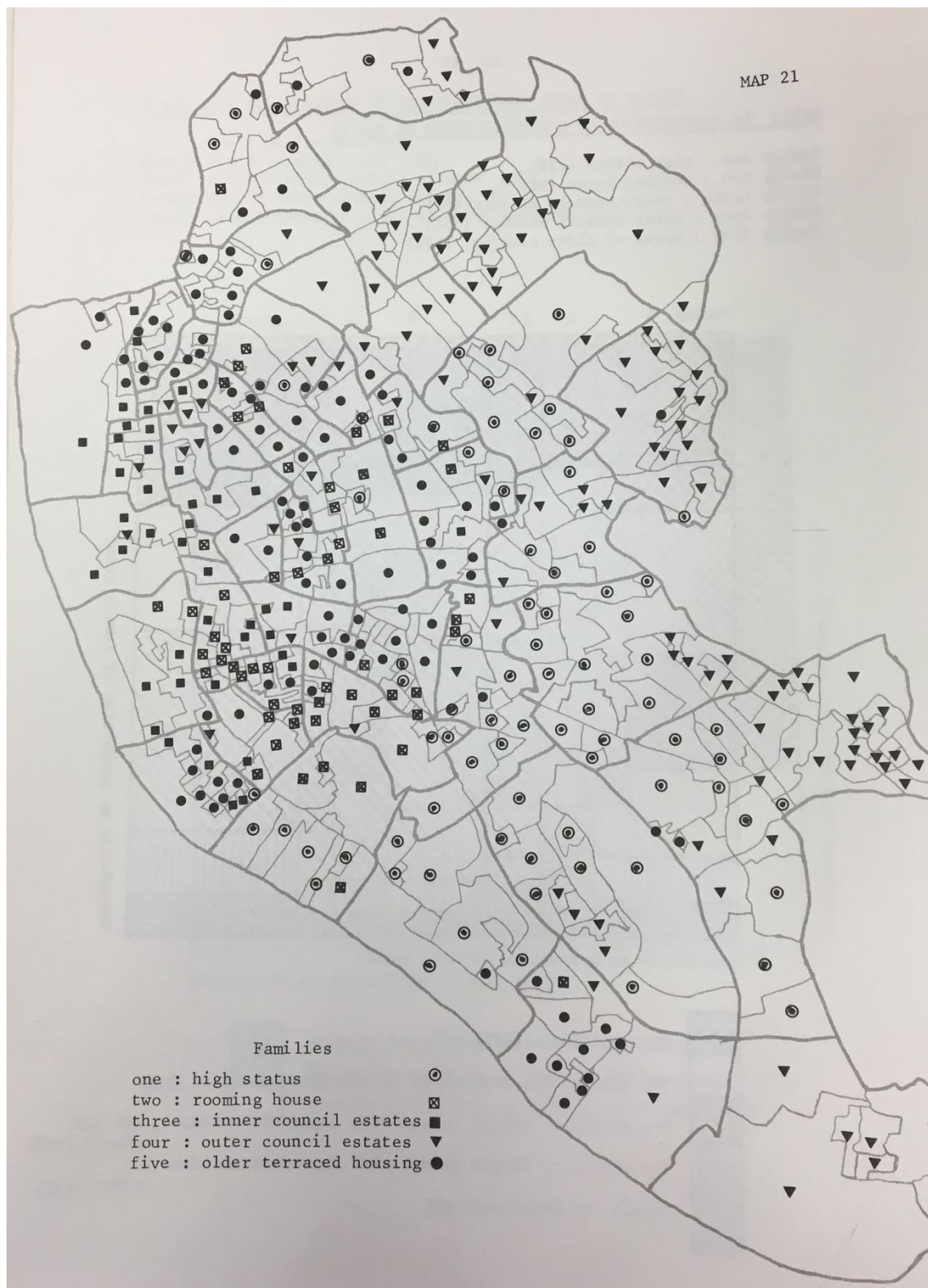
⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 69.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 71-5.

⁶⁰ Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Change or decay: final report of the Liverpool Inner Area Study* (London, 1977), p. 122.

Figure 4.2: Map of housing 'families'



Source: R. Webber, *PRAG technical paper TP14: Liverpool social area study 1971 data: final report* (London, 1975), p. 50.

The findings of PRAG's social area analysis fed directly into the Liverpool IAS. In their final report, published in 1977, the Liverpool consultants provided an account of 'living in the inner city'. In this account of everyday life in the inner city, environmental conditions were at the fore, with firm links drawn between housing and social conditions. Thus, the 'older private housing' in Lodge Lane East, Toxteth, came to typify a particular set of social trends and conditions:

Many families in the area were poor, judging by the high take up of free school meals and the number of children who could not afford to go on outings; but they were stable and parents cared about their children.⁶¹

Life for older residents in this area, however, was much more difficult, with 'arthritic and chest complaints caused by dampness' directly attributed to the construction of the buildings in which people lived.⁶² Multiple deprivation was therefore seen to affect residents of the inner areas in different ways throughout their lifetime. This was attributed to the effects of population mobility and immobility, and was understood in spatial terms:

Social polarisation is occurring in Liverpool not only between inner and outer areas but within different parts of the city. Thus the professional and managerial people moving into high status areas in the five years prior to the 1971 census were raising the status of these areas still higher, whereas the increasing proportion of unskilled workers moving into the other council estates had an equivalent lowering effect.⁶³

Thus, the consultants warned of the 'intensifying social differences between [Liverpool's] more and less affluent parts'.⁶⁴ This spatialised understanding of deprivation underpinned the idea of the 'inner city' in Britain, as shown through the publication of a central government white paper in 1977 and subsequent legislation.⁶⁵

Discrimination and 'community relations', c. 1967-81

In December 1967, the Youth Organisations Committee (LYOC) of the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Service (LCVS), which oversaw and co-ordinated youth groups in the city, set up a working party to investigate 'community relations'.⁶⁶ The working party's 19 members represented a number of state and non-state bodies based in Liverpool, and was convened in response to the Hunt report on *Immigrants and the Youth Service*, published earlier in the

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 133.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 57.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Cmnd. 6845, *Policy for the inner cities* (London, 1977).

⁶⁶ Liverpool Youth Organisations Committee (LYOC), *Special but not separate: a report of the situation of young coloured people in Liverpool* (1968).

year.⁶⁷ Coming in the same year as the expansion of the role of the national Race Relations Board, Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech, and the establishment of the Urban Programme by central government, the publication of the LYOC's report in October 1968 was timely.⁶⁸ Speaking in the House of Commons on the initiation of the Urban Programme, the Home Secretary, James Callaghan, described urban deprivation as being 'separate, although obvious [*sic*] related' to immigration, and by extension issues of race.⁶⁹ These sentiments were echoed by A. W. Shone, chairman of the working party set up by the LYOC. As Shone stated, the report's title, *Special but not Separate* 'is to emphasise our concern that problems of colour should not be tackled separately from a total attack on community problems'.⁷⁰ This was important in the emerging conception of racialised disadvantage from the late 1960s. As this thesis has shown, Liverpool was a laboratory for numerous central government initiatives; the longevity of Liverpool's black population allowed the city to 'show the consequences and particularly the problems of their life here'.⁷¹ There were, however, some drawbacks to this. Crucially, it was not known how many 'coloured people' there were in Liverpool.⁷² As explained in chapter 1, this was a function of the methodology by the census from 1971 to 1991. Nevertheless, the report described an area 'roughly defined as being that which lies within half a mile of Upper Parliament Street on the southward side' as the space in which the greatest concentration of the city's ethnic minority population lived.⁷³ The proximity of this area to the docks and other city centre landmarks can be seen in figure 4.3.

⁶⁷ Department of Education and Science, *Immigrants and the youth service: report of a committee of the Youth Service Development Council* (London 1967). This committee of the Youth Service Development Council of the Department of Education and Science was convened in December 1965 'To consider the part which the Youth Service might play in meeting the needs of young immigrants in England and Wales and to make recommendations' (p. 1).

⁶⁸ Race Relations Board, *Report of the Race Relations Board for 1968-69*, HC 270 (London, 1969), p. 5. Also see Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the making of postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, 2013).

⁶⁹ HC debate, 22 July 1968, series 5, vol. 769, col. 42.

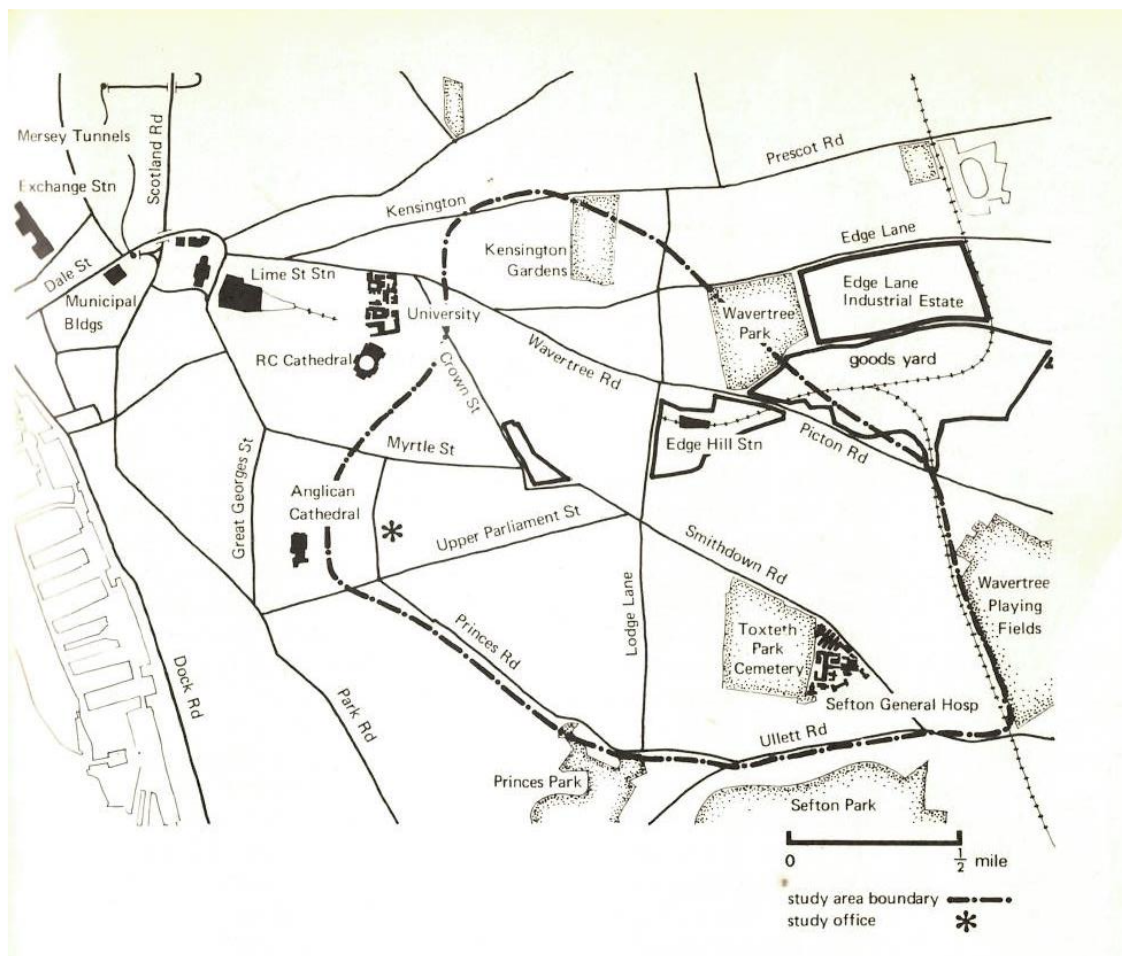
⁷⁰ A. W. Shone, 'Preface' in LYOC, *Special but not separate*, p. 3.

⁷¹ LYOC, *Special but not separate*, p. 6.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 5. The term 'coloured people' was used in Liverpool to refer to both New Commonwealth migrants and locally-born black and Asian people.

⁷³ LYOC, *Special but not separate*, p. 8.

Figure 4.3: Map of Upper Parliament Street



Source: Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Change or decay: final report of the Liverpool Inner Area Study* (London, 1977), p. 15.

At the outset, the LYOC adopted a clear position on the idea of 'indigeneity' in Britain.⁷⁴ The indigenous population of the city was 'both white and coloured'.⁷⁵ While this rhetoric of indigeneity offered an impression of Liverpool as a 'colour-blind' city, this was not the case. Housing was a particular issue, and *Special but not Separate* described how underlying discrimination further ingrained inequality and defined areas of the city as belonging to particular social or community groups. As the report stated,

Official housing policy is strictly non-discriminatory, but this commendable intention is undermined by the fact that for coloured

⁷⁴ Indigeneity, or indigenusness, is an important concept in colonial and post-colonial histories, an 'oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonisation by foreign peoples'. In the context of post-colonial Britain, the term can take on different meaning while still being 'an identity constructed, shaped and lived in [a] politicised context'. The use of the term here is taken to imply belonging to the metropolitan society which, crucially for the LYOC, appears to be colour-blind. On indigeneity and the politics of identity in colonial societies, see Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, 'Being Indigenous: resurgences against contemporary colonialism', *Government and Opposition* 40 (2005), pp. 597-614.

⁷⁵ LYOC, *Special but not separate*, p. 8.

people it is often hard to move to another part of the city. It is still very difficult to buy a house in a “better” area if you are coloured.⁷⁶

Such discrimination highlighted the everyday privations experienced by black and Asian residents in Liverpool.⁷⁷ This housing concentration, enforced through discriminatory housing practices, was seen to lead to the development of normative assumptions about Liverpool’s black population, in particular:

Because they live in this area, coloured people are assumed to be all of a kind, and the fact that there are a great variety of differences of social class and cultural background is often forgotten.⁷⁸

As shown in section one, a spatialised understanding of social problems formed the hallmark of the political construction of the ‘inner city’ in Britain. In this, there was assumed to be a common experience of deprivation felt by inner city residents regardless of ethnicity. However, ethnic minority residents were seen to ‘suffer the added stigma of having deprivation and colour associated in a way which it is difficult for any individual to break down’.⁷⁹ As shown through the assumptions published in *Special but not Separate*, a small area of Liverpool 8 was identified as a racialised space. Everyday life within this area was typified by deprivation and racial disadvantage. However, this was also the place on which black politics in Liverpool was focused as residents and community groups reacted against what were seen as the everyday experiences of deprivation and discrimination.

The working party which produced *Special but not Separate* formed the nucleus of what would become the Liverpool Community Relations Council (LCRC) following meetings at the Stanley House youth club on Upper Parliament Street throughout 1969.⁸⁰ As the Town Clerk of Liverpool City Council wrote in a letter to prospective members of the LCRC, the city ‘has a long tradition of harmonious relations between its white and coloured citizens’. However, ‘recent research indicates that the situation is not all that it should be, and that indeed, much more could be done to foster racial harmony in Liverpool’.⁸¹ While similar organisations had been established across urban Britain – and, it was claimed, Liverpool was the only large city without such a council – the LYOC’s investigation was pivotal in the creation of the LCRC.⁸² The establishment of the LCRC was approved at a meeting in

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁷ Carl Nightingale, *Segregation: a global history of divided cities* (Chicago, 2012).

⁷⁸ LYOC, *Special but not separate*, p. 9.

⁷⁹ Ibid. This assumption was also expressed in the Scarman report; see Cmnd. 8427, *The Brixton disorders 10-12 April 1981: report of an inquiry by the Rt. Hon. The Lord Scarman* (London, 1981), p. 15.

⁸⁰ LRO: M362 PSS/7/5, Stanley House management committee/Y.O.C. working party, 1 December 1969.

⁸¹ LRO: M364 PSS/7/5, Proposed Liverpool Council for Community Relations, 21 January 1970.

⁸² Ibid.

Liverpool Town Hall on 16 February 1970, with a working party established to write a constitution and organise the LCRC's inaugural meeting.⁸³ The objective of the LCRC, as stated in its constitution, was 'to help the citizens of Liverpool of all races, beliefs and cultures to live and work together in harmony'.⁸⁴ In order to achieve this aim, the LCRC employed a Community Relations Officer, and was supported by the Community Relations Commission, which had been established to carry out 'the more positive, "preventive", aspect of race relations work' under the Race Relations Act 1968.⁸⁵ Harmonious community relations, however, were made more difficult by urban deprivation. As the Community Relations Commission claimed in 1970, their work 'is inevitably hampered... by having to work within the existing social and economic framework, which often includes housing shortages, "twilight" areas with poor social amenities and pockets of poverty'.⁸⁶ While there were 'many white people' who had 'been by-passed by the so-called "affluent society"', it was claimed that 'there tends to be a higher concentration of minority groups in these "twilight" areas'.⁸⁷

At its annual general meeting on 22 June 1972, the LCRC passed a resolution urging 'her Majesty's Government to enact legislation making possible the setting up of independent police review boards composed of civilians and police officers'.⁸⁸ This resolution reflected the idea that 'a healthy community requires a dedicated and efficient police force to uphold the law and protect the public', with mutual trust between the public and the police.⁸⁹ This mutual trust, however, was in short supply. In August 1972, the Falkner estate in Liverpool 8 was the scene of four nights of racialised urban disorder, as 'skinheads' clashed with black youths.⁹⁰ The disorder remained localised, focussed on particular streets and buildings, although participants were drawn from neighbouring areas. Following the breaking of windows by white youths, tenants in Falkner Place were reported to have asked young black and mixed-race men from neighbouring Granby for help

⁸³ LRO: M364 PSS/7/5, Working party for Liverpool Community Relations Council, 6 March 1970. The working party included representatives of the Liverpool Personal Service Society, the Jamaica (Merseyside) Association, a local Methodist church, the Princes Park and Granby Community Council, and the University of Liverpool; many of these members had also been involved in the production of *Special but not Separate*.

⁸⁴ LRO: M364 PSS/7/5, Liverpool Community Relations Council constitution, 23 July 1970, p. 1.

⁸⁵ LRO: M364 PSS/7/5, Working party for Liverpool Community Relations Council, May 1970, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Community Relations Commission, *Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1969-70*, HC 304 (London, 1970), p. 6.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ LRO: M364 PSS/7/5, Resolution passed by the Council at the A.G.M., 22 June 1972; the LCRC also called on the city council to support this policy.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ John Chartes, 'White and coloured youth gangs riot for four nights', *The Times* (9 August 1972), p. 1. The term 'skinheads' was used in the ITV news programme *This Week*. On the 'skinhead' subculture, see Dick Hebdidge, *Subculture: the meaning of style* (London, 1979), pp. 54-9.

and protection. Several nights of unrest followed. Race was an issue which underscored the coverage of the disorder. Local residents' accounts of the violence highlighted the racist language deployed by the white gangs, who were said to have shouted 'niggers get out', driven by envy over the apparently better material circumstances of black residents in Falkner Place.⁹¹ Black and white youths both decried 'harassment' by the police, likely reflecting the service's response to the conception that 'the large majority of criminals emanate from areas of the inner city'.⁹² The violence around Falkner Place in August 1972 served to focus attention on what Jonathan Dimbleby termed 'the crisis of Liverpool's inner city'.⁹³ While relations between the police and inner urban communities was a significant problem, as will be discussed below, the unrest in 1972 provides an important insight into the relationship between issues of race and the spatialised understanding of deprivation. Following the disturbances, the local authority identified a need for more leisure amenities in Liverpool 8 'suitable for teenage youths bored during the long summer'.⁹⁴ However, as the Community Relations Commission noted, 'It is impossible in this field clearly to distinguish between obstacles facing immigrant groups alone, and the problems of the disadvantaged generally'.⁹⁵ Citing the violence in Liverpool 8, which were not 'race riots', it nevertheless acknowledged that 'when violence flared up, it found immediate fuel in racial tension. In social terms, ethnic minorities have become the new scapegoat'.⁹⁶

Soon after its establishment in 1970, the LCRC 'was almost immediately overwhelmed by Black complaints of harassment by the police'.⁹⁷ In fact, a programme on Radio Merseyside claimed that 'in certain police stations, particularly in the city centre, brutality and drug planting and the harassing of minority groups takes place regularly'.⁹⁸ The LCRC only covered Liverpool, but the complaints brought to the council included an increasing number of people coming from outside the city boundaries.⁹⁹ In 1974, the geographical boundaries of the LCRC were expanded. Re-named the Merseyside Community

⁹¹ *This Week* [television programme] ITV, August 1972 <player.bfi.org.uk/film/watch-liverpool-8-1972/> [accessed 15 July 2016].

⁹² LRO: 352 CTY/1/1, Crime in the city: comments of the Chief Constable of the Merseyside Police on "we live there", November 1974, p. 1.

⁹³ *This Week* [television programme] ITV, August 1972 <player.bfi.org.uk/film/watch-liverpool-8-1972/> [accessed 15 July 2016].

⁹⁴ Leader, 'Planning for people's needs', *Liverpool Echo*, 10 August 1972, p. 6.

⁹⁵ Community Relations Commission, *Community relations 1972-73: the annual report of the Community Relations Council*, HC 384 (London, 1973), p. 23.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, *Policing the crisis: mugging, the state, and law and order* (Basingstoke, 2nd ed., 2013), p. 281.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ LRO: M364 PSS/7/5, Minutes of a meeting of the LCRC, 30 September 1971, p. 5.

Relations Council, the organisation also expanded its remit. As set out in its constitution, the MCRC worked

To advance the education of the inhabitants of the Metropolitan County of Merseyside without distinction of sex or race or of political, religious or other opinions and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the subject of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.¹⁰⁰

Additionally, the MCRC was to bring together statutory organisations and educate 'inhabitants concerning good citizenship in a multi-racial society'.¹⁰¹ Finally, it was stated that the MCRC was intended

To work towards the elimination of the treatment of members of the community less favourably than other members of the community on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups generally.¹⁰²

One important way in which the MCRC acted to work towards the elimination of the less favourable treatment of members of the community was through the monitoring of interactions with the police. This was achieved by locals contacting the organisation to discuss complaints of harassment.¹⁰³ Through the community relations councils, it is possible to see how fraught relations between the police and inner-city communities were.

