Transport Choice and the Fragmentation of Mobility in Britain, 1959-1974

James Crisp

Downing College

June 2023

This Thesis is Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Abstract

Transport Choice and the Fragmentation of Mobility in Britain, 1959-1974 – James Crisp

This thesis studies the fragmentation of transport choice and people's perceptions of the three main mechanical modes between 1959 and 1974. The dawn of mass car ownership, which precipitated the decline of bus and rail demand, reshaped the importance of each to different groups. The rise of the car spread unevenly across different locations according to class, age, and gender. Thus, as the car became an increasingly common choice for men, the bus became the staple of women and the old. This thesis will explore how the public perceived these changes, including how women and the elderly felt about rail closures and the former's inferior position as the 'woman driver'. But the difficulties facing successive governments of adapting transport policy to this fragmentation is also studied. The government's urban transport problems were particularly acute in the nation's provincial cities, where patterns of movement varied and became increasingly difficult to provide for as the car splintered demand. However, the railways often did not offer a readily available alternative to enough people to prevent Beeching's closures. The expanding suburban and extra-urban locations of postwar Britain are also explored, to see how men and women perceived the car, bus, and railways according to the different social factors facing them. What is uncovered is that although transport choice was fragmented by location, class, gender, and age, people's perceptions of the three main modes were more similar than different. They were perceived, principally, as ways to expand individual mobility and choice, regardless of their public or private provision. The central issue for public transport was its inferior performance compared to the car in this period, before congestion became a serious issue across Britain's polycentric cities.

Acknowledgements

Most of all I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Peter Mandler, for his guidance, support, and patience. Also, thank you to Tim Hunter, Eleanor Girt-Izod, and Sally Ivens for all their help. I have also appreciated general discussions and advice from Colin Pooley, Terry Gourvish, Colin Divall, and Charles Loft, authors whose work my dissertation uses and seeks to build upon.

Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

AA – Automobile Association

ASLEF – Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

BR – British Railways, and from 1965, British Rail

BRB – British Railways Board

BRF – British Road Federation

BT – Board of Trade

DEA – Department of Economic Affairs

DOE – Department of Environment

HLG – Department of Housing and Local Government

LMR – London Midland Region of British Railways

MOT – Ministry of Transport

NUR – National Union of Railwaymen

PTA – Passenger Transport Authority

PTE – Passenger Transport Executive

RAC – Royal Automobile Club

RRL – Transport and Road Research Laboratory (Transport and Road Research Laboratory from 1972, TRRL).

SNCF – Société des Chemins de Français (the French state rail network)

TGWU – Transport and General Workers' Union

TSSA – Transport Salaried Staffs' Association

TUCC – Transport Users' Consultative Committee

Introduction

This thesis studies people's perceptions of how the railways, bus, and car shaped their mobility in Britain between 1959 and 1974. It also analyses how successive governments reacted to the widespread desire to be mobile using these modes, and changes in transport choice. This period is key because it saw the car become mass owned, reaching half of all households.[1] This complicated the nation's mobility, fragmenting modal choice according to location, class, age, and gender.[2] The railways, for example, were used most by the middle class.[3] But in provincial areas, as car ownership rose, women voiced their fears that Beeching's closures threatened their mobility. The bus could be a poor alternative to rail in these provincial areas and was considered mundane. Yet, it was the most used mode of public transport, including in suburban areas where it expanded working class consumption and leisure. As the car became affordable, it then offered convenience and flexibility in socially mixed suburbs, but for the male breadwinner more than the rest of the household.[4]

---

[1] J. Wickham, *Unequal Europe: Social Divisions and Social Cohesion* (Oxford, 2016), 104; A third of households owned a car in 1963: *Motor Trader*, 3 July 1963.
[2] The definition of class used in this thesis is a group with a similar economic, cultural and employment status, with normative values, but they do not act or think alike, and this stratification fragments further according to gender, ethnicity, education, region, religion, language, and according to consumer status, rather than solely a hierarchy of production: R. Trainor, in M. Daunton (ed.), (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2000), 674; J. Scott, *Stratification and Power: Structures of Class, Status and Command* (Cambridge, 1996), 15-18; 95-96; 191; 201; 208; 244-245.
[3] R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 194-195; 210.
[4] C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century? Changes in Everyday Mobility* (Aldershot, 2005), 6-14.

A diverse body of consumer-citizens, therefore, used these modes to fulfil their growing mobility expectations, and the complexity of movements they generated made transport policy problematic for successive governments. Contrary to transport history's habit of studying the modes in isolation, I argue that analysing the car, bus, and rail together bears the complexity of the practical and financial problems they caused government as mobility choices expanded. Nor should the study of people's perceptions of their mobility ignore the practical contingencies of everyday life. Thus, contrary to mobility history's emphasis on discourses, cultural representations or whether transport was publicly or privately provided, I listen to the choices people wanted as individuals in everyday life but also the realistic options each mode offered them. In this period, people's expectations of their mobility grew, but the financial and technical intricacies involved complicated policy as well as people's choices according to location, class, and gender.[5]

As detailed below, there has been a long conflict between transport history's focus on the technical and financial aspects of providing the different modes and more recent efforts to incorporate it into the history of mobility, focusing on the social and cultural influences on movement. I use both approaches, making four arguments about Britain's most significant period of transport fragmentation between the car, bus, and rail, and people's desire for mobility and choice. First, public transport could not respond to the flexibility of the car and the decentralisation of homes and jobs from central urban areas due to a series of technical and practical complexities. As car ownership spread in extra-urban and suburban areas before