In its seventh annual report, prepared for its 1977 annual conference, the MCRC described how Merseyside Police had made significant inroads in dealing with complaints of harassment made against officers.¹⁰⁴ As the report stated, 'We have always found that officers investigating the complaints to be helpful and courteous to complainants'.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the frequency of these complaints denoted lingering tensions between the people and authorities. As the report claimed,

¹⁰⁰ LRO: 296 CRC/1, Merseyside Community Relations Council Constitution, 1974.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.; this objective was underlined in the original MS.

¹⁰³ The Race Relations Board, which was established under the Race Relations Act 1965, had maintained an office in Liverpool which dealt with complaints of racial discrimination, however this was closed in June 1977; see 'Appendix 9: Memorandum submitted by Merseyside Community Relations Council', Race Relations and Immigration Sub-Committee (RRISC), *Racial disadvantage: minutes of evidence together with appendices, Tuesday 14 October 1980, Liverpool*, HC 610-x (London, 1980), p. 516.

¹⁰⁴ The independent Police Complaints Board was also formally established in 1977, under §8(6) of the Police Act 1976, which the MCRC's predecessor had called for in 1972; see Cmnd. 9584, *Police Complaints Board: final review report 1977-1985* (London, 1985), p. iii.

¹⁰⁵ Merseyside Community Relations Council (MCRC), *7th annual report* (Liverpool, 1977), p. 42; the numbering of these reports was continued, rather than re-started, following the re-establishment of the community relations council in 1974.

Some clients feel that any complaints they may make against the policeman may only lead to further harassment and after telling us about the incident do not want any further action.¹⁰⁶

As in other inner urban areas, including Brixton, 'stop and search' or 'sus' laws were at the root of this harassment.¹⁰⁷ As such, the MCRC supported attempts to have these laws repealed.¹⁰⁸ Thus, while the police 'feel they are an important tool in combatting street crime', the MCRC argued that stop and search powers were 'one of the major immediate causes of police/black friction'.¹⁰⁹ This friction arose from 'incidents where black youngsters feel they are unreasonably picked on, stopped and harassed by police'.¹¹⁰ Not only were these powers seen as having been unequally applied to black youths, stop and search represented a very public infringement on the body and on personal space.

Police harassment formed one part of a larger problem, however. As evidence submitted to the House of Commons Race Relations and Immigration sub-committee showed, the MCRC was concerned with endemic 'racism in our society'.¹¹¹ This was attributed to a 'pathological fixation on immigration control' within public policy, in which 'the public understands the term "immigration" to be little more than a polite euphemism for restricting *black* entry to Britain'.¹¹² Citing the Local Government Act 1966, the MCRC argued that the focus on immigrant communities further disadvantaged Liverpool's indigenous black population.¹¹³ Under this legislation, the Secretary of State was empowered to provide funds for local authorities to 'make special provision in the exercise of any of their functions in consequence of the presence within their areas of persons belonging to ethnic minorities whose language or customs differ from those of the rest of the community'.¹¹⁴ This was seen to disadvantage Liverpool's black population which faced problems of deprivation and racial discrimination, but neither spoke a different language nor had different customs to their white neighbours. Moreover, this legislative shortcoming was seemingly reinforced by Liverpool City Council's apparent unwillingness to adopt an Equal Opportunity Policy which, the MCRC reasoned, would indicate 'a real willingness by the [City] Council to confront the issues of race in the city'.¹¹⁵ As we can see, the MCRC

¹⁰⁶ MCRC, 7th annual report, p. 42.

¹⁰⁷ Cmnd. 8427, *The Brixton disorders 10-12 April 1981*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁸ 'Memorandum submitted by MCRC', RRISC, *Racial disadvantage* HC 610-x, pp. 516-17.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 517.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ 'Memorandum submitted by MCRC', RRISC, *Racial disadvantage* HC 610-x, p. 510.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 511-12.

¹¹⁴ Local Government Act 1966, §11.

¹¹⁵ 'Memorandum submitted by MCRC', RRISC, *Racial disadvantage*, HC 610-x, p. 511. A letter outlining the request that such a policy be adopted was submitted to the city council by the MCRC on behalf of 16 community groups, including the Charles Wootton Adult Education Centre, the Liverpool

consistently argued that Liverpool's indigenous black population had been overlooked by structures of governance built around post-war immigration. As the next section shows, black political and community groups developed in response to the perception that they had been overlooked by central and local government, as well as in reaction to the experience of persistent harassment by police. The Toxteth 'riots' of July 1981 were crucial in this.

Toxteth and the politics of the urban crisis, c. 1981-86

At around 21.30 on the evening of Friday 3 July 1981, Merseyside Police officers in an unmarked car chased a motorcycle along Princes Avenue in Liverpool 8. The motorcycle, ridden by an unnamed black youth, was stopped after it turned down Selbourne Street. Officers suspected that the motorcycle had been stolen and 'not satisfied with explanations given', decided to arrest the young man.¹¹⁶ The officers and the young man both called for assistance. A police van arrived, into which the young man was placed. But the young man's calls for help were also heeded; a crowd gathered, and 'As their numbers grew they were able to release the prisoner from the van'.¹¹⁷ During this release, three police officers were injured and another young black man, Leroy Cooper, was arrested. Over the next half an hour, what police later described as 'a gang of youths' gathered around Granby Street and were reported to have started throwing 'bricks and other missiles'.¹¹⁸ This throwing of missiles continued into the night. These clashes were the beginning of several nights of urban disorder in the area. The Toxteth 'riots' were not the only such upsurge of popular disorder in urban England that year. In April 1981, disorder had broken out in Brixton, London.¹¹⁹ What were popularly-termed 'race riots' also occurred in Handsworth, Birmingham; Moss Side, Manchester; Chapeltown, Leeds; and Southall, London.¹²⁰ These events played an important role in shaping the political discourse of the 'urban crisis' in 1980s Britain, drawing parallels with the racialised urban disorder evidenced across the in the United States in 1967.¹²¹

Black Organisation, and the Princes Park Methodist Youth Club. The names of the other organisations denoted connections to specific ethnic minority groups.

¹¹⁶ Kenneth Oxford, *Public disorder on Merseyside, July-August 1981: report to the Merseyside Police Committee by the Chief Constable of Merseyside, Appendix A: chronological outline of events* (Liverpool, 1981), p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Cmnd. 8427, *The Brixton disorders 10-12 April 1981*.

¹²⁰ Ibid, pp. 11-14.

¹²¹ For example, it was claimed that 'The report of the National Commission on the Cause and Prevention of Violence in the United States – the Kerner Commission – has suddenly become required reading for politicians'; see R. W. Apple, 'Mrs. Thatcher pleads for calm', *New York Times*, 9 July 1981, pp. A1 and A3.

The disturbances were legally defined as ‘riots’ under English common law.¹²² However, this term is problematic; as Martin Kettle and Lucy Hodges have noted, the Institute of Race Relations, in its journal *Race & Class*,¹²³ avoided using the term, except in inverted commas, because the editors ‘were anxious not to appear to collude in describing the summer’s events in the same way as the police and government’.¹²⁴ Other terms were also used, conveying the normative assumptions of their users; Kettle and Hodges, for example, cited ‘Hooliganism, public disorder, protest, rebellion, [and] uprising’, in this manner.¹²⁵ This section will, as far as possible, use the term ‘disorder’ to describe the events in Toxteth in July 1981. While the term was legally recognised, being used in public inquiries into the events, it seeks to avoid the implicit criticism of the ‘rioters’, whose reasons for taking to the streets were more complex than the intention to ‘alarm at least one person of reasonable firmness and courage’.¹²⁶

At around midday on 4 July 1981, the police received reports that “‘ammunition” was being gathered for further confrontation in the evening’.¹²⁷ Minor incidents were reported throughout the day, but at 22.47 police were notified that a barricade had been erected across Upper Parliament Street by a group of more than 50 local youths – including ‘a few white youths’ – who launched a ‘fusilade [*sic*] of missiles’, forcing police to retreat and call for back-up.¹²⁸ Police reinforcements arrived and further barricades were erected. Towards midnight, members of the MCRC, including its leader Wally Brown, encouraged the police to ‘defuse the situation’ by withdrawing the reinforcements.¹²⁹ However, hostilities continued into the night between police equipped with ‘riot shields’ and standard-issue police helmets, and youths throwing stones and pieces of debris from Toxteth’s derelict buildings. By the early hours of Sunday morning (5 July 1981), a number of buildings had been set alight, while police vehicles were driven towards crowds in order to force their dispersal.¹³⁰ What Kenneth Oxford, Chief Constable of Merseyside Police, described as a ‘furious and concerted assault on police’ represented a serious breakdown of law and order, stimulated by real and perceived grievances within the local community against discriminatory police practices. The next night, however, urban disorder in Toxteth

¹²² Cmnd. 8427, *The Brixton disorders 10-12 April 1981*, p. 42.

¹²³ See *Race & Class* 23 (1981).

¹²⁴ Martin Kettle and Lucy Hodges, *Uprising! The police, the people and the riots in Britain’s cities* (London, 1982), p. 10.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Oxford, *Public disorder on Merseyside: Appendix A*, p. 2.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

represented a much more fundamental breakdown in relations between the police and the policed, and drew parallels to the sectarian crisis in Northern Ireland.

On the evening of Sunday 5 July 1981, with additional officers drawn from surrounding forces, the police set up two cordons on Upper Parliament Street with two more on surrounding streets. Derek Worlock and David Sheppard, the Roman Catholic Archbishop and Anglican Bishop of Liverpool respectively, wrote in their 1988 book, *Better Together*, of how they waited on the side lines as two groups gathered around Upper Parliament Street. The clergymen spoke to both the police and protestors, trying to persuade the police 'not to move into [the area] or snatch any of the would-be rioters unless it became absolutely necessary'.¹³¹ As far as the 'would-be rioters' were concerned, the clergymen made overtures to the 'black community leaders' to 'encourage local people to stay at home and keep clear of trouble'.¹³² Community leaders, including Wally Brown, chair of the MCRC, were unable to get their message across.¹³³ It was not that protestors were unwilling to listen; they were unable to hear. The solution was to borrow a megaphone, with a young black man dispatched to find one. The young man was accompanied by the two clergymen to a police station, 'the only immediate source' of a megaphone at that hour.¹³⁴ When the duty officer enquired as to the reason for the request, the young black man left, but Worlock and Sheppard declared their intention to deliver the megaphones to Toxteth community leaders in an attempt to disband the crowds. Worlock and Sheppard were successful in their endeavour and delivered the microphones to Wally Brown. In their account of that night, Worlock and Sheppard offered up their signatures on the Merseyside Police records as proof of their exploits, though they may have been the two unnamed clergymen who proposed a 'truce' to allow for the evacuation of Princes Park Hospital.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, in spite of this, attempts to mediate were unsuccessful. Local youths set up their own barricades, and as on the previous night, stones were thrown and buildings set alight. Petrol bombs were also used by some of the young people out on the streets, forcing the police back.¹³⁶ There were further reports of a bulldozer being driven at police lines,¹³⁷

¹³¹ Derek Worlock and David Sheppard, *Better together: Christian partnership in a hurt city* (London, 1989), p. 166.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Kenneth Oxford's report also cited a London-based Pastor Morris who, with two youths – one black and one white – attempted to mediate with the police, but to no avail. See Oxford, *Public disorder on Merseyside: Appendix A*, p. 8.

¹³⁴ Worlock and Sheppard, *Better together*, p. 166.

¹³⁵ Oxford, *Public disorder on Merseyside: Appendix A*, p. 10.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

further evidence of how sites of dereliction and redevelopment were repurposed through the disorder.¹³⁸

As the confrontations progressed, the police were effectively losing control of the streets. Their tactics and equipment 'had not been designed to tackle violence of such a type and on such a scale'.¹³⁹ At 1 o'clock in the morning on 6 July 1981, Kenneth Oxford ordered a change in tactics and authorised the use of CS gas, or 'tear gas', on protestors.¹⁴⁰ This was a significant shift in approaches to policing in post-war Britain,¹⁴¹ but also drew a clear link between growing social disorder in Great Britain and the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland where the gas had controversially been deployed by security forces since the early 1970s.¹⁴² Following the use of CS gas against protestors, the *Liverpool Echo*, commented that

Despite the considerable courage of police officers ill-equipped to face such mob violence – and the scale of injuries they have suffered bears testimony to this – looting, burning and wrecking of vehicles has continued, creating scenes reminiscent of Northern Ireland.¹⁴³

The newspaper's coverage staunchly supported the police, or perhaps more generally of law and order. Nevertheless, in drawing explicit links between urban disorder in English cities and the ongoing violence in Northern Ireland, Liverpool's urban crisis had undoubtedly reached a new phase as its streets effectively became ungovernable through established police procedures. Throughout the disorder, hundreds of officers were injured, with many requiring hospital treatment.¹⁴⁴ Local coverage of the 'rioting' emphasised the damage caused to the city. The *Echo* bemoaned the ruin of Toxteth's landmarks,¹⁴⁵ especially the century-old Racquet Club.¹⁴⁶ Toxteth had been an affluent area in the late 19th century, and the Racquet Club on Upper Parliament Street remained a social space for the wealthy, causing resentment among local youths shut out of this private world of wealth on their

¹³⁸ Andy Beckett, *Promised you a miracle: why 1980-82 made modern Britain* (London, 2016), pp. 64-5.

¹³⁹ Oxford, *Public disorder on Merseyside*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

¹⁴¹ See Peter Joyce, *The policing of protest, disorder and international terrorism in the UK since 1945* (London, 2016), pp. 179-236.

¹⁴² Alex Spelling, "'Driven to tears": Britain, CS tear gas, and the Geneva Protocol, 1969-1975', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 27 (2016), pp. 701-25.

¹⁴³ Leader, *Liverpool Echo*, 6 July 1981, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ This was particularly acute on 5/6 July: 'Between 0001 hours on Sunday, 5th July and 0600 hours on Monday, 6th July, over 450 police officers had been injured'; Oxford, *Public disorder on Merseyside: Appendix A*, p. 10.

¹⁴⁵ 'Toxteth landmarks in ruins', *Liverpool Echo*, 6 July 1981, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ 'The aftermath... Fire kills a century of club's history', *Liverpool Echo*, 6 July 1981, p. 3; the Liverpool Racquet Club was a gentlemen's club established in 1874 and based on Upper Parliament Street until it was destroyed during the 'riots'.

doorstep.¹⁴⁷ Even after the use of CS gas, low-level confrontations between local youths and the police continued. After a night without violence, the *Echo* described how

The bands of young whites stalking the dark streets around Park Road were not making any social protest. They'd had the whiff of easy pickings and were intent on loot and mischief.¹⁴⁸

As Derek Worlock and David Sheppard observed that 'The longer the rioting lasted, the younger and whiter those taking part appeared to be'.¹⁴⁹ This observation shows how the politics of race and racial discrimination alone could not explain the onset of urban disorder in Toxteth in 1981. Rather, this urban disorder was caused by the interaction of deprivation, police harassment, high unemployment, and racial discrimination. As the *Echo* commented, 'Without doubt, almost every factor being blamed will have played some part in creating a situation out of which such violence and lawlessness have erupted'.¹⁵⁰ With the exception of racial discrimination, these factors were experienced by black and white residents of inner city Liverpool. That is not to say the Toxteth 'riots' transcended issues of race within the area; as this chapter has shown, urban deprivation and racial discrimination were seen as mutually reinforcing, especially within ethnically-diverse inner city areas.

As this section has shown, the 'riots' in Toxteth represented a fundamental crisis of governability. This crisis led to the search for new solutions to the area's problems. In the very short term, it saw the controversial deployment of extraordinary measures to reassert police authority over the streets. But it also contributed to the re-invigoration of black politics in Liverpool and, as previous chapters have shown, was a pivotal moment in the development of central government approaches to social, economic, and physical decline. Born on the second day of the Toxteth 'riots', the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee were identified by the MCRC as 'the only organised network of people who can claim to represent or be in contact with the feelings of the most crucial groups of people in any discussion of the riots – the youth of Liverpool 8'.¹⁵¹ The defence committee was established at a meeting in Stanley House, a community centre on Upper Parliament Street, before moving to a basement room at the Charles Wootton College for Further Education – named after a black sailor murdered by white 'rioters' in 1919 – on the same road.¹⁵² The defence committee was established to 'defend community residents who were victims of police oppression',

¹⁴⁷ Beckett, *Promised you a miracle*, p. 68.

¹⁴⁸ Leader, *Liverpool Echo*, 7 July 1981, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ Worlock and Sheppard, *Better together*, p. 166.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ MCRC, *11th annual report*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁵² William Nelson, *Black Atlantic politics: dilemmas of political empowerment in Boston and Liverpool* (Albany, NY, 2000), p. 207.

through collecting statements and arranging legal assistance.¹⁵³ In this, its role was later taken over by the Liverpool 8 Law Centre. However, the main role of the defence committee, during and immediately after the 'riot', was to 'arrange transport for families to visit those who were held at the Risley Remand Centre' near Warrington in Cheshire.¹⁵⁴ The defence committee came under attack, as did any group seen to support it, from the *Daily Mail* and churchgoers, after it was revealed that the Community and Race Relations Unit of the Council of Churches had given the organisation a £500 grant.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, while the events in Toxteth in July 1981 served to strengthen community organisation, the disorder represented a fundamental challenge for the government and governability more generally.

On 10 July 1981, the head of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, John Hoskyns, wrote a memorandum to Margaret Thatcher on the idea of a 'minister for urban renewal'.¹⁵⁶ In order to address what he called the 'urban unrest/renewal problem', Hoskyns argued that the first priority was the 'firm reimposition of order'.¹⁵⁷ The second part of the government's approach, Hoskyns argued, was the 'proper analysis of the problem and then plans for a solution'.¹⁵⁸ Similarly in a memorandum to Thatcher on the same day, Michael Heseltine explained the conflicting priorities which the disorder in Toxteth had presented. On top of the tension between the needs for investment with the government's desire to control expenditure was the issue of law and order. In particular, Heseltine noted the importance of addressing 'the particularly acute problems of Merseyside', without 'giving the impression that local communities can secure for their areas expenditure with riots'.¹⁵⁹ During his time in Liverpool as titular Minister for Merseyside, Heseltine was forced to tread a delicate line. This was recognised by one acerbic clergymen who, in response to Heseltine's claim that 'Violence will get you nowhere', replied 'It got you up here'.¹⁶⁰ As previous chapters have shown, the Toxteth disorders marked an important moment in Liverpool's urban crisis and stimulated government action. This was recognised in a 1982 article published in *The Times*:

For many southern Conservatives, Toxteth is just as improbable and foreign as Wodgate was to Disraeli's reader. An obvious reaction to Toxteth and Brixton was a law and order response; sending in the

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ David Sheppard, *Steps along Hope Street: my life in cricket, the Church and the inner city* (London, 2003), p. 215.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.; also see Belchem, *Before the Windrush*, pp. 261-3.

¹⁵⁶ TNA: PREM 19/577, John Hoskyns, A minister for urban renewal etc., 10 July 1981, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.; this phrase had been underlined by Thatcher.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ TNA: PREM 19/577, Michael Heseltine, Merseyside and inner city issues, 10 July 1981; phrases underlined by Thatcher.

¹⁶⁰ M. Jacobs, 'Margaret Thatcher and the inner cities', *Economic and Political Weekly* 23 (17 September 1988), p. 1942.

modern equivalent of the dragoons. Instead the events were used, thanks in part to Mr Heseltine's sense of political timing, to revive urban policy.¹⁶¹

In spite of this optimistic reading of the disorders as a stimulus for concerted government-sponsored urban regeneration, they also represented a fundamental challenge to the governability of urban spaces.

In late July 1981, the Home Secretary William Whitelaw wrote to John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, requesting 'up to 50 riot guns and 5,000 baton rounds to equip civil police forces in Great Britain'.¹⁶² These weapons would come from the Army's supplies, which Nott stated were safer than commercially-available examples. The supply of these weapons to the police presented a number of problems, including inhibiting the ability of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to replace its stocks, and seriously depleting Army stores which were intended for 'internal security duties at home or in a dependency overseas'.¹⁶³ Responding to Nott's letter on 6 August, Whitelaw accepted an offer for 50 guns and 4,000 rounds.¹⁶⁴ If the use of baton rounds and CS gas on crowds in Toxteth was reminiscent of the large-scale violence seen in the Northern Ireland 'Troubles', then the programme to equip civilian police forces with military-grade weapons suggested that this spectre of mass public disorder haunted urban Britain more generally. Ministers were quick to dispel the notion that the underlying causes of the disorders were problems of race. But in political cartoons published in 1982 and 1985, after another spate of urban disorder, the *Daily Express* firmly linked race to the idea that cities might become ungovernable. Urban disorder at home was likened to colonial disorder and Liverpool's indigenous black residents were portrayed as immigrants (see figures 4.4 and 4.5). Within the context of this racialised discourse of ungovernability and urban crisis, black community groups in Toxteth continued to work to improve social conditions and fight against the real and perceived infractions of the police.

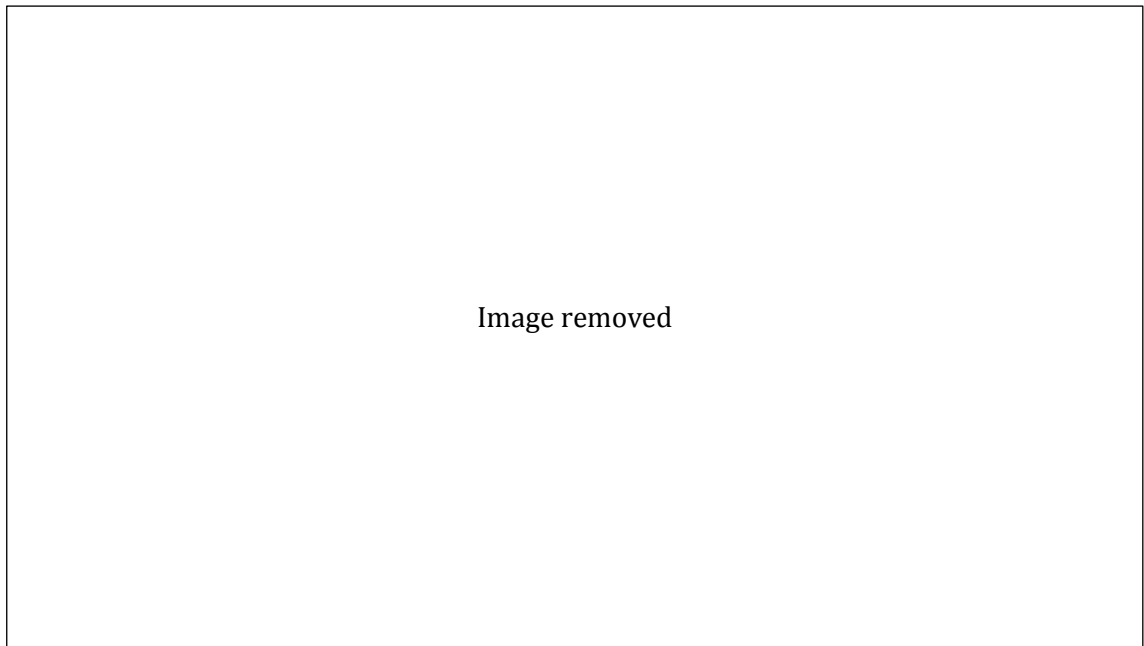
¹⁶¹ David Walker, 'Four cities, four crises', *The Times*, 17 February 1982, p. 8.

¹⁶² TNA: PREM 19/484, John Nott, Assistance to the civil police: riot guns and baton rounds, 30 July 1981, p. 1.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ TNA: PREM 19/484, William Whitelaw, Anti-riot equipment, 6 August 1981.

Figure 4.4: *Daily Express* cartoon, 1982



Source: *Daily Express*, 23 April 1982.

Figure 4.5: *Daily Express* cartoons, 1985

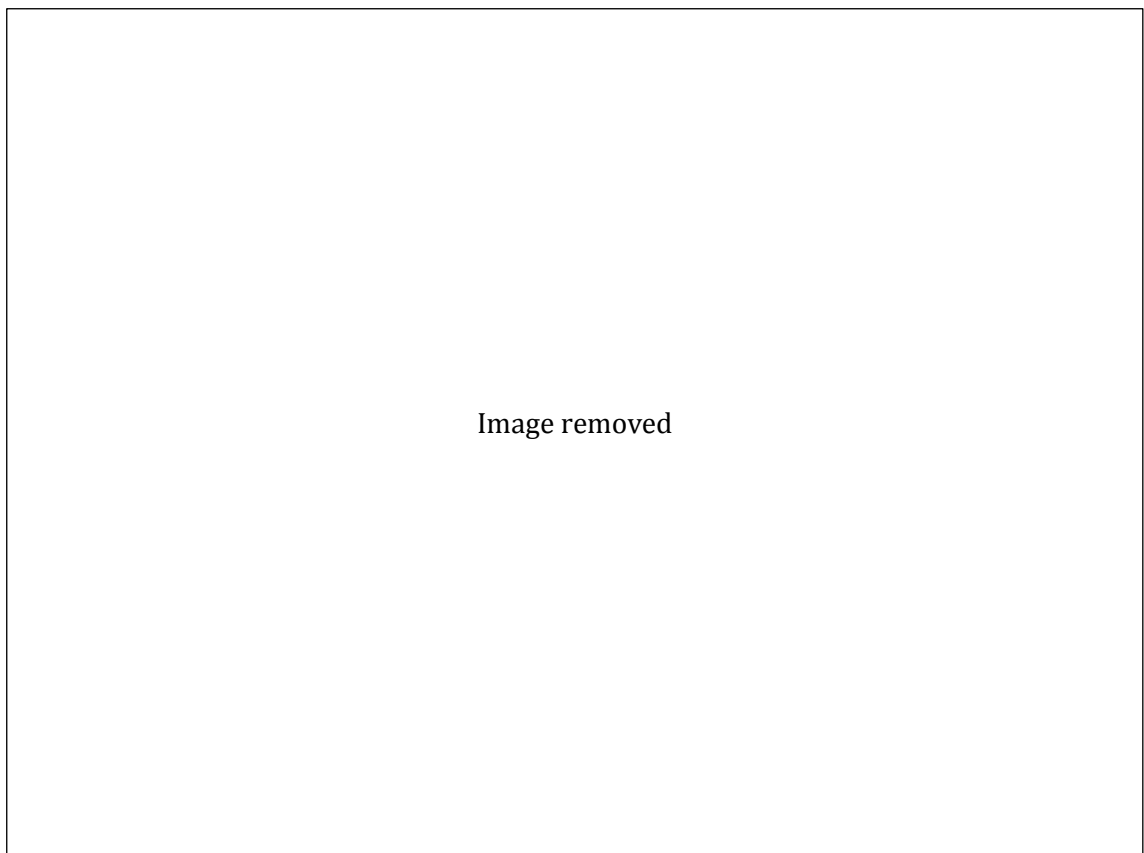


Image removed

Source: *Daily Express*, 20 October 1985; 10 November 1985.

Black political and community organisations established during the Toxteth disorders continued to play an important role in representing and articulating what they saw as the interests of ethnic minorities in the city. John Belchem has described the Liverpool 8 Law Centre as ‘perhaps the most positive outcome of the riots’ owing to the centre’s work in representing local residents in cases of racial discrimination.¹⁶⁵ Formed in 1981, the Management Committee of the Liverpool 8 Law Centre proclaimed that

The law can either be an instrument for oppression or a means to liberation. It is an instrument of oppression when it is used to project the interests of the powerful against the interests of the powerless. Similarly, it is oppressive when it is seen as a body of knowledge and a set of practices which lie beyond the grasp of the ordinary person.¹⁶⁶

The law centre therefore sought to ‘present the law as a means to liberation – a way in which the powerless can fulfil their legitimate aspirations and defend their legitimate rights’.¹⁶⁷ In order to carry out this stated goal, the law centre provided legal advice and represented local residents on social security and housing issues as well as in cases of racial

¹⁶⁵ Belchem, *Before the Windrush*, p. 271.

¹⁶⁶ Liverpool 8 Law Centre, *Annual report 1984/85* (Liverpool, 1985), p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

discrimination.¹⁶⁸ But the law centre, and local political organisations, also acted to represent what it saw as the interests of the black community during a prominent dispute with the city council. Here, we can see how an animated and redefined black politics was integral to the legacy of the Toxteth disorders.¹⁶⁹

The city council's failure to establish an Equal Opportunity Unit, as shown above, was a contentious issue for black community organisations in Liverpool. But when the city council finally established the position of Principal Race Relations Advisor, the appointee, a young black Londoner named Sam Bond, proved controversial. The so-called 'BOND AFFAIR' highlighted the continued struggle for black representation in Liverpool. The controversy was stirred, firstly by the allegation that Bond was unqualified for the position, never having worked in the field of race relations before.¹⁷⁰ Secondly, Bond was from London. He was therefore cast as an outsider, unfamiliar with the problems faced by Liverpool's black communities.¹⁷¹ The Liverpool 8 Law Centre reported that

local Black organisations believed that the Council had at long last recognised the importance of taking active steps to combat the pernicious effects of racism within Liverpool. This belief, unfortunately, turned out to be without foundation.¹⁷²

This disappointment reflected the perception that the viewpoints of black organisations had been ignored. The Liverpool Black Caucus, a group of representatives of black organisations who sat on Liverpool's Race Relations Liaison Committee, went further, describing the appointment as a declaration of 'war' on the 'organised black community in Liverpool'.¹⁷³ As we can see from this, the legacy of the Toxteth 'riots' was complex. For the right-wing press, exemplified by the *Daily Express*, the disorders offered a warning about the implications of immigration for the governability of Britain's cities. But by looking at the actions of organisations established during or immediately after the disorders, it becomes clear that the 'riots' also facilitated greater representation for Liverpool's black community, even if there were still fights to be won.

¹⁶⁸ Details of these activities can be found in the organisation's annual reports, though copies covering the first three years of the law centre's existence were not located in Liverpool Record Office.

¹⁶⁹ Perry, 'Black Britain and the politics of race', pp. 651-63.

¹⁷⁰ Liverpool Black Caucus, *The racial politics of Militant in Liverpool: the black community's struggle for participation in local politics 1980-1986* (Liverpool and London, 1986), pp. 69-84.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁷² Liverpool 8 Law Centre, *Annual report 1984/85*, p. 1.

¹⁷³ Liverpool Black Caucus, *Racial politics of Militant*, pp. 82-3.

Conclusion

Music mediated the Toxteth disorders in early July 1981. As the disorders flared, the Coventry-based band The Specials, were number one in the charts with their song 'Ghost Town'. The song captured a particular moment in Britain's urban crisis through its focus on the social fallout of urban decline. The Toxteth 'riots' themselves were the focus of the white, Liverpool-based band Cook Da Books' 1982 song 'Piggy in the Middle 8' and its promise of a 'hurled missile with love to [the police]'. Similarly, Public Disgrace's 1982 punk song 'Toxteth' was filled with invective against the social problems of the area, and the police. The Toxteth disorders were at the centre of a crisis of governability in urban Britain. This crisis, however, was different to that described by Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Blake and Brian Roberts in their 1978 study of 'mugging'.¹⁷⁴ *Policing the Crisis* highlighted how attitudes towards crime, and 'mugging' in particular, had come to be inherently racialised. As Hall *et al.* argued, 'mugging' was an Americanism with which analogous crimes of robbery and garrotting came to be associated, connected themes of 'race, crime and youth'.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, they showed how mugging came to symbolise the idea 'that the "British way of life" is coming apart at the seams'.¹⁷⁶ These themes were evident in the Toxteth disorders of 1981, as young black men (later joined by an increasing number of young white men) took to the streets in response to police harassment. However, the Toxteth 'riots' brought these twin problems of spatialised deprivation and racial discrimination together. The result was a crisis of governability which saw the extension of the use of force by the state, bringing in policing methods which had, to that point, mostly been confined to colonial policing and the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. The crisis described by Hall *et al.* relied on a cultural Marxist explanation which argued that the 'post-war consensus' had been 'fundamentally fractured over anxieties about black immigration, youth, sexual permissiveness and the moral consequences of "unbridled materialism"'.¹⁷⁷ While this explanation has its merits when applied to the urban disorders of the early 1980s, the crisis of governability was much deeper. The state, as Max Weber argued, was the organisation which had a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.¹⁷⁸ The Toxteth disorders called this legitimacy into question.

As this chapter has shown, the underlying problem was seen as spatialised multiple deprivation. Central and local government initiated a series of social studies which

¹⁷⁴ Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Blake and Roberts, *Policing the crisis*.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Kieran Connell, 'Policing the Crisis 35 years on', *Contemporary British History* 29 (2013), p. 275.

¹⁷⁸ Max Weber, *Politics as vocation*, trans. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York, NY, 1946), p. 3.

identified multiple deprivation as the root cause of crime and other social problems evidenced within the inner city. While material poverty had long been evidenced in urban areas, the new category of deprivation showed how social problems were linked to the problems of urban decline. The category of multiple deprivation was complicated by race. Race was seen to multiply the effects of urban deprivation through the added pressures of harassment and disadvantage which it brought. As the 1981 Scarman report into the Brixton disorders in 1981 argued, 'overall [ethnic minorities residents] suffer from the same deprivations as the "host community" (ie the white population), but much more acutely'.¹⁷⁹ Liverpool's black and Asian communities were not immigrants, but were seen as indigenous to the city. This indigeneity added another layer of complexity, with representatives arguing that it led to the peculiar problems associated with racial discrimination and disadvantage within the area being overlooked. As this chapter has shown, racial discrimination had a multiplying effect on urban deprivation. But the experience of these social problems also led to the proliferation of community groups, in particular black community groups which sought to act against what they saw as police harassment and represent the interests of their constituency. As the next chapter shows, community groups and voluntary organisations played an integral role in responding to the urban crisis in Liverpool.

¹⁷⁹ Cmnd. 8427, *The Brixton disorders 10-12 April 1981*, p. 15.

Chapter 5

‘Made Weak By Time and Fate But Strong in Will’: Voluntary Organisations and Urban Governance, c. 1968-86

Introduction

The governance of Liverpool’s urban crisis, as the preceding chapters have shown, involved local and national government agencies, interacting with a number of projects operating within defined areas of the city. But these agencies were unable to stem the tide of urban decline. As shown in chapter 4, in spite of the advent of a universalist welfare state, poverty and deprivation persisted. In areas of multiple deprivation, the idea that people had become distanced – physically and emotively – from the machinery of government was articulated in social studies of Liverpool.¹ As this chapter shows, voluntary organisations played an important role in connecting government and society, as well as filling gaps in the provision of services by the welfare state.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), especially charities and voluntary organisations, have long been central actors in urban governance.² Liverpool in particular has a long history of voluntary action, which John Belchem has argued was stimulated by its ‘wretched early-Victorian reputation’ as the ‘black spot on the Mersey’.³ In fact, the Vauxhall Community Development Project (CDP) contended in its 1977 final report that Liverpool ‘could fairly claim to be the origin of many voluntary movements that later spread to other parts of the country’.⁴ These included citizens advice bureaux and the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Aid which became models for voluntary organisations established in other towns

¹ Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Change or decay: final report of the Liverpool inner area study* (London, 1977), pp. 167-8.

² Robert Morris, ‘Governance: two centuries of urban growth’ in Robert Morris and Richard Trainor (eds), *Urban governance: Britain and beyond since 1750* (Abingdon, 2000), pp. 1-12. There has been some debate over the terminology, with some preferring the term ‘non-governmental organisation’ to refer to a range of organisations; see: Matthew Hilton, Nick Crowson, Jean-François Mouhot and James McKay, *A historical guide to NGOs in Britain: charities, civil society and the voluntary sector since 1945* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 1-11; also see Matthew Hilton, James McKay, Nick Crowson and Jean-François Mouhot, *The politics of expertise: how NGOs shaped modern Britain* (Oxford, 2012). The term ‘voluntary organisation’ is used here because this was the term used by members of the organisations themselves.

³ John Belchem, *Merseypride: essays in Liverpool exceptionalism* (Liverpool, 2006), pp. 101-28.

⁴ Phil Topping and George Smith, *Government against poverty? Liverpool community development project, 1970-75* (Oxford, 1977), p. 1.

and cities.⁵ This chapter focuses on a definition of urban governance as ‘two-way traffic’, in which ‘aspects, qualities, problems and opportunities of both the governing system and the system to be governed are taken into consideration’.⁶ Through this definition, as Jan Kooiman has argued, ‘Where government begins and society ends, or the other way around, becomes more diffuse’.⁷ This is vital to our understanding of the urban crisis for two reasons. Firstly, it shows how voluntary organisations, of which there were many, worked with the state, as well as against it, to improve social conditions in the city.⁸ Secondly, it highlights the weaknesses of the welfare state at the high point of the ‘welfare consensus’ in national politics.⁹

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first focuses on a number of local voluntary organisations, including the Liverpool (later Merseyside) Council of Voluntary Service (LCVS and MCVS respectively), the Liverpool Personal Service Society (LPSS), and the Merseyside Youth Association (MYA). These organisations played important roles in urban governance over the course of the period with which this thesis is concerned, as exemplified through their interactions with local and national government and people in inner Liverpool. Through their activities, they highlighted the shortcomings in welfare state provision, demonstrating the continued importance of voluntary organisations within the context of a universalist welfare state and the urban crisis. The second section focuses on ‘community development’ in the 1970s. Community development has been touched on in chapters 3 and 4 through the findings and actions of the Vauxhall CDP, set up in 1969. Nevertheless, community development as a concept was larger than the geographically- and temporally-constrained actions of the CDPs. The final section centres on *Scottie Press*, a newspaper established by the Vauxhall CDP and maintained by its successor, the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council (VNC). Through these newspapers we can see how the politics of community groups were shaped by the urban crisis and their efforts to resist urban decline. As this chapter shows, the urban crisis in Liverpool marked an important shift in the role of voluntary organisations from meliorist benefactors of the poor to the representatives of

⁵ Margaret Simey, *Charitable effort in Liverpool in the nineteenth century* (Liverpool, 1951), p. 141.

⁶ Jan Kooiman (ed.), *Modern governance: new government-society interactions* (London, 1993), p. 4.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Mitchell Dean has described ‘civil society’ as ‘the activities and relations of individuals, households, and families, which exist independently of, and in some way opposed to, the political structures of the state’.⁸ Inserted into this definition, however, are voluntary organisations which, as well as ‘opposing’ the political structures of the state, worked with state actors in order to achieve corresponding ends. See Mitchell Dean, ‘Society’, in Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris (eds), *New keywords: a revised vocabulary of culture and society* (Oxford, 2005), p. 328.

⁹ Derek Fraser, *The evolution of the British welfare state* (Basingstoke, 4th ed., 2009), pp. 287-312.

communities negotiating the panoply of problems evidenced within particular neighbourhoods.

Voluntary organisations and the welfare state, c. 1968-78

The development of the 'classic welfare state' in Britain after 1945 has been heralded as a period of full employment and 'the first age of mass affluence for the British people'.¹⁰ But while the welfare state in this period has been lionised as 'Britain's New Deal', the 'rediscovery of poverty' in the 1960s demonstrated the limits of the welfare state.¹¹ Where there were gaps in welfare state provision, people either fell through the cracks or came to the attention of voluntary organisations. However, the role of voluntary organisations in providing social services was called into question following the publication in 1968 of the report of the Seebohm committee on local authority and allied social services.¹² The report recommended that local authorities across Britain each establish a new department 'providing a community based and family oriented service, which will be available to all'.¹³ Recognising the 'social casualties' who had been underserved by established social services, the committee argued that a new local authority department 'should be more effective in detecting need and encouraging people to seek help'.¹⁴ It was this emphasis on the role of the state in the Seebohm committee's recommendations which caused some consternation. This was acknowledged by Robin Huws Jones – a social scientist, principal of the National Institute for Social Work, and member of the Seebohm committee – at a conference, held in Liverpool in September 1969, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the LPSS.¹⁵ Voluntary sector workers feared that the 'genuine independence' of their organisations was threatened by the expanding role of the state in providing social services.¹⁶ This was compounded by the increasing reliance of voluntary organisations on central and local government grants. But, he argued, the report had been misinterpreted by some in the voluntary sector. Rather than overlooking voluntary organisations, the Seebohm committee recognised 'their major role in developing citizen participation, in revealing new needs and in exposing shortcomings in the [social] services'.¹⁷ This vital role, he argued, was demonstrated by the LPSS in interceding in social problems in Liverpool.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 287.

¹¹ Ibid.; Peter Hennessy, *Having it so good: Britain in the fifties* (London, 2007).

¹² Cmnd. 3703, *Report of the committee on local authority and allied personal social services* (London, 1968).

¹³ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹⁵ Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Central Library (LRO): M364 PSS/11/1/73, *The future of voluntary organisations*, 1971.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The LPSS was founded after the First World War ‘to help any citizen in difficulty’.¹⁸ In this, the LPSS formed part of the larger urban civic movement of the interwar years.¹⁹ The society’s mission to help citizens in need did not change over the course of its first half a century. But, as Jones acknowledged during the conference, ‘Things have changed a lot over the last fifty years as some of us can testify from memory, and the statistics corroborate’.²⁰ Jones was referring to material conditions within the city, as well as to social change more generally. What is more, he suggested that this would continue into the future:

Certain things will change more rapidly over the next fifty years – in how people live, where and how they earn their living and spend their leisure; in the number of people and their age distribution; in their expectations and their attitudes; in their social services and ways of government.²¹

In responding to these changes, Jones contended, voluntary organisations continued to play a vital role. As the Liverpool-based clergyman, Father James Dunne, argued in his speech to the LPSS anniversary conference, voluntary organisations were able to adapt to different social needs for which the state had made no provision. Reflecting on this, he stated that

We know that existing establishments provided by the statutory services cannot cater for the deeply psychotic child. Or take the case of handicapped children, where no statutory provision exists for the very special category of autistic children. New knowledge brings to light what at first may best be met by voluntary organisations. They are able to explore the ground, determine the broad outlines of the problem and then bring it to notice.²²

This fundamental role played by voluntary organisations in filling the gaps in welfare state provision, the speakers at the conference argued, was highlighted by the work of the LPSS.

One case through which this vital role was demonstrated was that of ‘Mrs N’, identified but not named in a 1969 report produced by the General Secretary of the LPSS.²³ As the report acknowledged, ‘Families living under stress are vulnerable to many different problems and help is often required over a range of needs’.²⁴ Mrs N’s problems were not solely the result of larger processes of urban change; she was epileptic and, during a fit, had lost her leg after it was burned in a fire. Following this, her common law husband, ‘Mr N’, abandoned Mrs N and their three children. Mrs N came to the attention of the LPSS following

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁹ For example, see Tom Hulme, ‘Putting the city back into citizenship: civics education and local government in Britain, 1918-1945’, *Twentieth Century British History* 26 (2015), pp. 26-51.

²⁰ LRO: M364 PSS/11/1/73, The future of voluntary organisations, 1971, pp. 7-8.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 15.

²³ LRO: M364 PSS/3/3/2, Report of the General Secretary, February 1969.

²⁴ Ibid.

a suicide attempt, referred to the society by a medical social worker. The location of the family's residence was not mentioned, but it was stated that they were living in a 'dilapidated flat in a multi-let property' of the type which were predominantly found in the inner areas of Liverpool.²⁵ In addition to the problems of Mrs N's mental health and her son's truancy, the LPSS sought to aid the family through improving their material living conditions; as the report laid out:

The rooms were damp and all the family slept in one bed. We helped her with furniture and pressed her claim for re-housing with the Health and Housing departments of the Corporation. Mrs. "N" had need of constant engagement and support.²⁶

Mrs N's income predominantly came from the Department of Health and Social Security, with some 'erratic' payments from her estranged husband. This income, however, was inadequate to support the family.²⁷ It was not stated whether the LPSS provided financial support to the family, but by pressing Mrs N's claim for better housing, the LPSS showed how voluntary organisations were able to intervene in the living conditions of individual households. This support also pointed towards the inadequacy of the local authority housing system in identifying need. In this, they acted to 'plug a gap' between the state and the individual.