[5] Complexity is a theme of this thesis, centring on the intricacy of transport movements and planning across different locations, and the difficulties this poses for regulation – these are common themes in the transport literature: R. Macário, in M. Finger and T. Holvad (eds), *Regulating Transport in Europe* (Cheltenham, 2013), 142; H. Engler, 'Social Movement and the Failure of Car-Friendly City Projects', *Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 372; C. Assmann, 'The Emergence of the Car-Oriented City', *Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 347; K. Chatzis, 'Managing Traffic Complexity', *Journal of Transport History*, 42 (2021), 445-447; P. Rietveld and R. Stough, 'Institutions, Regulations and Sustainable Transport: A Cross-National Perspective', *Transport Review*, 24 (2004), 714.

city centres, a public transport system to cover all locations and outcompete the car became undeliverable in the 1960s.[6]

Secondly, many of the closures proposed by Dr Beeching and assessed by successive governments were more complex and treated more sensitively than is assumed. Individual cases reveal they had relatively low demand and little chance to gain passengers from the roads. Indeed, the growing complexity of movements across different locations and classes is little understood. Many radial rail routes struggled to compete with the bus and car in deindustrialising, decentralised cities, and its passenger base centred on the suburban and rural middle class. I show much resistance to Beeching came from these groups and their institutions. The locational fragmentation of transport demand was, thus, also a social divide as the working class moved out of cities into areas dominated by roads. Despite this middle class dominance of rail use, however, those actually affected by closures, across class, saw little divide between road and rail, wanting both as a means to expand their mobility.[7]

Thirdly, location was less important in determining women's access to transport than their position in society. The car was used by men more than women, which fragmented transport between the sexes and left women dominating bus use.[8] However, women showed agency in defending their mobility. They used the three modes to expand their choices despite their lack of access. In extra-urban areas, rail closures could be detrimental to women's mobility, and they opposed them. Women were also framed as domesticated with inferior driving skills. However, this image began to fade in this period but was reshaped within existing gendered stereotypes rather than being dispelled. Fourthly, I argue the historiography

---

[6] The potential for alternative public transport systems have been asserted: C. Pooley, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning* (Farnham, 2016), 58; C. Pooley, 'Landscapes Without the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 273-274.
[7] E. Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 674, cc. 1320, 27 March 1963; *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 736, 29 April 1963; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1; 27-31, Transport Research Laboratory Archive, Wokingham [henceforth TRL].
[8] C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-8, TRL; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 8; 16-17, TRL.

should make more of people's uses and enthusiasm for cars,[9] especially the suburban working class, a growing number of women, and the changes it brought to their everyday movements. This widespread desire for mobility saw little divide between whether transport was privately or publicly provided and made a coherent transport system increasingly difficult to deliver.

Historiography

The historiography has tended to study separately the politics or economics of transport technologies or their social or cultural impact, and has looked at one mode at a time. This thesis studies Britain's transition to a mass car-owning society when the fortunes of the railways, bus, and car travelled in very different directions – a nexus I will now show the historiography has only grasped in fragments.[10] The Triumph Herald and Morris Mini-Minor were released in 1959, promoted as mass-market cars. Fridge sales increased from 449,000 in 1958 to 849,000 in 1959, and televisions were in around two-thirds of British homes, reflecting growing consumption.[11] Labour's third general election loss that year also triggered debates about how affluence was changing people's lives and voting intentions.[12]

In December 1959, Minister of Transport Ernest Marples stated the need for a report on how to deal with rising car ownership and congestion.[13] In September 1960, Colin Buchanan was appointed as Advisor on Urban Road Planning with the notion that the car

[9] It rightly stresses the urban backlash against the car: D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 71.
[10] The postwar period in transport history has often been split into a periodisation between the growth of car ownership in the 1950s and 60s, leading to the planning of the car-friendly city, before a move to more pedestrianisation and public transport from the late 1960s: B. Schmucki, 'If I Walked On My Own', *Research in Transportation Economics*, 34 (2012), 81; J. Grant, *The Politics of Urban Transport Planning* (London, 1977), 5; 46-49; Press Release from the Ministry of Transport, 22 October 1963, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/1, Modern Records Centre, Warwick [henceforth MRC].
[11] The Mini was priced at under £500, which was expensive, but showed prices were falling: D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book One: Opening the Box* (London, 2013), 337-340.
[12] M. Abrams, R. Rose and R. Hinden, *Must Labour Lose?* (London, 1960), 35; 43; 88; 123; C. Riley, 'Must Labour Lose? The 1959 Election', *Historical Reflections*, 47 (2021), 70; L. Black, in L. Black and H. Pemberton (eds), *An Affluent Society?* (Oxford, 2004), 91-93.
[13] E. Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 615, cc. 771, 10 December 1959.

would become central to everyday life.[14] That same year the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries reported that the railways' finances were so perilous the country needed to decide whether they should be subsidised as a social service, or its common carrier obligations dropped to be run commercially.[15] National bus demand suffered an even faster decline than the railways in this period as its demand halved by 1968 alone.[16]

However, the spread of car ownership in Britain was uneven, concentrating in regions according to prosperity. Indeed, these fifteen years saw car ownership lag behind the decentralisation of homes and employment from cities.[17] This fragmented transport use between city centres and suburbs, the affluent and poor, and as we will see, between men, women, and the old. The number of people living in city centres declined and concentrated with lower income groups who either walked or took the bus, while suburban areas grew with some owning cars but many still travelling to work by bus.[18] This process varied nationally. In the richer South, South West, and Midlands, the car became the mode of choice in expanding suburbs and rural areas. In traditional industrial city centres, where incomes were lower, the car spread slowly, and buses and walking remained the key modes. Yet, even in public council housing estates in Sheffield, for example, car ownership had already reached over 20% of households by 1960.[19]

---

[14] S. Taylor, *The Moving Metropolis: A History of London's Transport* (London, 2001), 21-22; W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1970), 350-351; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problems of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 526; E. Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 627, cc. 1887, 28 July 1960; *The Guardian*, 8 December 1959; Calls for more parking charges increased: *The Guardian*, 9 July 1963.
[15] S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problem of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 525; A. Benn, *HC Debs*, vol. 627, cc. 2380, 26 October 1960; R. Nugent, *HC Debs*, vol. 627, cc. 2393, 26 October 1960.
[16] Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 9; 42; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-3, TRL.
[17] D. Feldman, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 201-202; 204-205; R. Haywood, 'Railways, Urban Form and Town Planning', *Plannings Perspectives*, 12 (1997), 39; 51; 60-62; O. Saumarez Smith, 'Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment', *Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), 225; 235; P. Mandler, in B. Conekin et al (eds), *Moments of Modernity* (London, 1999), 220.
[18] P. Walker, *The Ascent of Britain* (London, 1977), 23; 124-131.
[19] Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 63; 84; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 228-229; K. Morrison and J. Minnis, *Carscapes: The Motor Car, Architecture and Landscapes in England* (London, 2012), 97; J.

A huge 56% of Britain's freight was also carried on the roads in 1959, which was the railways' main profitable sector as its annual deficit reached £110 million.[20] By 1959, some of the earliest sections of Britain's motorways had just opened to media acclaim and by 1960, 83 miles had been finished. By 1970, Britain would have 672 miles of motorway.[21] Against this backdrop, Dr Richard Beeching was chosen as the first chairman of the British Railways Board in 1961. His appointment represented government's desire to increase its knowledge and control over its worst performing industry, and made an acceleration of closures inevitable.[22] Beeching's infamous report in March 1963 listed a vast swathe of closure proposals. However, the Minister retained the final say in consenting to passenger closures, which, as we will see, was crucial to how closures were carried out in practice as social resistance to them grew.[23]

By 1973, British Rail was losing £51.6 million and receiving a further £91.4 million in grants. However, the 1974 Railways Act then officially accepted that the railways could not break-even and replaced the 1968 Transport Act's renewable subsidies with block grants, called the Public Service Obligation. This amounted to £324 million in its first year and the Act also wrote off a further £200 million in rail debt.[24] Before 1958, there were no

---

Tanner, 'Car and Motorcycle Ownership in the Counties', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 126 (1963), 276; 281; J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 6-10; 35-53, TRL.

[20] Unless stated otherwise, figures on expenditure and debt are in current prices: Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 192-194; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation of Britain* (London, 2006); 161; D. Munby and A. Watson, *Inland Transport Statistics, Vol. I* (Oxford, 1978), 2-3; 14-15; 1959 debt level: E. Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 627, cc. 2361, 26 October 1960.

[21] P. Merriman, in R. Roth and C. Divall (eds), *From Rail to Road and Back Again?* (Farnham, 2015), 332-333; The most intense period of motorway building was 1970 to 1975: G. Charlesworth, *A History of British Motorways* (London, 1984), 94.

[22] Ashworth states that 'on any accounting basis', the performance of the railways was the worst of the nationalised industries: W. Ashworth, *The State in Business* (Basingstoke, 1991), 118; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986); C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation of Britain* (London, 2006); Glaister et al state Beeching was a 'necessary first step in 'transparency' to then enable official subsidies: S. Glaister et al, *Transport Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, 1998), 19.

[23] Section 56 of the 1962 Transport Act lays out the closure procedure; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 19; 97; 102; J. Hay, *HC Debs*, vol. 668, cc. 682, 29 November 1962.

[24] Under Section 3 (1) of the 1974 Railways Act; This grant scheme complied with EEC Law: T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 11-15; 22; J. Peyton, *HC Debs*, vol. 865, cc. 397, 28 November 1973.

motorways in Britain, but by 1974 they covered 1,161 miles.[25] By 1974, the car was the most popular mode to commute and bus services were subsidised as their financial viability teetered with rising car ownership, operated by the National Bus Company, local authorities, and the conurbations. The rail network was stabilised with grants, but, due to its deficits, there remained no clear view of what the railways' future should be into the 1980s.[26] The 'mystical goal' of public transport coordination as an alternative to the car went unobtained.[27] Given the fragmented nature of transport choice in this period, and the complexities facing government, the historiography has compartmentalised the economic or political forces and the social or cultural factors at play, failing to develop a wider picture of the contingencies involved. These divides can be explained by looking at the historiography's development.[28]

From Transport History to the History of Mobilities

Transport history developed out of business and economic histories in the 1950s and moved into labour and social histories in the 1960s.[29] But before the growth of mobilities approaches, or the 'mobilities turn', from the 2000s, transport historiography was slow to embrace cultural perspectives, and the postwar period was relatively understudied.[30] The

---

[25] B. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), 556.
[26] National Bus Company Annual Report, 1973, 17; 24, The National Archives, [henceforth TNA], National Bus Company Files [henceforth FH] 14/5; National Bus Company Annual Report, 1974, 9; 11; 14, TNA, FH 14/6; J. Gilbert, *HC Debs*, vol. 897, cc. 120, 5 August 1975; T. Gourvish, 'British Rail's "Business-Led" Organization, 1977-1990', *Business History Review*, 64 (1990), 122-123; 147-149; J. Wickham, *Unequal Europe: Social Divisions and Social Cohesion* (Oxford, 2016), 104; C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'The Journey to Work: A Century of Change', *Area*, 31 (1999), 287-288.
[27] J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 250.
[28] Transport 2000 Memo, March 1973, Museum of English Rural Life, Reading [henceforth ERL], SR CPRE C/1/199/5; BRF, Roads 1971: The Annual Report of the British Road Federation, 1971, 3-16, MSS. 21/2114/1-9, MRC; *The Observer*, 2 August 1970; *The Times*, 8 January 1969.
[29] H. Dyos and D. Aldcroft, *British Transport: An Economic Survey* (Leicester, 1969); *The Journal of Transport History* was established in 1953; Railway and Canal Historical Society in 1954; *Transport History* journal in 1968: J. Armstrong, 'Transport History, 1945-95: The Rise of a Topic to Maturity', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 104-105.
[30] For example, searching for 'Beeching' in transport history journals yields few results; Merriman is sceptical of framing it as a 'turn' as transport geography used these approaches before the 2000s: P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 13-14; 66.