In this case, the state-provided services which Mrs N had received were seen to have failed her and her family. In her recent work on the LPSS, Selina Todd has shown how the role of the 'home advisor' in the 1940s and 1950s was to advise on or undertake housework in order to improve the conditions of the home.²⁸ This role was diverse, but conformed in many ways to the governmental and biopolitical role of social housing described by Matthew Hollow, writing on the Park Hill housing estate in Sheffield in the 1960s.²⁹ By the late 1960s, however, this role had shifted from shaping the affluent citizen to managing the effects of urban decline. Through Mrs N's story, we can see how the LPSS interceded in a case of multiple deprivation in two important ways. Firstly, they supplemented state-provided services through their role as social workers. Secondly, they dealt with the local

²⁵ Ibid. For example, see R. Webber, *PRAG technical paper TP14: Liverpool social area study 1971 data: final report* (London, 1975), pp. 71-5; and Wilson and Womersley, *Change or decay*, pp. 117-19.

²⁶ LRO: M364 PSS/3/3/2, Report of the General Secretary, February 1969.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Selina Todd, 'Family welfare and social work in post-war England, c. 1948-c.1970', *English Historical Review* CXXIX, no. 537 (2014), pp. 370-71. Also see Mark Peel, *Miss Cutler and the case of the resurrected horse: social work and the story of poverty in America, Australia, and Britain* (Chicago, 2012); and John Welshman, 'The social history of social work: the issue of the "problem family", 1940-1970', *British Journal of Social Work* 29 (1999), pp. 457-76.

²⁹ See Matthew Hollow, 'Governmentality on the Park Hill estate: the rationality of public housing', *Urban History* 37 (2010), pp. 117-34.

authority on Mrs N's behalf, demonstrating both the apparent inadequacy of the local authority to identify individual families' housing needs and the issues which some people had in negotiating state services. This latter issue was also highlighted by the authors of the final report of the Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project (SNAP), which was established in the inner ward of Granby in 1969: 'One month is [enough time to spend here] to appreciate the inevitable conflicts between the deprived and bureaucracies'.³⁰

Housing was an important issue through which voluntary organisations identified issues in state provision and local government policy. On 26 November 1969, the LPSS held a conference at the Royal Institution in Liverpool in conjunction with the Liverpool Council for Social Service, Shelter, and the University of Liverpool's Department of Extra-Mural Studies.³¹ The conference on poor housing had its origins in a 1968 letter written by the social scientist and Labour city councillor Margaret Simey to W. B. Harbert of the LPSS Citizens' Advice Bureau.³² In the letter, Simey criticised 'the general attitude adopted by landlords in the Clearance Areas, that it isn't worthwhile doing repairs' to their properties.³³ As the case of Mrs N (above) has shown, the LPSS was concerned with the state of housing, which it sought to improve through its social work. Simey, however, questioned whether the casework approach hitherto adopted was sufficient to improve housing conditions within large areas of the city. She therefore stated: 'what I am after is a body who would be problem-centred rather than focussed on an individual'.³⁴ One such problem was the 'popular assumption [within local government] that the only requirement for a homeless family is a roof over its head whereas our experience suggests that many such families require prolonged help with their personal and social problems'.³⁵ In addition to this, there was a concern that 'Harrassment [*sic*] continues partly because families do not know where to get advice and are mistrustful of existing agencies'.³⁶ In this attempt to improve housing conditions in Liverpool, voluntary organisations therefore acted as a conduit between households and the state.

³⁰ See Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project, *Another chance for cities: SNAP 69/72* (Liverpool, 1972), p. 5.

³¹ LRO: M364 PSS/9/24, Programme for 'Housing and the Social Worker' conference, held at the Royal Institution, Liverpool on 26 November 1969.

³² Terry Philpot, 'Simey [*née* Todd], Margaret Bayne', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (January 2008) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/94079>> [accessed 7 February 2017].

³³ LRO: M364 PSS/9/24, Letter from Margaret Simey to W. B. Harbert, 6 November 1968.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ LRO: M364 PSS/9/24, Letter from W. B. Harbert to Don Simpson, 31 December 1968.

³⁶ *Ibid.*; it was also suggested that 'few social workers have an adequate knowledge of the legal rights of tenants' and 'fail to help families pursue their rights by writing letters on their behalf or accompanying them to public offices, solicitors, etc.' – see LRO: M364 PSS/9/24, Letter from W. B. Harbert to Lord Simey, 6 February 1969.

This conduit role was demonstrated through the conference, which was intended to inform 'social workers, the clergy and other relevant public servants about the services which are available and to encourage them to regard these problems as something which comes within the scope of their daily work'.³⁷ The LPSS, in concert with other charities and the University of Liverpool, had identified two important limitations of the local authority's housing policy. Firstly, slum clearance had contributed to the further run-down of private housing which the local authority was seen to have done little to prevent. These areas of poor housing came to be known as 'twilight areas'.³⁸ Secondly, Simey highlighted the limitations of a housing policy which improved the quality of the dwelling, but was not complemented by addressing any further needs a household may have. Through the discussions surrounding the 1969 housing conference, the voluntary sector therefore demonstrated its vital role in identifying gaps in state services. Through the organisation of a conference, which included the proposal to set up a Housing Advisory Service in Liverpool, voluntary and academic organisations sought to develop a solution to housing and social problems.³⁹ This solution was to be applied by the social workers in attendance who, through their casework approach, were able to access residents' homes in a manner not available to other parts of the state and voluntary welfare system.⁴⁰ Housing and social work were not the only areas in which the voluntary sector sought to intervene in the urban crisis.

As demonstrated through a number of organisations involved in youth work in Liverpool, the role of voluntary organisations in urban governance was multi-faceted. In September 1966, a group of voluntary organisations, with the support of the Department of Education and Science and Liverpool City Council, set up a 'detached youth work' project which came to be known as 'Contact'.⁴¹ The project was influenced by the Albemarle report of 1960, the 1965 Pelican book *The Unattached*, and a similar project proposed for Manchester.⁴² It was set up to cover the postal districts of Liverpool 1 and 8, encompassing 'part of the City Centre, the Dock area and private and corporation housing in various states

³⁷ LRO: M364 PSS/9/24, Letter from W. B. Harbert to Margaret Simey, 31 January 1969.

³⁸ Alison Ravetz, *The government of space: town planning in modern society* (London, 1986), pp. 90-100.

³⁹ See LRO: M364 PSS/9/24, Correspondence between Don Simpson and W. B. Harbert, 13 August 1969; 18 August 1969; 18 September 1969.

⁴⁰ Todd, 'Family welfare and social work', p. 366.

⁴¹ LRO: M367 MYA/M/4/1, Annual Report for 1969-70, p. 8; in this case 'detached' meant that the young people concerned were not members of a youth club.

⁴² Cmd. 929, *The youth service in England and Wales: report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education in November, 1958* (London, February 1960); and Mary Morse, *The unattached* (Harmondsworth, 1965). Details of the Manchester project can be found in LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/1, Application for a grant of £10,500 for development work with the "unattached", c. 1965.

of decay and renewal'.⁴³ Contact also built on the legacy of 1950s and 1960s social studies of Liverpool, including those conducted by John Barron Mays on young people and juvenile delinquency in the city.⁴⁴ Though the grant for this initial stage had been submitted by the Liverpool Union of Youth Clubs, the project was managed by the Youth Organisations Committee of the Liverpool Council of Social Service and lasted three years.⁴⁵ When the duration of the detached youth work project was extended in September 1969, the area covered was reduced. Focusing on Liverpool 8, the area covered by the project was described as 'a multi-racial district, where young people were at particular risk'.⁴⁶ With this, the management of the detached youth work project passed to the newly-established Merseyside Youth Association (MYA).⁴⁷

The MYA was created through the merger of the Liverpool Boys' Association and the Liverpool Union of Youth Clubs with the objective, 'irrespective of creed or colour':

To help and educate boys and girls and young men and women, especially those between the ages of 14 and 20 years, through their leisure-time activities, so to develop their spiritual, mental and physical capacities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society and that their conditions of life may be improved.⁴⁸

In this, the MYA conformed to the working model of voluntary youth organisations elsewhere.⁴⁹ Its management of the detached youth work project, however, demonstrated the association's important role in urban governance beyond the confines of the youth club.⁵⁰ Through the detached youth work project governance was enacted through teaching young people in Liverpool to manage their own problems. Moreover, through 'trying to help young "unattached" people become more positive in their attitudes... towards society in

⁴³ LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/1, Project with "unattached" young people in the districts of Liverpool 1 and 8, c. 1965, p. 1.

⁴⁴ John Barron Mays, *Growing up in the city: a study of juvenile delinquency in an urban neighbourhood* (Liverpool, 1964); and John Barron Mays, *The young pretenders: a study of teenage culture in contemporary society* (London, 1965).

⁴⁵ LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/7, Is there still a need for detached work? 19 November 1969; a full account of this stage of the project can be found in its final report, see Denis Ince, *Contact: a report on a project with unattached youth in an area of high social need in Liverpool* (Leicester, 1971).

⁴⁶ LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/4, Bill Cox and Judith Wild, Progress report on 'Contact' detached youth work team, June 1975.

⁴⁷ Charlotte Clements has argued that the establishment of this voluntary organisation was the result of a need to 'face the scale of the economic challenges posed by a city which was experiencing chronic industrial decline'. See Charlotte Clements, *Youth cultures in the mixed economy of welfare: youth clubs and voluntary associations in South London and Liverpool, 1958-85* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Kent, April 2016), p. 245.

⁴⁸ LRO: M367 MYA/M/4/1, Annual Report for 1969-70.

⁴⁹ See Clements, *Youth cultures in the mixed economy of welfare*.

⁵⁰ This role was articulated in part in the 1969 Fairbairn-Milson report, and acknowledged in the MYA's first annual report. See LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/7, Youth and community work in the 70s: proposals by the Youth Service Development Council, 1969; and M367 MYA/M/4/1, Annual report for 1969-70, p. 4.

general', the project represented an investment in future urban governance through the construction of active citizens.⁵¹

To gain the trust of young people in Liverpool 8, the detached youth workers were expected to be part of the community in which they worked.⁵² Throughout the 1970s, the project employed two full-time youth workers, one man and one woman.⁵³ In the first few years of the project, Maureen Flipse had been employed as one of the youth workers. A Granby local, it was claimed that 'Her ethnic background helped her to identify with the residents by whom she was readily accepted'.⁵⁴ Staffing changes, including Flipse's departure in 1973 led to a re-focussing of the project and its move to the Liverpool 6 area to the north of the city centre.⁵⁵ This area, in contrast, to Liverpool 8, was predominantly white and as such evidenced similar, but not identical problems. Nevertheless, the principle of 'contact' with unattached young people, the provision of counselling services, recreational activities, educational support and training remained central to the detached youth work team.

Throughout its lifetime, the detached youth work project used a variety of urban spaces to reach young people in Liverpool. In contrast to adult social work which valued access to the home to practise casework, or long-established club-based youth work, the 'Contact' team sought to meet young people on their own terms and within their own spaces. The pub, for example, appears to have been an important location for meeting young men.⁵⁶ This approach was not without its drawbacks, resulting from established practices within these local pubs. In contrast to their male counterparts, women under the legal drinking age were generally not accepted in Liverpool's inner-city pubs. This supposedly led to a Friday night 'binge-drinking' culture among young women.⁵⁷ While young men were easier to locate within the pub, once again local social practices often stymied youth workers' efforts to get to know locals. Youth worker Judith Wild, for example, described how local customs

⁵¹ Ince, *Contact*, p. 9.

⁵² See LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/2, Detached youth work team management committee minutes, 1967-79; and M367 MYA/M/6/1/4, Detached youth work team progress reports, 1975-79.

⁵³ As early documents made clear, there was a gendered division of labour in this; see LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/1, Application for a grant of £10,500 for development work with the "unattached", 1965.

⁵⁴ LRO: MYA/M/6/1/4, Bill Cox and Judith Wild, Progress report on 'Contact' detached youth work team, June 1975. It was not specified what Flipse's 'ethnic background' was, but it is reasonable to assume that she was black or mixed-race.

⁵⁵ Ibid.; also see Jude (Judith) Wild, *Street mates* (Liverpool, 1982).

⁵⁶ LRO: M 367 MYA/M/6/1/2, Keith Hitchen, 'Contact': counselling by young voluntary workers in a pub situation, May 1971.

⁵⁷ Detached youth worker, Judith Wild, posited that the integration of girls into the local pub culture would cut down on this binge-drinking; see LRO: M367 MYA/6/1/2, Worker's report, 8 February 1974.

precluded a woman buying a drink in a pub, this being the role of a man. As such, while some 'did the sensible thing' and accepted a drink from her, a number of young men were caught off guard by her offer. Wild claimed this was the result of their inability to buy her a drink in return.⁵⁸ In spite of this, the pub became an important space in which youth work could take place; this included one-on-one counselling, or group discussions. Other spaces in which this took place included street corners, car parks, 'chippies', and discos.⁵⁹ In meeting young people in these spaces – the places where they felt comfortable – the youth workers argued that they were able to get to know their subjects better.⁶⁰ Through meeting young people in pubs and on street corners, the voluntary workers were therefore able to intervene where the state either could not, or did not, reach out to them.

The problem of youth unemployment in Liverpool was a key driver of the detached youth work project. Youth unemployment was a serious issue in Liverpool. In July 1977, there were 46,000 unemployed people aged 16-24 in the city; a youth unemployment rate of 52 per cent.⁶¹ This unemployment problem was also seen to result in a 'culture of pessimism' in inner-city Liverpool. The 'traditional' response to this was 'building an individualist consciousness among youngsters, encouraging them to migrate, work and to break out of their community'.⁶² However, at a conference organised by the project in 1977, alternative ideas were put forward. These included 'teaching kids how to use the spare time they will inevitably have on the dole', and 'teach[ing] young people to change the society in which they live'.⁶³ The 1977 conference was attended by around 50 delegates 'from various professions and agencies', bringing together representatives of local authority social services and the local education authority as well as delegates from voluntary organisations in Liverpool.⁶⁴ Through showing a video to the attendees in which young people expressed their opinions on their generation's job prospects, especially in Liverpool, the project engaged in the established role of voluntary organisations as a conduit between the state and civil society.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ LRO: M367 MYA/M/4/6, Annual report for 1974-75.

⁶⁰ Wild, *Street mates*, pp. 29-31.

⁶¹ Expenditure Committee, *Thirteenth report from the Expenditure committee, sessions 1976-77 and 1977-78: people and work, prospects for jobs and training*, HC 647-iii (London, 1978), p. 775.

⁶² See LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/4, Education and work: the consumers' viewpoint – report of the 'SHARE' conference, March 1977, pp. 8-9.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶⁴ LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/4, Progress report on the work of the detached youth work team, July 1976- August 1977, p. 3.

⁶⁵ LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/4, Education and work: the consumers' viewpoint – report of the 'SHARE' conference, March 1977, pp. 1-5.

Issues of youth unemployment and the culture of pessimism were seen by some voluntary sector workers in Liverpool to manifest in a number of social problems. As one report noted, 'Delinquency, prostitution and drug addiction were commonplace and older teenagers were having extreme difficulty in obtaining employment'.⁶⁶ These 'vices' were therefore presented as a *fait accompli* of poor economic prospects. Through teaching young people to manage the effects of structural unemployment on their everyday lives, the detached youth work project therefore sought to prevent them from engaging in illegal or socially unacceptable practices. Moreover, the detached youth work project was intended to

encourage them [young people] to think more positively about their community in terms of the people within that community and the bricks and mortar of the community. Not to deface walls, not to damage cars, not to harass pensioners through noisy behaviour.⁶⁷

In meeting and supporting young people in their own spaces and on their own terms, therefore, the detached youth work project was intended as an intervention in the social and physical environment of the area as a whole. As this section has shown, well-established voluntary organisations in Liverpool responded to the urban crisis through attempts to intercede in areas of high unemployment, multiple deprivation, and associated social problems. Through this, the voluntary organisations acted to fill gaps in the provision of state social services, identifying people and places which had been left behind by the universalist welfare state.

Community development, c. 1974-82

In the 1970s, the role of voluntary action in intervening in the process of urban decline changed. While the interventions of social and youth workers in people's lives remained important, the advent of 'community development' marked an important shift towards the active attempt by the state to encourage inner-city residents to take an active role in finding solutions to their own problems. In Britain, the most publicised form of community development came through the eponymous projects (Community Development Projects or CDPs).⁶⁸ Peter Shapely has argued that the establishment of the CDPs reflected central

⁶⁶ LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/4, Bill Cox and Judith Wild, Progress report on 'Contact' detached youth work team, June 1975, p. 1.

⁶⁷ LRO: M367 MYA/M/6/1/4, Education and work: the consumers' viewpoint – report of the 'SHARE' conference, March 1977, p. 10.

⁶⁸ The concept of community development was used in colonial governance and internationalist approaches to the 'developing world' after the Second World War to encourage the emergence of civil society in these countries; see Randy Stoecker, 'Community development', in Ray Hutchinson (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies*, vol. 1 (Thousand Oaks, CA, 2009), pp. 176-78. For an example of community development within a colonial context, see Kate Skinner, "It brought some kind of

government's desire 'to find cost effective strategies [to alleviating urban deprivation] through statutory service reforms and by encouraging mutual aid'.⁶⁹ It has also been claimed that the CDPs were established in reaction to the 'social pathology' or 'victim blaming' explanation of poverty, though by the 1970s this explanation had begun to wane, combined with a nascent area-based approach to urban problems.⁷⁰ Community development thus emphasised the preparation of local residents to improve their own lives through residents' organisations and other small interest groups. As one 1974 report stated, the CDPs 'stressed the importance of people themselves becoming responsible and articulate and of local and central government services becoming sensitive and flexible to the needs and demands of inner-City [*sic*] areas'.⁷¹

During its lifetime, the 'experimental' CDP in the Vauxhall area of Liverpool set up a number of bodies including the *Scottie Press* community newspaper, an Information Centre, and a Law Centre all operating out of the People's Centre on Scotland Road.⁷² The People's Centre was an important achievement for community development in Liverpool. Opened in March 1975, its establishment was 'due almost totally to the efforts of local tenants'.⁷³ Within the broader structure of urban governance, the CDPs operated as intermediaries between the central and local state, and urban communities. For example, on the opening of the People's Centre, the CDP team claimed that:

The tenants involved have been fighting for years against the rundown of this area – and intend to supply social facilities (particularly for kids) and work on our own solutions to the problems which the Corpy [Liverpool City Council] and the Government are unwilling or unable to solve.⁷⁴

This interaction of actions taken *by* the community and actions taken *for* the community was the hallmark of the community development approach.

The Vauxhall CDP came to an end in March 1975, but community development continued across Liverpool. In April 1974, Liverpool City Council set up a Community

neatness to mankind": mass literacy, community development and democracy in 1950s Asante', *Africa* 79 (2009), pp. 479-99. Jordanna Bailkin, *The afterlife of empire* (London, 2012), pp. 55-94 shows how Britain's Voluntary Service Overseas organisation was involved in similar efforts.

⁶⁹ Peter Shapely, *Deprivation, state intervention and urban communities in Britain, 1968-79* (Abingdon, 2017), p. 141.

⁷⁰ Judith Green and Ann Chapman, 'The British community development project: lessons for today', *Community Development Journal* 27 (1992), p. 244; and Todd, 'Family welfare and social work in post-war England', pp. 362-87.

⁷¹ LRP: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1, Vauxhall Community Development Project – future: report of the Chief Executive, 22 October 1974, p. 4.

⁷² For an overview of the Vauxhall CDP, see Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?*, pp. 1-13.

⁷³ 'A PEOPLES CENTRE – UNDER OUT CONTROL', *Scottie Press* 49, March 1975, p. 1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Development Committee (CDC) to oversee projects across the city.⁷⁵ In Vauxhall, the CDP's steering group was transformed into the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council (VNC) 'with the object of improving the condition of life of the residents of the Vauxhall District without distinction of sex, race or religious or political opinions'.⁷⁶ The formal conclusion of the CDP altered the structure of urban governance, at least in the Vauxhall area of Liverpool. Without a direct path to central government, the VNC's main role – in addition to providing services and organising campaigns – was to act as an intermediary between the residents of Vauxhall and the local authority. The governance of Vauxhall therefore conformed more closely to that of other areas of the city which exhibited similar problems.

The activities overseen by CDC were varied, but all sought to engender a sense of 'community', and by extension community governance, within a particular area of the city. In the summer of 1973, and then again in 1974, community workers Pete Dodd and Chris Elphick organised festivals in the Granby area of Liverpool.⁷⁷ The 1974 festival ran from 20 July to 1 September. During its six weeks, residents were able to attend a carnival weekend, street theatre performances, clown shows and musical performances across a range of venues, including parks, derelict sites, churches and schools.⁷⁸ A report on the festivals, presented to the CDC, extolled the virtues of community development, arguing that it 'has now become part and parcel of our social terminology'.⁷⁹ As the author of the report's foreword, Rev. Fr. Austin Smith, explained, this was because 'contemporary [man] has decided to state not his privilege but his right to be part of the decision making which [rules] and decides his destiny'.⁸⁰ This staking of a right to be part of the decision-making process was integral to community development. But the manner in which the festival organisers hoped this would come about highlight the novel ideas deployed by some community workers, and the diffuse methods of urban governance in the city. In the case of the Granby Festival, community development, and by extension governance, were to be achieved through 'play'. Play, in this sense, was not confined to the recreational activities of children,

⁷⁵ Details of this committee's work can be found in its minute books; see LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1; 352 MIN/CTY 1/1A; 352 MIN/CTY1/2; 352 MIN/CTY/1/2A; and 352 MIN/CTY/2/1. For a brief overview, see LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/2A, Community development: report of the Chief Executive, c. 1976.

⁷⁶ LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1A, Constitution of Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council, December 1974, p. 1.

⁷⁷ LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1A, Pete Dodd and Chris Elphick, Community celebration, October/November 1974.

⁷⁸ See LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1A, Granby Festival report: report of the Community Development Officer, 25 March 1975; for a full programme, see LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1A, Granby Festival 1974 report, n.d.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Foreword by Rev. Fr. Austin Smith.