railways were analysed most due to their role in industrialisation.[31] Ian Carter argues the railways were a major focus because they have been seen as a tool to understand modernity.[32] Railways intersect capitalism, administrative bureaucracy, divisions of labour, urban growth and social stratification, cosmopolitanism, and technological advance.[33] Early histories of my period were thus focused on administrative changes in the nationalised British Railways, rail's economic situation, and labour relations.[34] Road histories also linked the economic and political factors that enabled new flows of traffic and the growth of the car industry after 1945.[35]

Of course, periodisation can never be so neatly organised, and there were examples of social and cultural histories before the mobilities turn of the 2000s. These focused on the railways' effect on the rural or local world. Schivelbusch argued the railways' ordered lines expanded people's everyday horizons but also exerted control, weakened the ties of the local, and provided a new public sociability, making the world one large commercial arena vulnerable to exploitation.[36] Richards and MacKenzie framed the railway station as a hub of order, crime, but also community, the closure of which caused the decline of local post offices and shops before the 1950s.[37] Norman Smith described the railways' 'Indian summer' for

---

[31] J. Armstrong, 'Transport History, 1945-95: The Rise of a Topic to Maturity', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 104-109; S. O'Connell, in F. Carnevali et al (eds), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (London, 2007), 123; J. Kellet, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (London, 1969); R. Dennis, in M. Hewitt (ed.), *The Victorian World* (Oxford, 2012), 251.
[32] I. Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain* (Manchester, 2001), 8; Also, Freeman argues the railway became a Marxian metaphor for the impact of capital: M. Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (London, 1999), 21; 94.
[33] I. Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain* (Manchester, 2001), 8; F. Thompson, in F. Thompson (ed.), *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982), 6-9; 19-22; 38; 144; T. Gourvish, 'What Kind of Railway History Did We Get?' *Journal of Transport History*, 14 (1993), 117-120.
[34] M. Bonavia, *The Organisation of British Railways* (Shepperton, 1971); P. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (London, 1974), 295; P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Vol. II* (London, 1982); T. Barker and C. Savage, *An Economic History of Transport in Britain* (London, 1974), 211-249; J. Richardson, 'The Administration of Denationalisation: The Case of Road Haulage', *Public Administration*, 49 (1971); D. Aldcroft, *British Railways in Transition* (London, 1968), 179; G. Allen, *British Rail After Beeching* (London, 1966).
[35] W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics, 1896-1970* (London, 1971); D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age: Road and Traffic Policies* (Oxford, 1982).
[36] W. Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey* (Oakland, 1986), 16-17; 37; 58; 76; 188; 197.
[37] J. Richards and J. MacKenzie, *The Railway Station: A Social History* (Oxford, 1986), 7; 394-395.

leisure travel in the 1950s before mass motoring and Beeching's arrival.[38] Thus, as Carter has stated, the railways have been perceived as a symbol of modernity from their inception, but became increasingly framed by an image of the local and rural by 1945.[39]

From the 1970s, social approaches to the roads proliferated in transport history, but in the United States first.[40] The conflicting optimism of greater mobility and the menace of accidents associated with the car in popular culture were explored.[41] Thus, the railways and roads have long been analysed as symbols of progress and regression, but studies looking at them both together were rare.[42] Between the 1960s and 1990s, transport history also expanded unevenly. It went beyond whiggish approaches, looking at how each mode outcompeted the last through technological and market logics, but often still focused on one mode, their impact on the economy, the separation of work and home, and the performance of new legislation, monopolies, and business practices.[43]

This gradual historiographical progress was reflected in the studies of Beeching from the 1980s by Gourvish, and later by Divall and Loft. Terry Gourvish's foundational accounts of British Railways revealed the industry's scale and complexity, the vast changes it underwent after nationalisation, and imply the appropriateness of a reassessment of finances and administration. However, he stresses the closure process was disorganised and less

---

[38] D. Norman Smith, *The Railway and Its Passengers: A Social History* (London, 1985), 135.
[39] I. Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain* (Manchester, 2001), 8; 254-256; 297; A point also made by Loft: C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation of Britain* (London, 2006), 11-12.
[40] T. Barker, 'Slow Progress: Forty Years of Motoring Research', *Journal of Transport History*, 14 (1993), 142-143; 161.
[41] S. Bayley, *Sex, Drink and Fast Cars* (London, 1986), 1-7; J. Tyme, *Motorways Versus Democracy: Public Inquiries into Road Proposals* (London, 1978), 1; E. Backett and A. Johnston, 'Social Patterns of Road Accidents to Children', *British Medical Journal*, 1 (1959), 409-410; 412-413; W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics, 1896-1970* (London, 1971), 362; 369; 389-390; L. Burton, *Vulnerable Children: Three Studies* (London, 1968), 7; 75.
[42] M. Beaumont and M. Freeman, in M. Beaumont and M. Freeman (eds), *The Railway and Modernity* (Oxford, 2007), 10-13.
[43] Transport history, and railway history in particular, was criticised for being too descriptive, not analytical enough and not taking on post-structural approaches: T. Gourvish, 'What Kind of Railway History Did We Get?' *Journal of Transport History*, 14 (1993), 117; M. Freeman, 'The Railway as Cultural Metaphor', *Journal of Transport History*, 20 (1999), 161-164; M. Robbins, 'The Progress of Transport History', *Journal of Transport History*, 12 (1992) 81-85; J. Armstrong, 'Transport History, 1945-95', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 114-116.