⁸⁰ Ibid. N.B. the document's binding and inclusion in a bound collection of reports has meant that some words (included in square brackets) were occluded.

which Krista Cowman has shown was a crucial aspect of working-class sociability.⁸¹ While children's play was a crucial concern at the time, play was also seen as something inventive, creative, and fun, in which adults could participate.⁸² This idea was put forward by the festival's organisers, who argued that 'When everyone plays together, differently but together, that's when we start to regain control of our lives in celebration'.⁸³ While the success of the festival in actually developing community governance was debatable, it was claimed that 'the festival injected new blood into the community spirit of an area, which has serious housing, environment and unemployment problems'.⁸⁴

The Granby Festival, with its emphasis on 'play', demonstrated an idealised form of community development through contact with one's neighbours. In this, there were similarities with the post-war idea of creating communities through spatial planning.⁸⁵ Moreover, community development in the sense discussed here differed from the social and youth work analysed above. While community workers were employed by state and non-state bodies to help build community organisations, it was the local activism of these organisations, rather than the workers themselves, who would raise the social and political capital within a particular urban area.⁸⁶ In this, it was the activity of the local community, i.e. urban residents, which was the key; the role of community development in enacting urban governance was to encourage the self-organisation of urban communities to manage their own problems.

Nevertheless, the Vauxhall CDP and its scions played an additional role in urban governance beyond encouraging the development of community organisations. In December 1972, the CDP, in conjunction with the Liverpool Law Society, established the Vauxhall Community Law Centre. The law centre was provided an annual grant for a three-year period by the CDP to cover much of its running costs, with its first lawyer, a Mr J. Linden, appointed in July 1973.⁸⁷ The role of the law centre included some legal

⁸¹ Krista Cowman, 'Play streets: women, children and the problem of urban traffic, 1930-1970', *Social History* 42 (2017), pp. 233-56.

⁸² See LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/2, Joint working party on play and leisure provision: report and policy recommendations, October 1975.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁴ LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1A, Granby Festival report: report of the Community Development Officer, 25 March 1975; the report also claimed that it was 'difficult at this stage to identify any community enterprise which has occurred as a result of the Festival'.

⁸⁵ See James Greenhalgh, 'Consuming communities: the neighbourhood unit and the role of retail spaces on British housing estates, 1944-1958', *Urban History* 43 (2016), pp. 158-74; and Stefan Couperus, 'Rethinking the "blueprint for living together": community planning and sociology in Coventry, 1940-55', in Harm Kaal and Stefan Couperus (eds), *(Re)Constructing communities in Europe, 1918-1968* (Abingdon, 2017), pp. 45-64.

⁸⁶ Peter A. Hall, 'Social capital in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science* 29 (1999), pp. 417-61.

⁸⁷ LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/2, Vauxhall Law Centre: report of the City Solicitor, 6 January 1976, p. 1.

representation in minor court cases, the provision of legal advice to individuals at the project's Information Centre and to community groups, the referral of more complex cases to specialist legal firms, and what was termed 'poverty law'.⁸⁸ Poverty law, in this case, referred to legal cases covering welfare benefits, social security, and employment tribunals. Here, the law centre's governance role in Liverpool's urban crisis was clear: the legal representation of individuals experiencing many of the social problems laid out in chapter 4. Housing, a persistent problem across urban Britain, was one area in which the law centres caseload continued to expand. The centre handled 143 housing cases in its first year, increasing markedly to 617 in its second.⁸⁹ Cases in this area were varied, with examples cited in a report produced by the Liverpool Law Society including a much-publicised but ultimately unsuccessful dispute over the provision of lifts in high-rise buildings.⁹⁰ The law centre professed to being apolitical, with its governance role limited to the application of the law. Nevertheless, the Vauxhall Law Centre made a point of arguing that 'More, not less, money is needed for expenditure on public housing'.⁹¹ This statement was the result of the centre's experience in housing cases; as the report explained:

we spend so much time and effort on individual problems of disrepair, brought about precisely from a lack of such expenditure. Every moment of time we devote to work of this sort is directed to this end.⁹²

As with social work, individual casework was subsumed within a larger process of urban governance. The law centre dealt with a large number of housing cases in part because there was a dearth of firms specialising in such cases, but this caseload also reflected local need and the nature of referrals from the Vauxhall Information Centre. To an extent the law centre was able to choose the cases it handled, eschewing divorce law in all but one instance.⁹³ Nevertheless, juvenile crime was an area in which the centre actively sought to intervene. Concerned over the power juvenile courts potentially held over the lives of young people, especially in an area marked by high levels of crime, it was declared that 'these are powers which ought to be monitored closely by lawyers'.⁹⁴

Because of their position at the intersection between the state (in their liaison role with the City Council) and civil society (their membership being predominantly composed

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/2, Report of the Liverpool Law Society on the working of Vauxhall Community Law Centre, c. January 1976, p. 1; by its third year of operation, the number of cases handled by the law centre more than doubled again, from 617 to 1319.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 2.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ This involved an emergency injunction in a domestic violence case; *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹⁴ LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1, Report of the Liverpool Law Society on the working of Vauxhall Community Law Centre, c. January 1976, p. 3.

of residents' groups), community councils played a vital role in governance within inner urban areas. Proposals were submitted to the Community Development Committee by Teddy Gold, a youth worker for the Bronte Community Council in Liverpool, in December 1974 to formalise links between the city and community councils through a re-organisation of local government. The proposal, it was suggested, would enable the

needs and aspirations as expressed [to] be met, bearing in mind not merely the needs of one neighbourhood, but also the needs of the City as a whole.⁹⁵

Moreover, it was suggested that such a re-organisation would prevent community and neighbourhood councils from becoming 'somewhat isolated and narrow in their outlook'.⁹⁶ Gold also claimed that, if the formal structure of local government was not changed to include community councils, it would 'discourage further community development and to revert back to the previous situation when all was done "for" the people'.⁹⁷ Community development therefore offered an alternative form of governmentality, emphasising the rule of the people, rather than technocrats. The proposals put forward by Gold would have created a further tier in the structure of local government in the city. This was in addition to the metropolitan Merseyside County Council. The city, Gold suggested, would be divided into districts, each with a District Council. District Councils would bring together adult and youth members of the neighbourhood councils in addition to the ward and metropolitan councillors for that area. In this, the neighbourhood council 'becomes the smallest elected council representing a section of a ward in the City'.⁹⁸ These proposals were never enacted owing to the increased administrative burden that a further tier of local government was thought to bring, but they would have fundamentally altered the role of the community councils and their position within the structure of urban governance.

Established in the 1960s and 1970s, the role of community councils within the system of urban governance was framed by the voluntary action of their members and their own function as a voice for people within their area.⁹⁹ Community councils were founded across urban Britain, to which Liverpool was no exception. In Liverpool, in 1976, there were some 220 voluntary organisations of varying sizes, with the councils comprising a significant mainstay of the local voluntary sector. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that

⁹⁵ LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/1A, Priority area development: neighbourhood and district councils... a challenge by the city to the people, December 1974, Introduction.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Introduction.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

⁹⁹ Examples include Toxteth Community Council, established 1963; Princes Park and Granby Community Council, established 1968; and Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council, established 1974.

'The distribution of community organisations is varied'.¹⁰⁰ As one report put it, 'As a generalisation they are mainly to be found in the areas of local authority or private rented housing in the Inner City, but also increasingly in both the older and new housing areas on the periphery'.¹⁰¹ Given that many residents' groups, of which community councils were composed, were established to campaign for a solution to a particular issue, this preference for community organisations undoubtedly reflected the prevalence of urban problems, especially in housing, within the inner city. It is also indicative of a widespread sense of community, even if this is difficult for the historian to pin down. Within their areas, community councils acted as representatives for a multitude of small residents' and other organisations. They also acted as a 'voice' for the community, advocating for the needs of their area. This can be seen through community newspapers, where they have survived. But as the case of Princes Park and Granby Community Council highlighted, these organisations' advocacy role also saw them directly interceding in the structures of urban governance.

The role of community councils in providing a voice for local concerns can be seen through their responses to particular events. In the aftermath of the 1981 Toxteth 'riots', Princes Park and Granby Community Council submitted a report to the Merseyside Police Committee providing 'constructive criticism' of policing methods in Liverpool 8.¹⁰² In this, the effects of technological change on the policing of particular urban areas – in particular the replacement of the 'bobby on the beat' with a 'de-humanised' force of 'panda' patrol cars, walkie-talkies, and computers – were integral to the community council's critique.¹⁰³ The community council's proposed solution, or 'new philosophy', was that of community policing. Deriding the minimal number of 'Community Liaison Constables' working for Merseyside Police (two to cover an entire division of the force's area), the community council proposed a return to the 'Bobbie on the Beat' in the form of 'Community Constables'. The policy was based in no small part on nostalgia for an imagined past in which police officers were 'more often than not known by name' and 'the caution was mightier than the handcuffs'.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the authors of the report also expressed the idea that every police officer 'needs to realise' that:

Britain is a free society;
Everyone is innocent until proven guilty;

¹⁰⁰ See LRO: 352 MIN/CTY/1/2A, Community development: report of the Chief Executive, 1976, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Princes Park and Granby Community Council, *Community policing: a model for Liverpool 8, a submission to the Merseyside Police Committee working party studying police/community liaison* (Liverpool, 2nd ed., 1981), p. 1. The second edition of this report was dated 28 October 1981; the first edition, published two weeks earlier, is not available in LRO.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

Every person regardless of age, social status, colour, race, religion or sexuality is worthy of equal respect;
Courtesy costs nothing, but can reap dividends;
and that he should react accordingly.¹⁰⁵

In producing and submitting reports criticising the liaison between the police and urban communities, the community council sought to make the actions of an arm of the state accountable. Through this, the report reasoned, policing would once again have the consent of the people.¹⁰⁶ As shown in chapter 4, the experience of racial discrimination played an important role in revitalising black politics in Liverpool. From Princes Park and Granby Community Council's submission to the police authority, we can see how this experience and the 'riots' of 1981 also reanimated local politics. More than simply supplementing the state, community councils also acted in opposition to it in an attempt, as they saw it, to protect their communities against the worst excesses of urban governance.

Community politics, c. 1979-86

Newspapers, including the popular press, have long played an important role in constructing the 'public sphere', as well as facilitating and allowing individuals to participate in public debate.¹⁰⁷ While their reach or popularity did not meet those of the national or local dailies, community councils sought to use their own newspapers in a similar vein. This section focuses on the *Scottie Press*, named after the local epithet for Scotland Road which ran through the project area, to show how VNC used its newspaper to provide a 'voice' for local residents, to campaign and satirise local and national politics.¹⁰⁸ Similar newspapers were established across Liverpool, including the *Toxteth Times* and *Princes Park Granby News*. However, the survival of many of these publications in the archive has been limited.¹⁰⁹ As such, while a complete run of *Scottie Press* has not survived, the availability of an extensive run of the publication in Liverpool Record Office provides an important insight into community politics in the city. *Scottie Press* was established 'to be a local newspaper run by local people, representative of the community, but non-political and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ See Adrian Bingham, 'Ignoring the first draft of history? Searching for the popular press in studies of twentieth-century Britain', *Media History* 18 (2012), pp. 311-26.

¹⁰⁸ The editorial group was established in the autumn of 1970, drawing on 'a fund of technical expertise from some dissatisfied city journalists'; see Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?* p. 62. The newspaper was the idea of a student attached to the Vauxhall CDP team named Ian Hering. He was reported to have driven the project forward, gaining the support of tenants' groups and the city council; see 'The birth of a community newspaper', *Scottie Press* 100, March 1980, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Toxteth Times* Nos. 1-14 (1984-1987); and *Princes Park Granby News* Nos. 1-3 and 5 (1984) can be found in Liverpool Record Office.

non-sectarian'.¹¹⁰ The first issue of *Scottie Press* was published in February 1971, featuring a charged editorial setting out the publication's intention to keep local people

fully informed with what is happening in the area and also what is going to happen. We intend to bring to the notice of the city fathers the difficulties we are faced with and to bring home to them the undeniable fact, that we are entitled, as citizens of Liverpool, to a clean up in our district and a great improvement in the amenities... This is what we want. This is what we are entitled to. This is what we intend to have.¹¹¹

The newspaper's editorial approach prioritised 'local material with local flavour', encouraging Vauxhall residents to write for the newspaper and making minimal corrections to grammar and spelling 'as long as the contribution was understandable'.¹¹² In their final report, the CDP attributed the early success of *Scottie Press* to this approach. The editorial group of *Scottie Press* initially comprised three women and eight men together with the CDP's community worker, who combined their role with other voluntary activities.¹¹³ However, this group was eventually superseded by members of the CDP project team and later still the VNC.¹¹⁴ As such, it represented the community politics of particular groups, rather than of the people of Vauxhall as a whole.

¹¹⁰ Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?* p. 62.

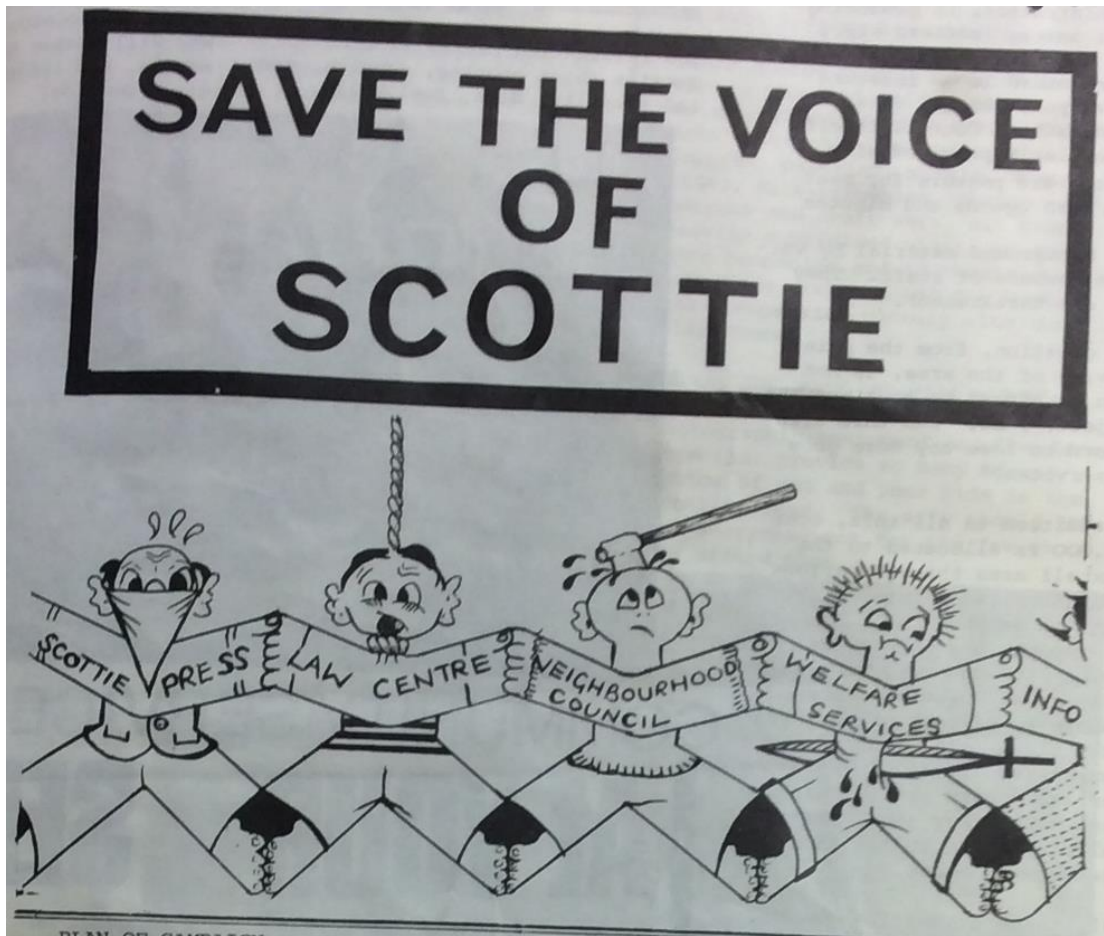
¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ The editorial group comprised: Norah Kelly, Tommy King, Joe Maxwell, Jim Millington, John Mulrooney, Bernie Murphy, Ted Murphy, Eileen Nixon and Ian Hering; see 'The birth of a community newspaper', *Scottie Press* 100, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?*, pp. 65-7.

Figure 5.1: 'Save the voice of Scottie'



Source: *Scottie Press*, emergency issue, September 1979, p. 1.

The VNC, like many voluntary organisations and initiatives in Liverpool, was funded through the Urban Programme. However, with the funding agreement due to end in March 1980, *Scottie Press* sought to publicise the value of community organisations, and the threat posed by their closure. Schemes which, the paper argued, were to be 'terminated' included the Vauxhall Law Centre, social and probation services, play schemes, youth centres, services for the elderly and the disabled, mental health groups, and tenants associations.¹¹⁵ While acknowledging the shortcomings of the CDP and VNC, the editors of *Scottie Press* argued that Vauxhall had reached a crucial moment:

Isn't it true that Vauxhall cannot be stripped of what assets it has left. On the contrary, this is a very important time in Vauxhall. The major changes are planned – the New Inner Ring Road – and the demolition of Walk-Up Flats. A strong community voice is required to speak up and influence any change for the good of the community.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ 'FIGHT ON', *Scottie Press* 92, June 1979, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

A working party was established by the city council to consider which 'time-expired' projects would be considered for renewal under the Urban Programme.¹¹⁷ *Scottie Press* feared that 'in the present atmosphere of "cuts all round"', they would need to mobilise the residents of Vauxhall to save the VNC and its newspaper.¹¹⁸ In September 1979, VNC published a free 'emergency issue' of *Scottie Press*, imploring residents to 'save the voice of Scottie' (see figure 5.1) by signing a petition. The VNC also organised a 'Tape/Slide display of what is under threat', public meetings, and lobbied city councillors and MPs.¹¹⁹ The campaign, however, was not simply about securing funding for the VNC, with the group arguing that the spatialised inequalities which underlay Liverpool's urban crisis meant that central government cuts 'obviously hit areas like ours harder than most because we depend on the services that are already so poor'.¹²⁰ The effect on the community in Vauxhall, it was suggested, would be severe: 'Tenements will go and so will many local residents'; 'Tate's [Tate and Lyle sugar refinery] will be gone'; 'Schools will be closed'; and 'More people on the dole – especially youngsters'.¹²¹ In the four-page emergency issue of *Scottie Press*, the VNC therefore produced stories which suggested that the loss of Urban Programme funding would only worsen the urban crisis in Vauxhall, and Liverpool more generally.

In addition to constructing a narrative of continuous decline, the VNC used its publication to criticise what it saw as its opponents. Citing the support of local pubs, schools, youth clubs, factory-workers, and the district Labour Party, the VNC rebuked three local councillors for their alleged claim to impartiality in the VNC's efforts to secure additional funding under the Urban Programme. The VNC argued that 'Councillors are not supposed to be impartial in [their] own wards – they are meant to act for the people, of the ward [*sic*] and defend services'.¹²² The editors of *Scottie Press* also claimed that the three councillors had produced and distributed a leaflet suggesting that 'workers for the Neighbourhood Council are not answerable to local people'.¹²³ Moreover, they were alleged to have claimed that 'there are many voluntary groups who can work perfectly well without the Neighbourhood Council'.¹²⁴ In response, the leaders of the VNC contended that 'the threat

¹¹⁷ The working group recognised the importance of the services provided by the VNC and proposed that, if funding was not renewed under the urban programme, the services offered by the neighbourhood council be combined and undertaken by the city council's Education Committee; see LRO: 352 MIN/FIN II/23/5, Meeting of the Policy Review and Financial Control sub-committee, 24 October 1979, p. 51.

¹¹⁸ 'Save Scottie', *Scottie Press* 95, September 1979, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ *Scottie Press*, emergency issue, September 1979, p. 1.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ 'SCOTTIE PRESS THREATENED', *Scottie Press*, emergency issue, September 1979, p. 1.

¹²² 'WHO CARES?', *Scottie Press*, emergency issue, September 1979, p. 4.

¹²³ 'STOP PRESS', *Scottie Press* 96, October 1979, p. 1; a copy of this leaflet has not been located.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

to the grant [was] a CUT on services provided to the area'.¹²⁵ As this episode suggests, while community development was a policy aim of successive local and national government initiatives, interactions between community organisations and local government were at times fraught. This was especially the case as the VNC saw itself as a vital conduit for local concerns.

On 16 January 1980, the future of the VNC was secured with funding approved by the city council.¹²⁶ With councillors' support for the 'concept of the projects', the VNC maintained control over its activities.¹²⁷ Further funding was announced in March 1980 from the Liverpool Inner City Partnership.¹²⁸ However, as the VNC acknowledged, it was not the only project threatened with the expiration of its time-limited funding. In a report published in July 1980, the Liverpool Council for Voluntary Service (LCVS) highlighted the risk to 'quality of life' in the city, explaining that 'Our problems of unemployment, urban deprivation and decay hardly need exposition here and, even with the existing level of provision, people are missed out and left wanting'.¹²⁹ As the LCVS explained, the policy of limiting the time for which projects were funded was reflected in the idea that 'projects would end naturally, their work done, and others which proved their value would be absorbed by local authorities as part of the normal programme of work'.¹³⁰ However, it was claimed that 'The STOP-GO arrangements for Urban Aid funding cause serious damage'.¹³¹ In making this argument, the LCVS suggested that Liverpool's urban crisis was endemic; ameliorative voluntary sector interventions, whatever form they took, should not be time-limited if they were to have any effect.

The LCVS set out the rationale for continuing to fund 32 'time-expired' projects, including their use of formerly- or otherwise vacant buildings and the expertise which the projects had established.¹³² At the base of this, however, was the assertion that the groups 'are a contribution to Liverpool's problems from the people themselves and, because of that, are likely to satisfy the area's needs'.¹³³ The fight against local government spending cuts

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ LRO: 352 MIN/FIN II/23/5, Meeting of the Policy Review and Financial Control sub-committee, 16 January 1980, p. 95.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ The Inner City Partnership contributed £135,000 and the city council £45,000; see 'SAVED!', *Scottie Press* 101, April 1980, p. 1.

¹²⁹ Liverpool Council for Voluntary Service, *Urban aid projects in Liverpool: quality of life at risk* (Liverpool, 1980), p. 1.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 3-5.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 5.

was an important one for voluntary organisations.¹³⁴ However, without their own established newspapers, many groups and projects – including the Women and Children's Aid Centre, the Merseyside Play Action Council, and the West Everton Legal Advice service – relied on the LCVS to represent their interests in the face of funding cuts.¹³⁵ That these projects had not achieved their original aims by the end of their funding agreement reflected the depth of the problems with which they were established to deal. Moreover, the problems faced by communities evolved over time. This was clearly demonstrated through campaigns run by the VNC in the early 1980s.