money was saved than predicted.[44] Divall has stressed the haste with which Beeching's programme was formulated under financial pressures, which neglected the vast regional economic planning and population redistribution at the time.[45] However, within this framing, Divall does not argue that swathes of Beeching's closures were mistaken. Divall's work on the south east Dorset conurbation comprising Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole looks at three services proposed for closure, which at the time, in 1963, were loss-making, not heavily used by commuters, and passed through sparsely populated areas. These issues, as well as the prominence of road transport, were enough for central and local government not to resist their closure. With proposed overspill schemes and expansions planned, however, they would become useful by the 2000s, as well as the increasing expanse of London commuting, and the re-urbanisation of British city centres from the 1980s.[46]

Charles Loft's political and administrative study of the Beeching era concludes that after a decade of indecision between the government and the British Transport Commission, successive governments, driven by the Treasury, set new economic and financial parameters for the railways in the wider drive for modernisation, and in that context, closures were rationally conducted but with some mistakes. He also argues that the extent to which closures ignored their social costs or covered up their potential to break-even has been over-emphasised, but that their potential in aiding economic and population redistribution was underappreciated.[47] Often in closure cases, rail demand was low, which was deemed evidence of rail's lack of future potential, despite those areas later developing into commuter zones. It

---

[44] T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 210-212; 414; 455-461; T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002); T. Gourvish, *Britain's Railways, 1997-2005* (Oxford, 2008).
[45] C. Divall, in D. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 109.
[46] C. Divall, in M. Emmanuel et al (eds), *A U-Turn to the Future: Sustainable Urban Mobility* (Oxford, 2020), 92; 93; 98-102; 102; 105-107; C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'The Journey to Work: A Century of Change', *Area*, 31 (1999), 286-287.
[47] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain* (London, 2006), 6; 119; 150; C. Loft, 'The Beeching Myth', *History Today,* 53 (2003), 38-40; A point also made by Divall: Colin Divall, ''Do you Really Call that Progress, Mr Marples?' The Politics of Railway Closures in East Dorset', Unpublished Manuscript of a Paper First delivered at the Priest's House Museum, Dorset, 2 May 2014, 5-8; 12-14; R. Lamb, *The Macmillan Years, 1957-1963* (London, 1995), 440.

was technically and financially easier to accept the prevalence of the car as the future trend.[48] I expand on these perspectives by taking on the aims recently stressed by Gunn, of showing how class, location, gender, and affluence re-shaped people's mobility expectations, leading to the resistance to rail closures by women, the decline of buses in rural areas before the cities, and the choices the car provided in suburban space.[49]

I do not argue whether Beeching's closures were right or wrong.[50] I argue from the historical perspective, stressing the complexity of closures as well as the relatively cautious deliberation given to them by British Railways and successive governments, which has been underappreciated at a time rife with predictions of mass car ownership and affluence. These rail closures took place when the expansion of suburban living and car ownership looked as probable as the re-urbanisation of Britain's city centres from the 1980s may have seemed improbable.[51] The decisions taken responded to popular attitudes to the car, but neither did they surrender public transport, and the class disparity between rail and bus users must be better understood. The decisions taken by Conservative and Labour governments in relation to these complexities, and Beeching's financial rationale, were also defined by continuities, not discontinuity.[52] Those continuities included careful investigations of closures as well as

---

[48] This is a point also made strongly by Divall: C. Divall, in M. Emmanuel et al (eds), *A U-Turn to the Future: Sustainable Urban Mobility* (Oxford, 2020), 97-100; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain* (London, 2006), 94-95; 149-160; C. Loft, *Last Trains: Dr Beeching and the Death of Rural England* (London, 2013), 290-292.

[49] S. Gunn, 'Spatial Mobility in Later Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2021), 1- 3.

[50] The plan was based on the types of traffic and parts of the physical system it wanted to keep rather than an accounting approach because so little was known of the health of its division accounts: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 5.

[51] Plans for greater suburban space had been building for decades before 1945: J. Whitehand and C. Carr, 'England's Interwar Suburban Landscape and Reality', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25 (1999), 483-484; 498; Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 296.

[52] Successive Acts of Parliament, transport studies, and policies allowed the competitiveness of the roads in passenger and freight to shift national transport demand, but also sought to mitigate urban congestion: J. Hillman, *The Parliamentary Structuring of British Road-Rail Freight Coordination* (Evaston, 1973), 140-143; R. Lamb, *The Macmillan Years, 1957-1963* (London, 1995), 440-441; B. Castle, *Fighting All the Way* (London, 1993), 372.

the drive for savings. They could be political, but were rarely ideological, more often being pragmatic as transport choice fragmented beyond government control.[53]

It is important to recognise that the vast majority of Beeching's closure proposals fell into one of three groups: rural branch lines, services with low demand, or duplicate passenger stations or services, which this thesis will analyse.[54] But these definitions were never binary. There were cases in Leeds, Bradford, Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Nottingham, Bristol, Hull, and Liverpool where suburban commuter services also passed through cross-country areas, leading out to nearby towns. This made them less in-demand at the time, but useful in future, as suburbanisation continued. It is also important to recognise that the fascination with Beeching has grown in hindsight, since the disappearance of many rural branch lines.[55] Indeed, it is instructive to remember that union protests against Beeching's closure of railway workshops lasted just one day, on 3 October 1963.[56]

Thus, it is important to establish from the start that the railways had been an unprofitable industry since the early twentieth century. Despite this, the approach and impact of Beeching has been framed as a mistake from a range of perspectives. Beeching has been described as a form of social and urban destruction with the implication that he caused a substantial transfer of passengers from rail to road.[57] Other complaints are the lack of urban transport coordination with town planning and that the railways could have been more