The activism of the VNC was firmly rooted in Liverpool's urban crisis. As previous chapters have shown, the redevelopment of Vauxhall hastened the decline of the area's population and left it blighted.¹³⁶ *Scottie Press* therefore became a medium through which campaigns could be launched or publicised to protest planned changes which residents felt could worsen conditions in the area. This included the threat of closure to wash houses and public baths in the area in the summer of 1980. With residents professing their inability to afford washing machines of their own, the provision of these public facilities was an important issue in terms of the social welfare of a deprived area.¹³⁷ The partial demolition of an old fire station was also cause for complaint. The VNC contended that the derelict site posed a danger to children in the area, citing the potential collapse of the building's remaining walls and the site's location next to the canal. The response to this complaint from the city council, as reported in *Scottie Press*, was that 'if the so-called kids who are playing on the site are injured or killed, it would be their own fault'.¹³⁸ While the veracity of this response is unclear, the VNC was active in responding to issues within its area which, as this thesis has shown, were inexorably bound to Liverpool's urban crisis.

Housing was a vital issue for the VNC. As Peter Shapely has shown, rising tenant anger against the housing policies of Manchester City Council contributed to a surge in community action from the mid-1960s.¹³⁹ By the late 1970s, the problem of managing the council housing stock in that city were compounded by de-industrialisation, rising unemployment, and rising levels of crime.¹⁴⁰ One important focus of *Scottie Press* and the VNC was on rent increases in council housing. Increasing rents in an area with high levels

¹³⁴ For example, see *Scottie Press* 97, November 1979, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁵ A full list of the 32 projects due to time-expire on 31 March 1981 can be found in the appendix to the LCVS report.

¹³⁶ Topping and Smith, *Government against poverty?* pp. 20-23.

¹³⁷ 'BATTLE FOR BATHS!', *Scottie Press* 104, July 1980, p. 1.

¹³⁸ 'DANGER, city surveyor at work', *Scottie Press* 107, September 1980, p. 3.

¹³⁹ Peter Shapely, *The politics of housing: power, consumers and urban culture* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 157-79.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-209.

of deprivation was repeatedly criticised by the VNC.¹⁴¹ The poor state of the physical environment was also leveraged as a justification for restricting rent increases in Vauxhall. In an open letter to the Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council, published in *Scottie Press* in November 1980, Joe Morgan, a city councillor, argued that 'No allowance of [*sic*] this run down area has ever been made in the last few years when assessing rent and rate increases'.¹⁴² In fact, Morgan questioned how parents could 'be expected to educate and bring up their children to be responsible citizens in such an environment when the head teacher in the lesson of vandalism and destruction appears to be the Corporation'.¹⁴³ In January 1981, *Scottie Press* published the views of several residents on its front page in an attempt to highlight the issue of rent increases. The reason for tenants' dismay was familiar; as Dora Evans stated: 'It's ridiculous, you wouldn't mind so much if the repairs got done, but there's no chance of that'.¹⁴⁴ Or, as the editorial staff put it:

I wonder how Mrs. Thatcher would fancy doing Dennis [*sic*] and Mark's tea in Portland Gardens with the ceiling falling in or constant dripping taps, leaking pipes and draughty ill fitting [*sic*] doors and window frames which local residents are forced to accept as a fact of life.¹⁴⁵

Within the context of Liverpool's urban crisis, the everyday travails of living in poor council housing in particular became an important locus for community action. As such, the neighbourhood council sought to intervene in a problem over which its role as intercessor between the local authority and the area's residents might have afforded it some influence.

Through its newspaper, the VNC constructed Vauxhall as an area of social and economic crisis. In a 1980 issue of *Scottie Press*, letters written by two unnamed men were published under the headline 'Redundancy Kills'.¹⁴⁶ Emphasising the economic and cultural impact on dock workers of containerisation and modernisation, one of the letters stated plainly:

We who work on the Liverpool Docks should make it clear that we too are prepared to defend our jobs. It's no use the union ringing it's [*sic*] hands pleading progress, progress for who? Not for those left behind to suffer for it.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ In one case, a 1972 freeze in council housing rent increases in deprived areas was cited as evidence of the further injustice of proposals which, the VNC reasoned, would have seen rates reduced by a penny as part of a 'community politics gimmick' with the cost offset by an increase in rents across the whole city; see '300 TENANTS MARCH', *Scottie Press* 53, July 1974, p. 1.

¹⁴² 'Letter to A. J. Stocks, 18 October 1980', *Scottie Press* 108, November 1980, p. 2.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ 'NO RENT RISES!', *Scottie Press* 110, January 1981, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ 'Redundancy Kills', *Scottie Press* 100, March 1980, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The availability of jobs was therefore a crucial concern for people in Vauxhall. As one of the main employers in the area, this concern was located around the long-threatened closure of the Tate and Lyle sugar refinery in the early 1980s.¹⁴⁸ In July 1980, Tate and Lyle announced that 81 workers would be offered redundancy. While this was described as an attempt 'to get rid of bad timekeepers', the editors of *Scottie Press* contended that this was part of a slow run-down of the refinery: 'In 1954, 8,000 people worked there. In 1980 there [were] 1,525. What will it be in 1990?'¹⁴⁹ By January 1981, the threat of Tate and Lyle's closure had increased. The risk to Vauxhall, the VNC argued, was greater than 1,600 jobs being lost.¹⁵⁰ As an editorial in *Scottie Press* suggested, the effects of Tate and Lyle's closure were 'too catastrophic to contemplate'.¹⁵¹

In articulating their case against the plant's closure, the editors of *Scottie Press* played on the politics of the urban crisis, suggesting that this single refinery was all that stood between Vauxhall and complete ruin, arguing in January 1981 that 'Whole families, indeed a whole community will be destroyed. Vauxhall will have no future at all'.¹⁵² As the coverage of the closure of Tate and Lyle's closure in the *Scottie Press* indicates, the VNC sought to leverage Vauxhall's position as a deprived and blighted area of the city as part of its piecemeal efforts to resist job losses. On top of its various campaigns to influence local government policy, the VNC therefore sought to use its publication to push for jobs to be saved and deployed Mr Cube, Tate and Lyle's mascot (see figure 5.2), to castigate the company.¹⁵³ Through the community newspaper, therefore, we can reconstruct the variegated activities of community groups in articulating the needs of particular urban areas. But it is also possible to see how these same groups constructed a narrative of urban decline within their local area. When, three months later, Tate and Lyle closed, the VNC argued that jobs in Vauxhall had been 'sacrificed on the altar of profit'.¹⁵⁴ *Scottie Press* therefore shows how the local community group constructed a narrative of urban crisis in Vauxhall which focused on the role of external actors – in this case a multinational company – in hastening the area's decline.

¹⁴⁸ This closure had been long-threatened; see Wilson and Womersley, *Change or Decay*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁹ Is this the END of.. [sic]', *Scottie Press* 104, July 1980, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ 'UNITE AND FIGHT!' *Scottie Press* 110, January 1981, p. 1.

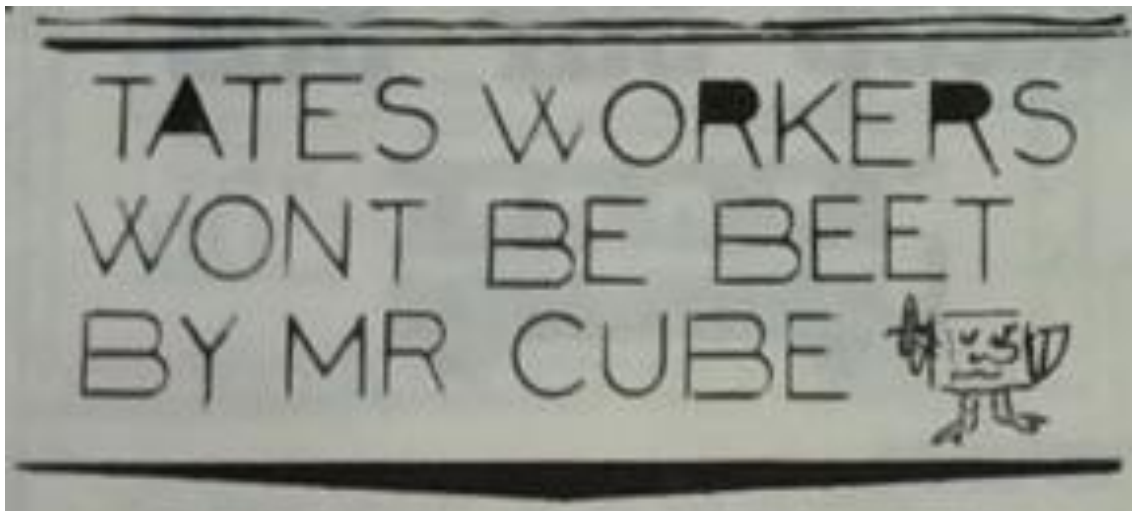
¹⁵¹ Leader, 'TATES MUST NOT CLOSE!' *Scottie Press* 110, January 1981, p. 2.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ See Anthony Hughill, *Sugar and all that: a history of Tate & Lyle* (London, 1978), pp. 145-73; and Ron Noon, 'Goodbye, Mr Cube', *History Today*, 10 October 2001 <<http://www.historytoday.com/ron-noon/goodbye-mr-cube>> [accessed 28 August 2017].

¹⁵⁴ '2,600 JOBS DOWN THE ROAD', *Scottie Press* 112, April 1981, p. 1.

Figure 5.2: Tate and Lyle's Mr Cube



Source: *Scottie Press* 110, January 1981, p. 3.

Conclusion

After 1945, successive British governments developed an extensive, universalist welfare state. However, with the 'rediscovery of poverty' in the 1960s, it became increasingly apparent that there were gaps in welfare state provision. As this chapter has shown, voluntary organisations acted to fill the gaps in welfare state provision in Liverpool. This intervention was variegated, but ranged from voluntary organisations' more 'traditional' role as social and care workers to experimental projects which saw youth workers take to the streets to meet, educate, and counsel young, unemployed people. While Liverpool had a long tradition of voluntary action, going back to the nineteenth century, the role of voluntary organisations in the provision of welfare services and urban governance became more important from the late 1960s as the city's urban crisis intensified.

This increasingly vital role was demonstrated through the advent of 'community development' in the late 1960s, which also marked a shift away from voluntary organisations acting simply as philanthropic benefactors of the urban poor. Community development largely focused on inner-city areas to encourage communities and people to play a greater role in solving the problems they faced. While this has been linked to a 'victim-blaming approach to urban deprivation, community development was vital in raising the political and social capital of particular urban communities.¹⁵⁵ This social capital was important. As Robert Putnam argued in his writing on the 'collapse' of American community, the 'very real costs' of weakened social capital were reflected in 'the degradation of our

¹⁵⁵ Hall, 'Social capital in Britain', pp. 417-18.

public life'.¹⁵⁶ For Putnam, (re-)creating social capital 'would be eased by a palpable national crisis, like war or depression or natural disaster'.¹⁵⁷ As this chapter has shown, however, the urban crisis in Liverpool facilitated the reaffirmation of social capital. This was most clearly demonstrated by the political activism of community groups. This political activism went beyond the conduit role, through which voluntary organisations acted to bridge the divide between the state and the individual or urban neighbourhood. Rather, as the stories published in the *Scottie Press* newspaper show, these groups also constructed a narrative of urban crisis – based on real events – through which they could advocate for the needs of their area and their constituency. As the final chapter shows, Liverpool City Council engaged in a similar process of narrative construction between 1983 and 1986 during its prolonged budget disputes with Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government.

¹⁵⁶ Robert Putnam, *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community* (New York, NY, 2000), pp. 402-3.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Chapter 6

'In Defence of Jobs and Services': Militant Tendency and the Politics of the Urban Crisis, 1983-86

Introduction

The victory of the Liverpool District Labour Party (LDLP) over the Liberals in the local election on 5 May 1983 was a watershed moment in the political history of the city. Prior to the 1970s, the Conservative Party, and the Tory Party before it, had been the dominant political force in the city from the mid-eighteenth century. John Belchem even described Liverpool as 'a veritable stronghold of popular Toryism for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.¹ As David Jeffrey has shown, the Conservatives' electoral success continued until 1973 when the Liberal party managed to wrest control of the city council in a 'surprising' local election victory. This dramatic shift, Jeffrey argued, was the result of a number of factors including dissatisfaction with the Heath government and the operation of local party machines.² But the importance of the LDLP's electoral victory in 1983 went beyond cultures of party political support. As this chapter shows, Labour's victory in Liverpool represented the apex of the urban crisis. The high-profile budget dispute between the city council and Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government from 1983 to 1986 threatened to dismantle the delicate relationship between central government, the local authority, and the people of the city.³

The second momentous political shift in Liverpool during the 1970s and 1980s occurred within the LDLP. The local party, for a generation after 1945, had been dominated by a closed political machinery around leading figures Jack and Elizabeth 'Bessie' Braddock.⁴ This closed party structure contributed to a 'traditionally low [level of] working-class political activity' in the city which, John Callaghan has argued, allowed supporters of the Trotskyite group known as Militant Tendency to infiltrate the LDLP machinery in the

¹ John Belchem, *Merseypride: essays in Liverpool exceptionalism* (Liverpool, 2006), p. 155.

² David Jeffrey, 'The strange death of Tory Liverpool: Conservative electoral decline in Liverpool, 1945-1996', *British Politics* 12 (2017), pp. 386-407.

³ Michael Parkinson, *Liverpool on the brink: one city's struggle against government cuts* (Hermitage, 1985).

⁴ Jack Braddock was leader of the city council (1955-61 and 1963-7) while Bessie Braddock served as MP for Liverpool Exchange (1945-70). Liverpool at this time have been noted for the prevalence of 'boss politics' across all parties; see Jeffrey, 'Strange death of Tory Liverpool', pp. 400-401.

1970s.⁵ Simply by turning up to local party meetings, a tactic known as ‘entryism’, Militant supporters were able to gain prominent positions within what had been a closed party structure.⁶

Labour’s electoral victory in 1983 followed a local political dispute over education. In 1981, the Department of Education had recommended the closure of several comprehensive schools owing to the long-term decline in the city’s population.⁷ As Derek Hatton, Deputy Leader of Liverpool City Council (1983-85) and an affiliate of the Militant Tendency group, wrote in his autobiography, this campaign to save schools from closure enabled the LDLP, and by extension Militant, to expand its reach in the city.⁸ The campaign to prevent the closure of comprehensive schools in the city provided an immediate stimulus for Labour’s political renewal, and showed how the LDLP’s political activities at this time were framed by promises to protect local government services. In fact, Militant’s control of the city council has been seen as a major act of civic empowerment, with a number of laudable achievements including its house-building programme, investments in schools, and in creating jobs.⁹

But even as other Labour-led local authorities in cities across England moved to the left in the early 1980s, the politics of Militant-dominated Liverpool City Council represented a significant challenge to the authority of the leadership of the British Labour Party.¹⁰ What

⁵ John Callaghan, *British Trotskyism: theory and practice* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 168-9.

⁶ Militant Tendency was formally established as the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL) in 1964, declaring itself to be the British section of the Trotskyite Fourth International. The RSL’s stated goal was ‘to win the leadership of the working class for the establishment of a workers’ government in Britain and in collaboration with the World working and toiling masses to abolish classes and build a World Socialist order of society’; see Modern Record Centre, University of Warwick (MRC): 601/C/1/1, Constitution of the Revolutionary Socialist League, 1964. Its tactic of entryism (also spelled entrism) was set out in a document published by the group; see MRC: 601/R/24/63b, Entrism, 1973.

⁷ See Diane Frost and Peter North, *Militant Liverpool: a city on the edge* (Liverpool, 2013), p. 53.

⁸ Derek Hatton, *Inside left: the story so far...* (London, 1988), pp. 45-55. The terms ‘affiliate’ ‘supporter’ have been used as, technically, Militant did not have ‘members’. On the difficulties of identifying the membership of Militant, see Martin Pugh, *Speak for Britain! A new history of the Labour Party* (London, 2010), p. 369.

⁹ The achievements of the city council during this period have been noted in Brian Marren, *We shall not be moved: how Liverpool’s working class fought redundancies, closures and cuts in the age of Thatcher* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 144-76; especially pp. 171-2. However, the list referenced by Marren is based on a website established by Militant-supporting members of the city council without much critical treatment.

¹⁰ See Daisy Payling, “‘Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire’: grassroots activism and left-wing solidarity in 1980s Sheffield”, *Twentieth Century British History* 25 (2014), pp. 602-27; and Stephen Brooke, ‘Space, emotions and the everyday: the affective ecology of 1980s London’, *Twentieth Century British History* 28 (2017), pp. 110-42. However, it should be noted that Militant differed from these groups in eschewing identity politics, maintaining ‘class’ as its central category of analysis. The result of this was a public dispute between the city council and the Liverpool Black Caucus over the appointment of race relations officials; see Liverpool Black Caucus, *The racial politics of Militant in*

most marked the period 1983-86, however, was the dispute between central and local government over cuts to local authority budgets and the policy of rate-capping. This chapter takes as its focus the budget dispute, showing how disagreement was framed by the urban crisis. The city council sought to defend its spending programme, arguing that it was the only way to protect jobs and services in the city. Meanwhile, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government sought to maintain control over what it saw as reckless spending. The dispute, therefore, was as much about political ideology as it was the practicalities of governing a city suffering from the effects of social, economic, and physical decline.

Jobs, services, and local government spending, 1983-84

The general and local elections of 1983 facilitated a high-profile dispute over local government spending in Liverpool. The LDLP won the May 1983 local election on a platform of increasing city council spending to defend jobs and services in Liverpool.¹¹ Enacting these spending plans would require additional public sector borrowing or an increase in central government grants because, as Derek Hatton later claimed, 'the simple truth was that the city just didn't have enough money'.¹² The next month, Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives won a second term with a manifesto promise to 'curb excessive and irresponsible rate increases by high-spending councils, and to provide a general scheme for [the] limitation of rate increases for all local authorities to be used if necessary'.¹³ In August 1983, the Department of the Environment published a white paper outlining central government's plans for the reform of the rating system. The 'most important reform' set out in the paper was the planned legislation 'to curb excessive rate increases by individual local authorities, and [provide] a general power, to be used if necessary, for the limitation of rate increases for all authorities'.¹⁴ While acknowledging the importance of local taxation in the provision of services, especially to the private sector, the white paper was a step towards the replacement of the rating system during the 1980s.¹⁵ In fact, the white paper appeared to

Liverpool: the black community's struggle for participation in local politics 1980-1986 (Liverpool, 1986). Also see Michael Crick, *Militant* (London, 1984), p. 77.

¹¹ Frost and North, *Militant Liverpool*, pp. 53-62.

¹² Hatton, *Inside left*, p. 76. Also see Michael Parkinson, 'Liverpool's fiscal crisis: an anatomy of failure' in Michael Parkinson, Bernard Foley and Dennis Rudd (eds), *Regenerating the cities: the UK crisis and the US experience* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 110-27.

¹³ 'Conservative Party general election manifesto 1983', *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, n.d. <<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110859>> [accessed 2 September 2017]; also see The National Archives, London (TNA): PREM 19/1082, Rate limitation legislation, 29 June 1983, p. 1.

¹⁴ Cmnd. 9008, *Rates: proposals for rate limitation and reform of the rating system* (London, 1983), p. 1.

¹⁵ David Butler, Andrew Adonis and Tony Travers, *Failure in British government: the politics of the poll tax* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 5-8.

suggest that the reform of the rating system was driven, among other concerns, by the requirements of the private sector:

[The Government] recognise that the health of the private sector depends on the provision of efficient and effective services by local government; but the economic regeneration of the country cannot be secured if the cost of local government is too great a burden for the private sector to carry.¹⁶

Clearly, central government policy had been conceived with its own political goals in mind, in this case private sector-led economic regeneration. The proposal to further limit local government spending – building on powers already granted to central government through the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 and Local Government Finance Act 1982 – was controversial, even for some Conservative-run local authorities.¹⁷ Nevertheless, with central and local government newly-mandated to carry out their policies, the stage was set.

The direct confrontation between central and local government began on 29 March 1984 when the city council held an extra-ordinary meeting to approve a new budget for the 1984/85 fiscal year.¹⁸ Approved by the Performance Review and Financial Control sub-committee three days earlier, the budget as proposed would have broken the limits placed by central government on local authority spending.¹⁹ This budget proposed expenditure of £269 million for the 1984-85 financial year, against the government's target of reducing the city's expenditure to £216.1 million.²⁰ In order to finance the budget, which also included a deficit of £34 million carried over from the previous year, the council would have to increase rates by 175 per cent. The council, however, proposed a rate increase of 9 per cent, demanding that central government pay the excess. The budget was therefore illegal under the terms of the new legislation.²¹ The Labour group on the city council argued that the increased expenditure was vital to 'defend and improve jobs and services'.²² However, it was the view of central government that much of this proposed expenditure was wasteful. As one civil service advice note argued,

¹⁶ Cmnd. 9008, *Rates*, p. 2.

¹⁷ David Walker, 'Rate controls rejected by Conservative councils', *The Times*, 15 September 1983, p. 4; also see TNA: PREM 19/1082, Rate limitation legislation, 29 June 1983, p. 9.

¹⁸ Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Central Office (LRO): 352 MIN/COU II/96, Minutes of an extra-ordinary meeting of the city council, 29 March 1984, pp. 518-34.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 521; also see LRO: 352 MIN/FIN II/23/9; 352 MIN/FIN II/23/9A; and 352 MIN/FIN II/23/9B.

²⁰ TNA: PREM 19/1614, Background note, c. April 1984, p. 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² See LRO: Acc 6204/100/2, *Liverpool News*, c. January 1984. N.B. This was the first issue of *Liverpool News*, a news publication produced by the city council to 'report news and information to which you [residents] are entitled or need to know'.

It is clearly possible to reduce the expenditure of the Council... by greater efficiency, cutting increases in expenditure (the Labour Group propose for instance a £8 million decorative allowance for Council tenants, a veiled method of reducing rents) and better financial management.²³

Not only was the budget deemed wasteful, it was also cast as illogical. As the same advice note contended 'For each £5 million that the City Council can reduce its expenditure it gains an extra £10 million in Rate Support Grant'.²⁴ This initial phase was therefore stimulated by fundamental disagreement as to how to provide the resources the city needed.

Opposition to the proposed budget also came from within the city council, as local politicians warned that the budget risked destroying, rather than protecting, jobs and services. At the March 1984 meeting of the city council, the budget was strongly criticised by Sir Trevor Jones, leader of the Liberal group and former Leader of the City Council. Jones proposed an amendment stating that 'the people of Liverpool are caught in a relentless battle between the militant left, led by Derek Hatton, and the militant right, led by Margaret Thatcher'.²⁵ In criticising Labour's leadership of the council, he offered a robust defence of the Liberal legacy and sought to replace the budget. Jones put forward a draft budget of £210.6 million, with a rate increase of between 15 and 30 per cent based on whether penalties would be applied by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Patrick Jenkin.²⁶ The Liberal amendment was rejected in a vote of the city council, but the opposition was supported by a group of six Labour rebels, including Eddie Roderick, a former leader of the LDLP.²⁷ This opposition to the budget was driven by the spectre of 'the immediate loss of thousands of jobs in the City'.²⁸ But some city councillors were also concerned by the increasing political polarisation between the hard left and new right as shown through Liverpool's disputed budget.

Leading figures within the LDLP sought to use the municipal newspaper to organise demonstrations and gain support for the city council. As John Hamilton, Leader of the City Council and LDLP, but not an affiliate of Militant, wrote in an editorial published in *Liverpool News*:

²³ TNA: PREM 19/1614, Background note, 1984, p. 1.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ LRO: 352 MIN/COU II/96, Minutes of a meeting of the city council, 29 March 1984, p. 522.

²⁶ Ibid., amendment by Trevor Jones, pp. 524-6.

²⁷ The *Liverpool Echo* reported that the six Labour councillors who had voted against the budget had to be driven away from the town hall in a police van, escorted by Special Branch officers; see *Liverpool Echo*, 30 March 1984, p. 6.

²⁸ LRO: 352 MIN/COU II/96, Minutes of a meeting of the city council, amendment by C. G. Hallows, 29 March 1984, p. 527.

To read the papers you would think the City Council is confronting the Government. It is the Government that is confronting the people and workers of Liverpool. We are being asked to make a choice between:

- Sacking up to 5,000 of the Council's workforce and drastically cutting services.
- Levying a 200% rate increase to carry out our manifesto promises on jobs and services.

WE WILL DO NEITHER – such actions would be a betrayal of the electorate.²⁹

Hamilton ended by saying to the city's residents: 'You can show your support by demonstrating and lobbying the Council on March 29th – the Budget Day'.³⁰ *Liverpool News* was a controversial publication. Established by the city council, and published using council funds at the beginning of 1984, it was intended to be 'a civic bulletin to be sent to every householder in the City highlighting the situation facing the City'.³¹ As chair of the city council's communications sub-committee, Derek Hatton, along with his Militant-supporting deputy, Paul Luckock, were given 'powers to determine the content of the bulletin and to approve arrangements for its printing and distribution'.³² Through this, the council was able to distribute information on its budget policy, and its story of how and why the dispute had arisen, through people's letterboxes across Liverpool.³³

After a further failed attempt to pass a budget on 25 April 1984, a decision was delayed until after the local elections on 3 May.³⁴ In the meantime, central government remained focused on the potential effects of a default by Liverpool City Council on the £32 million of debt which was due to be repaid in May 1984.³⁵ While one Treasury civil servant noted that the Liverpool City Treasurer had 'for a considerable time anticipated disruption to his cash flow and taken precautionary measures in advance', financial markets were described as 'jittery'.³⁶ Moreover, it was claimed that 'a number of lenders' were only willing to lend to Conservative-controlled local authorities.³⁷ The threat to the ability of local

²⁹ LRO: Acc 6204/100/2, John Hamilton, 'Jobs and services... ALL OUT FOR MARCH 29TH', *Liverpool News*, March 1984, p. 1.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ LRO: 352 MIN/FIN II/23/9, Minutes of a meeting of the communications sub-committee, 28 October 1983, pp. 1-2.

³² Ibid. In addition to the coverage of the budget dispute, *Liverpool News* carried information on council services, reports on the problems with which the city was faced, and how the city council was working to deal with them.

³³ However, the publication was criticised by the Liberal opposition for carrying 'biased political propaganda'; see LRO: 352 MIN/COU II/97, Minutes of a meeting of the city council, 14 November 1984. The councillors who criticised the publication stated that it should be used for 'factual information', citing the need to check with the planning department before erecting stone cladding as an example.

³⁴ LRO: 352 MIN/COU II/96, Minutes of a meeting of the city council, 24 April 1984, pp. 584-603.

³⁵ TNA: T 517/686, Robert Culpin, The local authority market and Liverpool, April 1984, p. 1.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

authorities across the United Kingdom to raise funds through borrowing was articulated as a 'risk of contagion'.³⁸ As the Treasury official, Robert Culpin, wrote in an April 1984 memorandum,

The first and perhaps obvious point to stress is that, if Liverpool were to default on market debt, then we shall never again be able to say that no local authority has ever defaulted. It is on this proud boast, amongst other things, that the creditworthiness and the homogeneity of the local authority sector has rested and the market's perception of the sector would be changed for all time.³⁹

In a discussion on the day of the elections, Tim Lankester and John Redwood of the Downing Street Policy Unit expressed particular disquiet over the possible effects of Liverpool defaulting on its debts. In such a situation, the two agreed with Culpin that there would likely be 'widespread market effects – including a possible hiatus of lending in the short run and tiering of rates over the longer term'.⁴⁰ This 'tiering' would have seen a divergence in the interest rates paid by different local authorities. While recognising these problems, Redwood was of the opinion that the increased cost of local authority borrowing 'was more than outweighed' by 'the extra discipline which would be imposed upon spendthrift authorities'.⁴¹ In spite of this, it is clear that the budget dispute in Liverpool was seen to threaten the financial basis of local government across the whole of Britain.

The local elections held on 3 May 1984 bolstered the LDLP's political position, as well as the confidence with which it engaged in the dispute with central government. With the LDLP's majority increased by seven seats, the power of the six rebels who had voted against the budget was diminished. The enhanced confidence with which the city council pushed its position was most clearly demonstrated through its use of the municipal newspaper, as *Liverpool News* carried the headline: 'In Liverpool on May 3rd... THE PEOPLE DECIDED... Now the Government must respond'.⁴² In spite of this apparent confidence, the city council needed money to carry on operating services. While the city council did not set a rate, *Liverpool News* carried a notice asking that 'Since the rate for 1984-85 will not be less than that for 1983-84 you may wish at this stage to consider paying an amount similar to that paid by you in 1983-84'.⁴³ After the May local election, the city council therefore moved to shore up its position by publicising what it argued was a mandate from the people. Moreover, in asking that Liverpool residents continue to pay their rates at the same level as

³⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ TNA: T 517/686, Liverpool and local authority creditworthiness, 4 May 1984, p. 1.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² LRO: Acc 6204/100/2, *Liverpool News*, June 1984, p. 1.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 1.

the previous year, the Labour council effectively set a rate in line with its budget proposal. This tactic ensured that it could continue to finance its funding commitments, thereby prolonging the dispute.

The first phase of Liverpool's budget crisis drew to a close on 11 July 1984, when the city council held another extra-ordinary meeting.⁴⁴ In the weeks leading up to the meeting, Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment from July 1983 to September 1985, had visited Liverpool and met with a number of city councillors, along with the Members of Parliament for Copeland (Jack Cunningham, Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment), Blackburn (Jack Straw), and Liverpool Walton (Eric Heffer, a prominent defender of Militant).⁴⁵ A draft report of this meeting, to be sent to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, suggested that 'The Councillors said they intended to make their budget decision at the council meeting on 11 July, and appeared genuinely to try to make a proper rate'.⁴⁶ On 9 July, Jenkin visited Liverpool again to assess the housing situation, and made a promise of £20 million, a policy dismissed in an editorial in *The Times* as 'danegeld' (a tax levied in Anglo-Saxon England to pay off Danish invaders).⁴⁷ Nevertheless, in presenting a new budget totalling around £231 million to the city council, John Hamilton continued to push the case for additional funding, citing the scale of Liverpool's problems.⁴⁸ Hamilton claimed that 'In spite of the industrial, economic and social decline which has taken place, necessary resources have been withdrawn'.⁴⁹ Each side claimed to have won the dispute. The city council published a special edition of *Liverpool News* which simply declared 'VICTORY FOR THE CITY'.⁵⁰ Patrick Jenkin, seeking to avoid the perception of a climb-down on the part of the government, informed the House of Commons that Liverpool 'remains subject to exactly the same rules as every other local authority in England'.⁵¹

The rate-capping rebellion, 1984-86

Even as each side claimed victory, the city council began to prepare its campaign for the 1985/86 budget. On 28 September 1984, the Policy and Finance Committee approved the

⁴⁴ LRO: 352 MIN/COU II/97, Minutes of a meeting of the city council, 11 July 1984, pp. 93-103.

⁴⁵ TNA: AT 44/407/1, Draft minute for the Secretary of State to send to the Prime Minister, 20 June 1984.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Leader, *The Times*, 11 July 1984, p. 11; 'Danegeld', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (7 February 2007), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Danegeld/> [accessed 23 February 2017].

⁴⁸ This included a rate increase of 9 per cent; see TNA: PREM 19/1562, Liverpool budget options: 1985-86, n.d.; and LRO: 352 MIN/COU II/97, Minutes of a meeting of the city council, 11 July 1984, especially pp. 94-95.

⁴⁹ Hamilton cited a total of £262 million which had been 'stolen'; *ibid.*, p. 95.

⁵⁰ LRO: Acc 6204/100/2, 'VICTORY FOR THE CITY', *Liverpool News*, July 1984, p. 1.

⁵¹ HC Debate, 11 July 1984, vol. 63, c. 1023.

printing of a new booklet.⁵² Entitled *Campaigning for Jobs and Services*, the glossy booklet purported to tell the story of Liverpool's budget crisis and was distributed to Labour-led councils across Britain. Writing in the foreword, the Leader of the City Council, John Hamilton, claimed that central government policy would lead to the

abolition of local government and central control of all expenditure and decisions. Local initiatives would be stifled [*sic*] and a rigid monolithic nationally directed approach would quickly develop.⁵³

In his plea for a national fight against this threatened erosion of local government, Hamilton stated that

We must be determined and bold and we must have the courage to stand up and fight for those people who turn to the local authorities for help – the needy, the depressed, the people with social problems. Let us fight to preserve the basic standards of education, housing and welfare services and let those who want to destroy those services be seen as the vandals they are.⁵⁴

Finishing with a plea to 'build a renewed and strengthened society based on the concepts of the Welfare State and Socialism', Hamilton articulated the city council's fight as one to defend local government itself as well as the spending plans of his administration.⁵⁵ However, in linking the budget dispute directly to 'the needy, the depressed, the people with social problems', Hamilton's call both fed into, and drew from, the discourses of urban crisis in Liverpool.⁵⁶

The city council's deputy leader, Derek Hatton, supported Hamilton's framing of the budget dispute within the urban crisis, reasoning that 'Liverpool needs better Council services to deal with the City's economic crisis, mass unemployment and widespread poverty'.⁵⁷ More than simply articulating a need for more funding, however, Hatton rebuked the Conservative government's fiscal policies by claiming that the cut to the Rate Support Grant had 'deprived' Liverpool of £120 million over five years. He also claimed that Liverpool had been disproportionately targeted, especially when compared to Manchester City Council's increased budget, and that funding provided through the Urban Programme and Inner City Partnership schemes was 'totally inadequate' to meet the city's needs.⁵⁸

⁵² LRO: MIN/FIN II/1/147, Minutes of a meeting of the Policy and Finance committee (PFC), 28 September 1984, p. 67.

⁵³ LRO: Acc 6204/95/5, *Campaigning for jobs and services: Liverpool's budget crisis 1984: the story of the campaign*, 1984, n.p.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, section 6.

Hatton's narrative therefore reinforced the position put forward by Hamilton. However, rather than simply pointing to the special needs which existed in Liverpool, Hatton also articulated a narrative in which the city had been continually disadvantaged by central government. In framing the politics of the urban crisis, Hatton therefore cast Liverpool as a victim of central government neglect which could only be rectified by a robust political response.

Needing to save face in the battle over perception, the Conservative government resolved to fight further illegal budgets set by Liverpool City Council and other local authorities.⁵⁹ In the summer of 1984, central government strengthened its hand. The Rates Act 1984 gave the Secretary of State for the Environment the power to limit rate increases by designated local authorities. In July 1984, a total of 18 authorities, including the county councils of Merseyside and South Yorkshire and the Greater London Council, were designated under this legislation which saw their rates capped. While Liverpool City Council was not designated for rate limitation in the financial year beginning 1 April 1985, the authority was still subject to fiscal control.⁶⁰ In enacting this legislation, central government effectively widened the crisis over local government funding to include local authorities across urban England.

In its fight to 'defend jobs and services' in its 1984/85 budget, Liverpool City Council had largely acted unilaterally; in the dispute over the 1985/86 budget, however, Liverpool was joined by other authorities in the so-called 'rate-capping rebellion'.⁶¹ The city council brought its budget day forward to 7 March 1985 because, as Hatton later wrote, 'we didn't want to break ranks with the London boroughs, Sheffield and the rest'.⁶² Unsatisfied by the level of previous spending plans, the Labour group on the city council proposed an enlarged budget – from £231 million, to £265 million.⁶³ This was more than the £222 million target set by central government and, if enacted, would have required the council to increase rates by between 83 and 109 per cent.⁶⁴ Buoyed by their supposed victory the previous year, the council believed that if they held out, they could once again win financial concessions from

⁵⁹ Frost and North, *Militant Liverpool*, pp. 95-6.

⁶⁰ Department of the Environment, *Local government: the rate limitation report 1984*, HC 589 (London, 1984), p. 1. Liverpool City Council was, however, designated for rate limitation in the financial year beginning 1 April 1986; see Department of the Environment, *Local government: the rate limitation report 1985*, HC 541 (London, 1985), p. 2.

⁶¹ See Butler, Adonis and Travers, *Failure in British government*, pp. 41-69.

⁶² Hatton, *Inside left*, p. 94.

⁶³ TNA: PREM 19/1562, Liverpool budget options: 1985-86, n.d.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

central government. Liverpool City Council, along with Lambeth Borough Council, began the 1985/86 financial year with no official budget, and not having set a rate.⁶⁵

Building on their strategy from the previous year, the city council sought to leverage a politics of urban crisis to gain support for their budget proposals. On 7 March – Liverpool’s first budget day in 1985 – crowds gathered outside the town hall for a ‘Day of Action’, called by the city council.⁶⁶ The evening edition of the *Liverpool Echo* reported that most of the council’s 30,000 employees had stayed away from work, though some who crossed the picket line complained of their ‘being used as pawns’.⁶⁷ Speakers at the rally included the Labour MP and former government minister Tony Benn, and the Leader of Sheffield City Council, David Blunkett, as well as representatives of Liverpool City Council. Addressing the crowd, John Hamilton cited the scale of Liverpool’s problems in support of his administration’s cause: ‘60,000 people unemployed, 40,000 jobs lost in the private sector since 1979, youth unemployment up to 90 per cent, 5,000 council jobs cut, and the worst housing conditions in Europe with 15,000 building workers on the dole’.⁶⁸ These were the kind of urban problems which the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, had the day before likened, though not in scale, to the ‘darkness of disease, death and disaster’ in Ethiopia.⁶⁹ As we can see from the rhetoric which surrounded Liverpool during the Day of Action, the material effects of urban decline on the people of the city, most notably the problem of unemployment, became the central theme around which the council’s justification for their budget proposals was based.

The Day of Action was denigrated by the *Liverpool Echo* which, while recognising the legitimacy of the case made by the city council that Liverpool had significant and special needs which required financial investment, lamented ‘the confrontation[al] atmosphere and stage management’ of the council’s budget meeting. As the *Echo* argued, ‘Liverpool’s legitimate and strong case could go by default – lost among all the banner-waving and tub-thumping rhetoric’.⁷⁰ The *Echo* also rebuked the city council’s claim that 60,000 people – ‘more than would fill either Goodison Park or Anfield’ – had turned out to support their cause, instead estimating the figure to be closer to 4,000 protestors.⁷¹ Whatever the turnout, the Day of Action represented a very public display of support for the city council. Moreover,

⁶⁵ Hatton, *Inside left*, p. 94.

⁶⁶ Again, the city council used its newspaper to appeal for demonstrators; see LRO: Acc 6204/98/9, *Liverpool News*, February 1985, p. 1.

⁶⁷ See *Liverpool Echo*, 7 March 1985, pp. 1-5.

⁶⁸ Leader, *Liverpool Echo*, 8 March 1985, p. 6.

⁶⁹ Leader, *Liverpool Echo*, 7 March 1985, p. 6.

⁷⁰ Leader, *Liverpool Echo*, 8 March 1985, p. 6.

⁷¹ Danny Buckland, ‘It’s a numbers game!’, *Liverpool Echo*, 7 March 1985, p. 2 estimated that only 4,000-5,000 had attended.

even press coverage which was ostensibly against the city council's budget strategy identified the substantial need for investment within the city. Within the discourses surrounding the budget dispute, there appears to have been consensus over the problems which Liverpool faced, but fundamental disagreement over the remedy.

The rate-capping rebellion broadened the politics of Liverpool's urban crisis to include local authorities across England, most especially the London Borough of Lambeth. However, on 25 March 1985, Oliver Letwin, then working in the Downing Street Policy Unit, wrote a memorandum to Margaret Thatcher, stating that 'The rate-capping revolt is crumbling, principally because the Government has refused to panic and has stuck to its policy of "no negotiations, no precipitate action"'.⁷² Letwin was right, to an extent, as rebellious local authorities across the country began to set legal rates and budgets. Liverpool and Lambeth, however, held out. These two local authorities were remarkable for the extent of the problems which existed within their boundaries, as evidenced in the 1970s inner area studies.⁷³ While, in the case of Liverpool the supporters of Militant had additional motives, it is apparent that the social and economic problems which existed in Liverpool and Lambeth underwrote their efforts to use the rate-capping rebellion to secure additional funding. This appears to have bolstered the local authorities' resolve, as indicated through the rhetoric deployed by members of the LDLP during the dispute which leveraged unemployment and other statistics as both a justification for their action and a call for public support.

The rate-capping rebellion represented a fundamental challenge to the authority of the central state which responded through the Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England and Wales, established in 1983. On 21 May 1985, the newly-appointed District Auditor, Tim McMohan, wrote to Liverpool City Council informing them of their duty to set a rate under section 15(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1982. On 12 June 1985, he was directed by the Audit Commission to hold an extra-ordinary audit of Liverpool City Council.⁷⁴ Two days later, the council met 'following the submission of a requisition, pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, for the purposes of considering the Budget for 1985/86'.⁷⁵ While they had been forced to meet to vote on a budget, Labour councillors remained defiant. Hamilton moved that the council re-endorse 'the policies upon which the people of Liverpool elected the Labour Party to power': the

⁷² TNA: PREM 19/1616, Oliver Letwin, Rate capping: misc 109, 25 March 1985, p. 1.

⁷³ Graeme Shankland, Peter Willmott and David Jordan, *Inner London: policies for dispersal and balance* (London, 1977); and Hugh Wilson and Lewis Womersley, *Change or decay: final report of the Liverpool Inner Area Study* (London, 1977).

⁷⁴ LRO: 352 MIN/FIN II/1/148A, District Auditor's report to Liverpool City Council, 26 June 1985.

⁷⁵ LRO: 352 MIN/COU II/98, Minutes of a meeting of the City Council, 14 June 1985, p. 64.

defence of existing jobs and services; the creation of new ones; building new houses for rent; ending privatisation; and refusing 'to impose increases in Rates, Rents and Charges to compensate for Government cuts'.⁷⁶ Hamilton also re-iterated the problems which Liverpool faced, arguing that 'Tory Government monetarist policies have brought devastation to Liverpool with untold suffering to thousands of Liverpudlians', and censured the city's previous Liberal administration.⁷⁷ In a further act of rebellion, Hamilton submitted a budget of £265 million which could not be covered by the proposed rate levy and government grants. Immediately, the City Solicitor informed the council that the motion, if passed 'would be contrary to law'.⁷⁸ The Labour council therefore responded to the actions of the central state by deploying a politics of urban crisis to justify its actions and blame other political administrations – the Conservative central government and the previous Liberal-led city council – for underfunding the city's services.

The rate-capping rebellion dragged on for longer than the dispute between Liverpool City Council and central government the previous year. In the autumn of 1985, Liverpool's political and financial crisis reached a new peak. On 5 September 1985, the front page of the *Echo* carried the simple message, 'YOU'RE ALL SACKED!' warning that all council workers would be given 90 day redundancy notices.⁷⁹ The Finance and Strategy committee, at a meeting on 6 September 1985, reaffirmed its commitment to the council's policy to protect jobs and services. In particular, it noted the importance of the council's education and social services, and its urban regeneration strategy, 'to the lives of the people of Liverpool and employment opportunities in the private sector'.⁸⁰ The City Treasurer was instructed to reschedule the city council's debts and seek permission to borrow an additional £25 million to cover spending commitments. In the absence of this loan, the council would not have the resources to pay its staff or provide services. It was therefore resolved that measures be put in place to safeguard the essential services, including the burying of the dead, and that 'all employees be reinstated as soon as possible and, in any event, not later than 1st April 1986'.⁸¹ On top of the breakdown of the structure of urban governance through the confrontation between central and local government, the rate-

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 64-8.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

⁷⁹ Peter Phelps and Colin Wright, 'Unions fury as council says... YOU'RE ALL SACKED!' *Liverpool Echo*, 5 September 1985, p. 1.

⁸⁰ LRO: 352 MIN/FIN II/1/148, Minutes of the Finance and Strategy committee, 6 September 1985, p. 32.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 33-4.

capping rebellion threatened to bring further chaos to the city as the services, which the city council was attempting to save, were shut down.