---

[53] J. Shaw and I. Docherty see transport as 'intensely political', in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 31; Loft argues ideology became less important in rail policy from the mid-1950s as its problems mounted, and the main parties in government sought to fit their decisions into the contemporary ideas of modernisation, decline, and technological advance: C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain* (London, 2006), 15; 25; 88; 133.
[54] In Liverpool, there were 3 different stations offering separate services to Manchester: J. Patmore, 'The British Railway Network in the Beeching Era', *Economic Geography*, 41 (1965), 72-78; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 14.
[55] H. White, *Forgotten Railways* (Warley, 1986), 17; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways* (London, 2006), 87.
[56] P. Bagwell, *End of the Line? The Fate of Public Transport Under Thatcher* (London, 1984), 82.
[57] Described as a 'bankruptcy of the social imagination' in, L. Mumford, *The Highway and the City* (London, 1963), 10; O. Saumarez Smith, 'Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment', *The Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), 223; 232; C. Pooley, 'Landscapes without the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 270-271; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 225; J. Moran, *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London, 2010), 41; 177; 246; J. Richards and J. MacKenzie, *The Railway Station* (Oxford, 1986), 7.

competitive against the roads.[58] Beeching's closures have been associated with falling rail demand, which 'promoted car use'.[59] There are works that identify closures they believe to be mistaken.[60] Much of these, however, start from the position of trying to save as many rail lines as possible, rather than a historical approach.[61] But there are also accounts framing Beeching as personally liked at British Railways, dealing with 'an impossible task', that accept a closure programme was inevitable, and that many of his organisational reforms helped improve performance by the 1980s.[62]

The History of Mobilities

The lack of progress within transport history to embrace cultural approaches by the 1990s led Divall and Revill to argue in the 2000s that it must engage with the cultural turn to explore how people's mobility was shaped. The power behind ideas and discourses that created those new transport technologies, the framing of legislation, and the nature of

---

[58] R. Haywood, 'Mind the Gap: Town Planning', *European Planning Studies*, 6 (1998), 193-195; P. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution* (London, 1974), 283; 337; 375.

[59] A. Root, in A. Halsey and K. Webb (eds), *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends* (Basingstoke, 2000), 448; G. Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline: The Rise of Britain since 1945* (London, 2004), 282; C. Pooley, 'Landscapes Without the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 270-271.

[60] C. Austin and R. Faulkner, *Disconnected! Broken Lines* (Oxford, 2015), 132-136; D. Henshaw, *The Great Railway Conspiracy* (Hawes, 1991), 268-276.

[61] Gijs Mom has written of the influence of amateur histories on transport history, and of the focus on public transport and 'nostalgia': G. Mom, 'What Kind of Transport History Did We Get?' *Journal of Transport History*, 24 (2003), 121-122; 131; John Armstrong and Theo Barker were sceptical about the work of rail and other enthusiasts: J. Armstrong, 'Transport History, 1945-95: The Rise of a Topic to Maturity', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 103; Anti-Beeching narratives: R. Adley, *Out of Steam: The Beeching Years in Hindsight* (Hitchin, 1990), 33-40; 76-77; R. Lamb, *The Macmillan Years, 1957-1963* (London, 1995), 433-440; J. Holland, *Dr Beeching's Axe Fifty Years On* (Newton Abbot, 2013), 7-8; D. Henshaw, *The Great Railway Conspiracy* (Hawes, 1991), 151; 232-234; I. Marchant, *Parallel Lines: Or Journeys on the Railway of Dreams* (London, 2003), 135; 301-302; M. Engel, *Eleven Minutes Late* (Oxford, 2009), 222; 227-228; P. Salveson, *Beeching in Reverse* (Huddersfield, 2001), 15.

[62] R. Hardy, *Beeching: Champion of the Railways?* (London, 1989), 15; H. White, 'Beeching – Benefactor or Bogeyman?', *Journal of the Railway and Canal Historical Society*, 30 (1990), 4-5; G. Allen, 'Dr Beeching Prescribes', *Modern Railways*, 17 (1963), 289; M. Bonavia, 'Stamp and Beeching: Parallels and Contrasts', *Journal of Railway and Canal Historical Society*, 30 (1991), 219-222; D. Clough, *Dr Beeching's Remedy* (Hersham, 2013), 156; S. Glaister et al, *Transport Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, 1998), 19; S. Bradley, *The Railways: Nation, Network and People* (London, 2015), 510; C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 284-292; P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Volume 2* (London, 1982), 26; *Financial Times*, 26 November 1964.

people's attitudes had to play a bigger role. This, for example, would reveal how a consensus could form framing the car as a symbol of progress, and cities transformed to accommodate them. But at the same time, a variety of voices opposing it, according to gender, class, or race, could be uncovered to form new narratives, as well as the experiences of using transport, both designed and accidental.[63]

Freeman then retorted that studies of transport modes as symbols of progress in conflict with their reshaping of cities and social segregation were underway, but that cultural frameworks can be vague, and the role of capital was still crucial.[64] Divall and Revill replied, arguing Freeman was still separating the cultural and material aspect of social life too much, making transport history a barometer of social change when its cultural and technical shifts constituted social change.[65] I argue that cultural approaches have expanded our understanding of mobility, revealing how discursive power relations legitimise new technologies and policies. But they can be light on historical evidence in relation to everyday people's views. By studying policy as well as people, and emphasising transport history's complexity, a social approach becomes less a barometer of change than a diverse web of contingent factors. I stress the car was more than just a conceptual or discursive force and had vast appeal for formerly immobile classes. Rail closures were also treated with social as well as financial judgements, and people across class made demands for their mobility as individuals beyond the divides of the modes or public or private provision that government struggled to deliver.

---

[63] C. Divall and G. Revill, 'Cultures of Transport: Representation, Practice and Technology' *Journal of Transport History*, 26 (2005), 100-107.
[64] M. Freeman, 'Turn If You Want To: A Comment', *Journal of Transport History*, 27 (2006), 138-141.
[65] C. Divall and G. Revill, 'No Turn Needed: A Reply', *Journal of Transport History*, 27 (2006), 145-148.

The effect of the mobilities turn in sociology in the 2000s[66] was to provide transport history with conceptual frameworks for Divall and Revill's direction.[67] It saw mobility as central to social formation and change. One of its foci was on the roads' impact in furthering globalisation and the discourses legitimising it. Within this, the success of the car was described by Urry as an unstoppable, self-reinforcing system: the car as the quintessential manufactured object by iconic capitalist firms. The car was defined as an item for individual consumption and status, immersed in the working of the economy, national infrastructure, requiring vast global resources and supply-chains to sustain. As a private mode, it also coerced people into an 'intense flexibility' in daily life, making other modes 'inflexible and fragmented'.[68] Thus, mobilities studies sought to uncover the post-structural and political relations behind the spread of transport technology and had a desire to study the past.[69]

Mobility and its relationship with transport were also better defined by mobilities studies, articulating the social, emotional, and sensory dimensions to people's experiences.[70] Mobility was described as the combination of physical movement, representations and meanings of movement, and the experience and embodied practices of movement, showing how travel is embedded in our sociability.[71] The growth of car use, or automobility, was again

---

[66] Mobilities studies can use sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, historical geography, transport geography, migration studies, and technology studies, looking at both physical and human factors. Mobilities was not studied as much before the 2000s because the social sciences saw the notion of 'dwelling' rather than movement as central to social formation and meanings: M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning*, 38 (2006), 207-209; 213; J. Shaw and I. Docherty, in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 25-27; N. Salazar, in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 55-56.

[67] The Mobilities Turn was an influence on the T2M International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility Association and Conference, formed in 2003: G. Mom et al, in G. Mom et al (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art* (Neuchatel, 2009), 14-23.

[68] J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 17-19; 115; J. Urry, 'The System of Automobility', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21 (2004), 28; M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'The City and the Car', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (2000), 745.

[69] D. Cresswell, 'Towards a Politics of Mobility', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28 (2010), 17-21.

[70] M. Sheller, 'Automotive Emotions: Feeling the Car', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21 (2004), 224; The effect of capitalism on the experience and effect of faster movement, or accelerationism, has also been studied: P. Merriman, 'Mobilities III: Arrivals', *Progress in Human Geography*, 41 (2017), 275-378; N. Thrift, 'The Aesthetic Experience of Traffic in the Modern City', *Urban Studies*, 40 (2003), 1614-1619.

[71] D. Cresswell, 'Towards a Politics of Mobility', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28 (2010), 17-20.

a central focus, echoing postwar community studies in their argument that as people moved more and faster, they were uprooted from their community.[72] Automobility could thus be described as a technological and capitalistic system making society and the national infrastructure dependent on it. The roads and their vehicles could thus be exclusionary – some participated in that system through car ownership and others did not.[73] This further underlines automobility as socially constructed but multifarious as it can be legitimised and perceived from different perspectives, including its beneficiaries, such as men, but also the excluded such as women, the poor, and pedestrians.[74]

The four main forms of social mobility were also outlined by geographical and sociological approaches: everyday mobility, travel, changes in residence, and migration. This again shows mobility is an intensely social activity. It confers social status, depends on economics, impacts on others, and can be either compulsory or a choice.[75] Indeed, how people form their associations with transport and their mobility has been researched. As well as sensory associations, there is an emotional dimension – people feel a particular attachment or identify a feeling with a journey or mode. As a result, transport and mobility can be associated with new experiences and freedom, but also mundaneness, constraints, and everyday necessity.[76] I will expand on these everyday associations with the car, bus, and railways with a social history perspective in the context of location, class, gender, and age,[77]

---

[72] H. Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity* (New York, 2013), 6-8; 18; 69; 105-106; 158; J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 220; T. Cresswell, in G. Benko and U. Strohmayer (eds), *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity* (Oxford, 1997), 361; 372-375; 377-379.
[73] T. Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (Oxford, 2006), 161.
[74] The Social Construction of Technology hypothesis (SCOT) is part of this perspective: J. Beckmann, 'Automobility – A Social Problem', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 19 (2001), 594-596.
[75] Modelling of modal choice started in the United States in 1974: V. Kaufmann, in G. Mom, G. Pirie and L. Tissot (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art in the History of Transport* (Neuchatel, 2009), 43-44; 56.
[76] These paradigms are taken from the urban context but are useful for general reference to people's transport experiences: C. Pooley, 'Cities, Spaces and Movement: Everyday Experiences of Urban Travel', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 94-98.
[77] This is an avenue highlighted as germane by Gunn: S. Gunn, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 229.

but show the car had more potential to expand mobility than is currently stressed, and the individual's perspective in these associations will be a central focus.

These sociological frameworks had a particular relevance to how the urban past was understood from the 2000s. During the postwar period, automobility was framed as a logical advancement in modernity in which private movement was widespread, with strong associations to personal choice, status, and the good life, but also a threat to urbanity.[78] By the 2000s, however, automobility was understood by the social sciences as requiring a symbiotic relationship between people and the car that constituted that modernity. The everyday use of a car produced a hybrid machine cyborg that makes people think and act differently when insulated within its private space, separating them from human contact in local communities and streets built long before its invention.[79] The cultural power of the car also made society slow to understand it does not offer what it promises without irrevocably transforming the city into an asocial space, causing accidents, exhausting natural resources, and widening class and gender divides.[80] A clear dichotomy thus emerged between attitudes towards the car as it became a mass item in the 1960s, and interdisciplinary frameworks trying to understand that epoch forty years later.[81]

---

[78] Roland Barthes framed the car as 'cathedrals' of the modern era: R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London, 1972), 7; 88; Théophile Gautier had called railway stations 'cathedrals of the new humanity' in the previous century: J. Richards and J. MacKenzie, *The Railway Station* (Oxford, 1986), 3; J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (London, 1965), 352; Iain Nairn, *Your England Revisited* (London, 1964), 9-10; 22; 62; 70; 80.