In delivering redundancy notices to its more than 30,000 workers, the city council risked losing the support of local trade unionists and pushing the budget crisis to its limit. The city council was not able to secure a loan to cover its wages bill, and in an episode which Derek Hatton later described as a 'godsend' to the right-wing press who were 'like hyenas gathered round a carcass', redundancy notices were prepared.⁸² Trade unions in the city reacted with a protest at the town hall, hoping to prevent the notices from being authorised.⁸³ On the day the city council was supposed to approve the redundancy notices, the *Echo* warned of 'ALL-OUT CITY CHAOS'.⁸⁴ Councillors were successfully kept out of the town hall, and the meeting was delayed. The decision to send redundancy notices to all 31,000 of the city council's employees was finally taken on 27 September 1985.⁸⁵ The *Liverpool Echo* reported that redundancy notices had been prepared as early as 9 September and kept in a storage facility in Toxteth which it called 'Hatton's Hideout'.⁸⁶ The city council had used the urban crisis to justify its actions. In rebelling against central government, it was defending jobs and services in a city which had been marred by unemployment, multiple deprivation, and physical decay. In making its entire workforce redundant, this political position was eroded and the council was turned from a defender of the city in the face of urban decline, to a manifestation of the urban crisis.

The redundancy notices marked the beginning of the end of the budget dispute; of Militant supporters' leadership of the city council; and Militant's role within the British Labour Party. But it also marked the apex of the urban crisis in Liverpool. With the redundancy notices due to be sent out on Monday 30 September, 'angry teachers' attempted to block their distribution.⁸⁷ Hatton later wrote that many of the notices were sent out in the post and others handed out within individual departments. However, 'the ones which caused the greatest furore were those which went out by taxi'.⁸⁸ Teachers opposed to the redundancy notices sought to prevent their distribution, picketing University Comprehensive School, from where it was believed they would be sent. However, the 'secret cabbie convoy' of 27 taxis was actually sent from a different school in the Anfield area of the

⁸² Hatton, *Inside left*, p. 98.

⁸³ Colin Wright, 'BLOCKADE MAY HIT DOLE PLAN', *Liverpool Echo*, 13 September 1985, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Peter Phelps and Colin Wright, 'COUNTDOWN TO ALL-OUT CITY CHAOS', *Liverpool Echo*, 16 September 1985, p. 1.

⁸⁵ LRO: 352 MIN/COU II/ Minutes of a meeting of the City Council, 27 September, pp. 212-14.

⁸⁶ *Liverpool Echo*, 27 September 1985, p. 2.

⁸⁷ *Liverpool Echo*, 30 September 1985, p. 1.

⁸⁸ Hatton, *Inside left*, p. 102.

city.⁸⁹ The tactical decision to send out redundancy notices caused deep divisions between trade unions and the city council. A further Day of Action garnered little support and the event was cited by Neil Kinnock, national leader of the Labour Party to launch what Hatton described as a 'vitriolic attack on me and Militant'.⁹⁰ Neil Kinnock's prodigious criticism at the Labour Party conference in October 1985 was directed towards the 'grotesque chaos of a Labour council – a Labour council – hiring taxis to scuttle round a city handing out redundancy notices to its own workers'.⁹¹

In response to their refusal to set a budget in July 1985, 49 Labour councillors were surcharged, 47 of whom were also banned from local government under the Rates Act 1984. The surcharge amounted to approximately £2,000 per councillor to cover the interest which had been lost from the failure to set and collect a rate.⁹² Militant's fall within the British Labour Party was much slower. Following a 1982 inquiry into the Liverpool District Labour Party and internal disputes over the efficacy of expelling party members, Derek Hatton and other Militant supporters were expelled from the party by the National Executive Committee in 1986.⁹³ But Militant supporters were still active in Liverpool in 1990.⁹⁴ As we can see from this, the fall of the Militant-supporting city council was further illustration of the level to which Liverpool's urban crisis had reached by the autumn of 1985. The city council had leveraged the urban crisis to gain support for its cause, but this failed as its actions went against the LDLP's promise to defend jobs and services. The budget dispute represented the apex of the British urban crisis because, simply put, it was seen to be the final moment at which the city threatened to become ungovernable. Or, using Michael Parkinson's term, it was the final point at which Liverpool was truly seen to be 'on the brink' of disaster.⁹⁵

Conclusion

The Liverpool budget dispute has most frequently been seen within the context of the internal politics of the Labour Party. However, the longevity of the dispute was founded in Liverpool's urban crisis. The city council continually framed its budget dispute within a narrative of urban decline, deploying statistics of unemployment and deprivation to justify, firstly, the injustice of central government cuts, and secondly, Liverpool's additional funding

⁸⁹ *Liverpool Echo*, 30 September 1985, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Hatton, *Inside left*, p. 102.

⁹¹ Julian Haviland, 'Kinnock speech a masterpiece, say moderates', *The Times*, 2 October 1985, p. 1.

⁹² Hatton, *Inside left*, pp. 95-6.

⁹³ Pugh, *Speak for Britain!* pp. 377-8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁹⁵ Parkinson, *Liverpool on the brink*.

needs. The specific services which, it argued, were in need of protection were also framed by this evidence of decline: education; social services; and urban regeneration. The city council drew public and trade union support by highlighting Liverpool's special needs and articulating a narrative in which the city had been disadvantaged by central government. Through this, the city council was able to continue with its strategy even as other left-wing councils yielded, setting rates and legal budgets. However, when the city council's narrative began to unravel, as they were driven to give notice to over 30,000 employees that they would be made redundant, so did its support.

The budget dispute was both a reflection of Liverpool's urban crisis, and its apex. The dispute threatened the relationship between central and local government, and between government and the people of the city. It also threatened to bankrupt the city and, it was feared, take with it the fiscal foundation upon which British local government rested. The removal of Militant supporters within Liverpool City Council and re-imposing fiscal control over the local authority did not end the urban crisis *per se*. However, by ending the confrontation between central and local government, a level of 'normality' returned to the city. This question of what happened in Liverpool after the urban crisis had reached its peak is further addressed in the conclusion to this thesis.

Conclusion

This thesis has used the city of Liverpool as a case study of urban decline and urban crisis in Britain between 1968 and 1986. In doing so, it has focused on four main research questions: how was 'decline' experienced and evidenced in particular urban areas? What role did evidence of urban decline play in shaping approaches to urban governance at national and local levels? How did evidence of the persistence of urban decline constitute a 'crisis'? What was the role of particular events in Liverpool in shaping discourses of urban crisis in Britain?

Urban decline in Liverpool was evidenced through a series of social studies as well as cultural representations of the city in contemporary films and television series. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Liverpool provided the backdrop to a series of films and television programmes exploring the characters' experiences of urban decline. *Boys from the Blackstuff* (1982) and *Letter to Brezhnev* (1985) highlighted the problems faced by Liverpool's unemployed, whether through Yosser Hughes' mental ill-health and loss of breadwinner identity (*Blackstuff*) or Elaine's desire to leave the city and seek a better life elsewhere (*Brezhnev*). Willy Russell's plays, *Our Day Out* (1977) and *Blood Brothers* (1983), explored the lives of children from deprived families. Alan Bleasdale's *No Surrender* (1985) and Philip Saville's *The Fruit Machine* (1988) used Liverpool's derelict and decaying physical environment to frame their stories of sectarian tension and gangland violence. Liverpool's urban crisis, therefore, was not short of cultural representation. This accumulated evidence produced a structure of feeling which identified Liverpool as the locus of specific urban problems. Social studies in particular were crucial in shaping approaches to urban governance in Liverpool. Area-based strategies developed which focused on particular parts of the city. These included the Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project, the Vauxhall Community Development Project, and the Liverpool Inner Area Study. These projects also initiated their own social studies which, along with their adjoining and overlapping boundaries, defined the problem of urban decline in Liverpool.

Urban decline in Liverpool was evidenced through a continuously falling population, the gradual closure of docks and port-related services and firms, rising unemployment, and an increasingly derelict and decayed physical environment. While the structure of this thesis has studied these processes of urban decline thematically, they were mutually reinforcing. Between 1931 and 1991, Liverpool's population almost halved. This fall also

meant that the local authority lost financial resources through taxation and central government grants linked to the population. As inner urban areas lost population at a greater rate than other parts of the city, those who remained were identified as being multiply deprived, and therefore in need of additional resources in an increasingly tight fiscal environment. Demography – the study of the changing structure of the population – was crucial in identifying these issues which, though not new, became linked to the problems of urban decline rather than urban growth.

The effects of population decline were exacerbated by Liverpool's economic decline, the character of which is important because it complicates historiographical narratives which focus on service sector growth and de-industrialisation in the second half of the twentieth century.¹ Liverpool's labour market problems were primarily driven by the decline of the service sector as the city's docks closed and dock workers lost their jobs throughout the post-1945 period. Meanwhile, manufacturing increased as a relative share of the city's economy until the late 1970s when Liverpool also began to de-industrialise. De-industrialisation added to Liverpool's existing labour market issues. Neighbourhoods like Vauxhall, which already had an unemployment rate of around 40 per cent by the early 1980s, were therefore particularly hit hard when the Tate and Lyle sugar refinery closed, taking away manufacturing jobs on top of the port-related service employment which had already been lost. This thesis has therefore contributed to the historiography of economic decline in twentieth-century Britain. Through a spatial approach, it has emphasised the interaction between 'subjectivity and objectivity, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable'.² As I have shown, Liverpool's economic decline was not simply a 'declinist' political construct.³ Unemployment in Liverpool was consistently above national and regional averages. The apparent intransigence of structural unemployment in Liverpool underwrote the city's urban crisis as central and local government sought to find new ways of stimulating employment growth.

Population and economic decline in Liverpool contributed to the spread of dereliction across the city. As such, urban decline was experienced through the physical

¹ Stephen Broadberry, 'The rise of the service sector', in Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries and Paul Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge economic history of modern Britain, vol. II: 1870 to the present* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 330-61; and Jim Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization not decline: a new meta-narrative for post-war British history', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 76-99.

² Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined-places* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 56-7, as cited in Alan Latham, 'Edward J. Soja', in Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin (eds), *Key thinkers on space and place* (London, 2nd ed., 2011), p. 384.

³ Cf. Jim Tomlinson, *The politics of decline* (Harlow, 2001); and Jim Tomlinson, 'Thrice denied: "declinism" as a recurrent theme in British history in the long twentieth century', *Twentieth Century British History* 20 (2009), pp. 227-51.

environment. But the urban fabric did more than just reflect Liverpool's decline. The physical environment was identified by central and local government, planners, the press, and voluntary organisations as a major obstacle to economic regeneration and a barrier to encouraging people to move back to the city. The processes of urban decline – a falling population, rising unemployment, and a decaying physical environment – formed a vicious circle. This thesis has therefore contributed to the historiography on urban modernism – the town planning practices which prevailed after the Second World War, including policies of large-scale slum clearance and decentralisation to remake the city along modern, functionalist principles – by showing that its end was not simply produced by conservation activists.⁴ Moreover, building on the work of Otto Saumarez Smith, it has shown how urban decay was linked to secular processes of urban decline in which the physical environment was more than a symbol of urban change.⁵ The physical environment, which encompassed buildings and urban nature, was conceived by contemporaries as an actant within a vicious circle of urban decline.

This vicious circle of urban decline underwrote the development of a spatialised approach to unemployment and deprivation.⁶ This approach, called the 'total approach' by Peter Walker (Environment Secretary, 1970-72), sought to identify and intervene in problems within particular urban districts and was crucial in the identification of the 'inner city' as the locus of urban decline in late twentieth-century Britain.⁷ But urban decline was also closely associated with multiple deprivation, a category which combined material poverty with other indicators, including the condition of housing and the reputation of the neighbourhood. For the city's black and Asian population, which was mostly concentrated within the Toxteth area of inner Liverpool, these problems were compounded by racial discrimination and disadvantage.

The experience of urban decline in Liverpool was uneven. This unevenness was reflected spatially – through the development of the inner city as a policy focus – and racially – with ethnic minority communities suffering disproportionate levels of unemployment on top of everyday discriminations, including police harassment. The persistence of multiple

⁴ For a definition of urban modernism, see Simon Gunn, 'The rise and fall of British urban modernism: planning Bradford, circa 1945-1970', *Journal of British Studies* 49(2010), pp. 849-69. Christopher Klemek, *The transatlantic collapse of urban renewal: postwar urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago, 2011).

⁵ Otto Saumarez Smith, 'The inner city crisis and the end of urban modernism in 1970s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27 (2016), pp. 578-98.

⁶ Simon Gunn, 'The spatial turn: changing histories of space and place', in Simon Gunn and Robert Morris (eds), *Identities in space: contested terrains in the western city since 1850* (Aldershot, 2001), 1-14.

⁷ Peter Walker, *The ascent of Britain* (London, 1977), pp. 124-46.

deprivation, which came to public and governmental attention following the 'rediscovery of poverty' in the 1960s, as well as racial discrimination, played an important role in shaping the urban crisis in Liverpool. Not only were these issues central in the identification of urban decline, they also contributed to the reanimation of local community and black politics in Liverpool.⁸ While this draws inevitable comparisons with recent historiography on the cities of the North American 'rust belt', especially with Thomas Sugrue's work on race and inequality in post-war Detroit, the British urban crisis was different.⁹ Most importantly, British cities did not experience 'white flight' in the same way as cities in the northern United States. While immigrant and ethnic minority communities in Britain were seen to be more deprived and concentrated in inner-city areas, race was not the principal marker of the British urban crisis. Rather, racial disadvantage was identified as one of many factors in the definition of 'multiple deprivation' by urban policymakers in the 1970s.

The accumulated evidence of urban decline underwrote central and local government urban policies and the initiatives of voluntary organisations. These policies and initiatives were adapted to suit the needs of Liverpool. But in many ways, Liverpool acted as a laboratory for developing approaches to multiple deprivation and urban decline across Britain more generally. In identifying problems caused by the depopulation of inner urban areas, for example, the policy of decentralising households to new towns and other overspill areas was disavowed.¹⁰ Moreover, there was an increasing spatialisation and localisation of government policy as initiatives became focused on specific urban neighbourhoods. Through these initiatives, the 'inner city' became the locus of urban decline and the experiences of Liverpool fed directly into central government urban policy more generally. For example, the findings of Liverpool's inner area study fed directly into the pivotal white paper *Policy for the Inner Cities* in 1977 and the resulting legislation in 1978. In the 1980s, the Urban Development Corporations were a further example of how Liverpool was key in the development of wider urban policy initiatives.

While the state was a critical actor in efforts to ameliorate or even reverse the effects of urban decline, it worked in conjunction with voluntary organisations which acted to fill in the gaps in the welfare state. In the 1970s, voluntary action altered its aims from

⁸ Cf. Kennetta Perry, 'Black Britain and the politics of race in the 20th century', *History Compass* 12 (2014), pp. 651-63.

⁹ Thomas Sugrue, *The origins of the urban crisis: race and inequality in postwar Detroit* (Woodstock, revised ed., 2005).

¹⁰ This offers a different narrative to that put forward by Guy Ortolano who focused on the role of new towns as the 'spatial dimension of the welfare state' which the Thatcher government sought to dismantle; see Guy Ortolano, 'Flat roofs in the forest city' (unpublished paper given at King's College London on 18 January 2016).

charitable provision of services to the poor, to encouraging communities to improve conditions within their own neighbourhoods. Peter Shapely has criticised this approach, arguing that 'These were communities with no leadership and, with few people who possessed the social capital to engage in political processes, they displayed widespread apathy and low morale'.¹¹ But this was not the case in Liverpool. While neighbourhood and community councils did not stem Liverpool's decline, they acted to provide a voice for their areas and provided services, including legal advice in welfare and racial discrimination cases. In this, voluntary organisations were an important counterweight to the state, especially in Toxteth where community relations with the police remained contentious.

While these initiatives were accompanied by additional investment, urban decline persisted in Liverpool. Evidence of this persistence constituted a crisis by the late 1970s. Planners were unable to stem the decline of the city's population; economic initiatives in the 1960s directed manufacturing to Merseyside, but the region's unemployment remained high; funds were allocated to the improvement of Liverpool's physical environment, but the city continued to hold extensive tracts of derelict and vacant land which both reflected the city's problems, and acted as a barrier to private sector investment; and in spite of a universalist welfare state, poverty remained concentrated within particular urban districts, the effects of which were multiplied by racial discrimination, a poor environment, and joblessness. This produced a crisis in two important ways. Firstly, the inability of government and voluntary organisations to stem Liverpool's decline led to the search for new policies. Liverpool's urban crisis therefore reflected what Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton termed a 'marketplace of ideas'.¹² This marketplace of ideas included a renewed focus on the role of the private sector in regenerating Britain's cities. While the shift from the state to the market was a hallmark of Thatcherite policymaking, this change occurred earlier in urban policy, becoming increasingly important in the mid-1970s. This therefore complicates narratives of post-1945 Britain which have divided the second half of the twentieth century into 'social democratic' and 'neoliberal' periods with a transformation taking place around 1979. Secondly, indicators of urban decline reflected the problems faced by the people of Liverpool. These were lived experiences, rather than statistical constructions. For example, while geographical disparities in levels of unemployment constituted a political problem, framed within regional and industrial policy, the material effects of people living in areas with over 40 per cent unemployment constituted a social

¹¹ Peter Shapely, *Deprivation, state intervention and urban communities in Britain, 1968-79* (Abingdon, 2017), p. 319.

¹² Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, 'Introduction: the benighted decade? Reassessing the 1970s', in Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton, and Pat Thane (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 1-24.

crisis. As this thesis has demonstrated, what we might call the crisis of everyday life was revealed through the production of central government-sponsored social studies. What we might call the 'social crisis' therefore highlighted problems with the universalist welfare state and therefore appeared to undermine one of the cornerstones of the so-called 'post-war consensus'.¹³ These issues came to national prominence – especially in the national press – through the urban disorders in the summer of 1981 and the budget disputes between 1983 and 1986.

Liverpool's urban crisis reached its peak in the early-to-mid 1980s. While the city's urban decline was exacerbated by an economic recession which can partly be attributed to the fiscal and economic policies of Margaret Thatcher's first government, Thatcherism did not *cause* the urban crisis. As this thesis has shown, there were two critical moments in Liverpool's urban crisis during which the city threatened to become 'ungovernable'. Firstly, the Toxteth 'riots' of 1981 represented a fundamental moment of urban crisis. While there were similar disorders in other English cities, it was in Liverpool 8 that the police first resorted to the use of CS gas on the streets of Great Britain. The dramatic police reaction was reminiscent of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. But central government also feared that such suppressive policing tactics would need to be used to restore law and order elsewhere, as shown through the Home Office's attempts to buy most of the Army's supply of the weapons. The crisis on the streets of Toxteth therefore coloured attitudes within central government to British cities more generally. Secondly, the victory of a District Labour Party controlled by supporters of the far left Militant Tendency in the May 1983 city council elections threatened the relationship between local and central government. Militant's politics are most frequently viewed from the perspective of its entryist tactics and the attempted renewal of the Labour Party nationally under Neil Kinnock.¹⁴ The actions of Liverpool's Militant-dominated council, however, has been shown here within the context of the city's urban crisis, as the group sought to use evidence of urban decline to frame and justify their wider political strategy. It was only when the council's strategy appeared to run counter to its stated aim of defending jobs and services – an aim which was framed by evidence of the effects of urban decline – that it began to lose the majority of its support within the city.¹⁵

The Militant-dominated city council's budget dispute with central government represented the apex of the British urban crisis. By the end of the 1980s, Liverpool no longer

¹³ Peter Hennessy, *Having it so good: Britain in the fifties* (London, 2007).

¹⁴ Martin Pugh, *Speak for Britain! A new history of the Labour Party* (London, 2010).

¹⁵ Though support from groups within Liverpool's black communities had already been eroded by the Sam Bond affair.

appears to have been the locus of a specific narrative of urban crisis in spite of continued evidence of urban decline. The city continued to lose population until the 2011 census recorded the first increase since 1931, while high levels of unemployment and deprivation have also persisted in the city.¹⁶ This change in how the city has been seen is reflected through archival documents. When, in December 2011, the National Archives released a tranche of files under the thirty-year rule, details of files likely to generate popular interest were circulated to news organisations, as has now become common practice. One of the files which received much attention was PREM 19/578. Comprising documents on the government's response to the Toxteth disorders of July 1981, the general public was provided with an insight into high-level political discussions as evidenced through the archive. Among the more than 300 pages of memoranda, minutes, and policy proposals was a paper written by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Geoffrey Howe, asking whether investing in Liverpool was 'to pump water uphill? Should we rather go for "managed decline"?'¹⁷ In a sardonic editorial, responding to the file's release, the *Liverpool Echo* thanked Howe 'for absolutely nothing' and mocked the way in which the city had been portrayed throughout the late twentieth century:

The city of Liverpool has been subjected to many unprovoked beatings over the years – but the very least we can expect our enemies to do is make themselves known.

Some, however, prefer to lurk in the shadows. Perhaps they haven't got the courage of their convictions. Perhaps they have no courage whatsoever.

It can only now be revealed, 30 years after the event, that the then chancellor, Sir Geoffrey Howe, thought we should basically be left to rot.¹⁸

That the revelation of Howe's suggestion elicited such a reaction from a Liverpool-based newspaper should not be a surprise. But the release of the National Archives file provides two important insights for historians. Firstly, the extent to which the narrative has changed was shown through the visceral reaction to the document's release. How and why this changed is an important story, but is beyond the scope of this study. Secondly, it reveals that Liverpool's urban crisis had reached a new peak by the autumn of 1981. Though never

¹⁶ Though it has recently been suggested that Liverpool's relative position has recently improved; see Liverpool City Council, *The index of multiple deprivation 2015: a Liverpool analysis* (Liverpool, 2015) <<http://liverpool.gov.uk/media/10001/1-imd-2015-executive-summary.pdf>> accessed 28 April 2017.

¹⁷ The National Archives, London: PREM 19/578, Geoffrey Howe, memorandum on Merseyside, 4 September 1981, para. 5.

¹⁸ Leader, 'Toxteth riots – so who didn't care', *Liverpool Echo*, 30 December 2011 <<http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/toxteth-riots--who-didnt-3358762>> [accessed 1 October 2017].

enacted, the very serious suggestion by a senior cabinet minister that the city be left to decline, albeit in a managed way, demonstrated the extent to which established central and local government policies were seen to have failed to alleviate the very real problems which existed in Liverpool.

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