[79] J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 118; B. Luckin and D. Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility', *Cultural and Social History*, 6 (2009), 212; N. Thrift, 'Driving in the City', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21 (2004), 47; D. Merriman, 'Automobility and the Geographies of the Car', *Geography Compass*, 3 (2009), 592; J. Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies* (London, 2000), 63; 77; H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991), 98; Actor Network Theory suggests people view technological objects as semi-human, anthropomorphising the car or train: J. Beckmann, 'Automobility – A Social Problem', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 19 (2001), 603; M. Freeman, 'Turn If You Want To' *Journal of Transport History*, 27 (2006), 140; 142.

[80] J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 118; 133; 278; A city may be rebuilt for the car or new public transport, reshaping society, which makes transport infrastructure a source of material culture: S. Robertson, 'Visions of Urban Mobility: The Westway', *Cultural Geographies*, 14 (2007), 83; J. Appleton, 'The Communications of Watford Gap', *Transactions and Papers*, 28 (1960), 215.

[81] P. Merriman, 'Driving Places: Marc Augé', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21 (2004), 156; 159-162.

This was seen in transport history as it focused more on the car by the 1990s due to its pre-eminence in contemporary society.[82] As the shipping and rail industries declined, the focus of research shifted from producers to consumers – the people using transport.[83] The United States and Germany explored the social impact and culture of the car and roads more than Britain.[84] But since the 2010s, the effect of roads in urban areas and on marginalised groups has been studied, focusing on accidents, and youth rebellion.[85] Gunn has studied how the car was perceived as a transformative mass-item in government and intellectual discourse with a growing concern for urbanity, environment, and pollution,[86] and how different cities sought to accommodate it through comprehensive redevelopment before the rejection of the motor city ideal in the early 1970s.[87] The advantages of road haulage over rail freight were also uncovered in Britain, but this contradicted the idea that Beeching's reforms and greater rail provision could have stopped that undeniable trend.[88]

With the growth of the study of the people using transport, its technology and infrastructure as cultural and social constructs have been explored in history, as well as people's experiences of them.[89] Peter Merriman has used these approaches to show how car

---

[82] G. Mom and P. Norton, 'Mobility Studies at a Crossroads', *Mobility in History*, 5 (2014), 1-6.
[83] P. Lyth, 'The *JTH* at Fifty and the Shape of Things to Come', *Journal of Transport History*, 24 (2003), 5-6.
[84] P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography* (Oxford, 2007), 17-20; R. Koshar, 'On the History of the Automobile in Everyday Life', *Contemporary European History*, 10 (2001), 144-145; 152.
[85] C. Williams, in T. Crook and M. Esbester (eds), *Governing Risks in Modern Britain* (London, 2016), 218; L. Jackson and A. Bartie, 'Children of the City': Juvenile Justice', *Economic History Review*, 64 (2011), 88-89; 95-97; 102; 107; A. de Greiff and M. Hard, 'The Historical Ironies of Roads', *Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 3-4.
[86] S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problem of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011); S. Gunn, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain', *Social History*, 38 (2013); Studies of the car and the car in relation to environmental history was slow before 2008: T. McCarthy, in G. Mom et al (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art in the History of Transport* (Neuchatel, 2009), 70.
[87] S. Gunn, 'Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse of the Motor City Ideal', *The Historical Journal*, 61 (2018); S. Gunn, 'The Rise and Fall of British Urban Modernism: Planning Bradford', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010); Gunn and Townsend have also provided a comparison between British and Japanese cities: S. Gunn and S. Townsend, *Automobility and the City in Twentieth Century Britain and Japan* (London, 2019).
[88] P. Scott, 'British Railways and the Challenge of Road Haulage', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13 (2002); P. Scott, 'The Growth of Road Haulage, 1921-58', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998); S. Bradley, *The Railways: Nation, Network* (London, 2015), 417; S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 113.
[89] C. Divall et al, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 5; C. Divall, in C. Divall (ed.), *Cultural Histories of Sociabilities* (London, 2015), 5-7; M. Freeman, 'The Railway as Cultural Metaphor', *Journal of Transport History*, 20 (1999).

driving is social and roads are spaces of place and manifold experience shaped by their cultural and technical assembly.[90] The intrusiveness of roads in people's lives was justified and challenged in magazines, newspapers, advertising, scientific studies, as well as tour guides and the mapping of Britain according to its transport infrastructure that represented the extents and limits of people's spatial mobility.[91] The ways in which transport has been studied in relation to approved forms of road behaviour as well as the stigmatisation of mass movement, their social paradigms and laws, have also used Foucauldian governmentality as a central framework.[92]

Mobility has also been understood through the postmodern notions of space, place, and the self.[93] Lefebvre was influential in these theories of everyday life, arguing spaces have connected practices and meaning, which shape related political issues, including the ways people used and moved through those spaces.[94] But these notions can be complicated by subsequent historiography. Pooley has found that people's experience of movement and space are often mundane, routine, and based on the individual's interests. The historiography can thus be quick to ascribe meanings to people's everyday interactions with urban space.[95] Pooley argues that these sociological approaches are crucial but can look at past mobility 'superficially and without reference to strong evidence' in the sources.[96] Thus, between the

---

[90] P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography* (Oxford, 2007), 1-15; P. Merriman, 'Driving Places: Marc Augé', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21 (2004), 146-147.
[91] P. Merriman, 'Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre', *The Sociological Review*, 54 (2006), 75; 83-84; P. Merriman, 'Operation Motorway: Landscapes of Construction', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31 (2005), 114-115; 120; P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography* (Oxford, 2007), 145; 174-178; M. Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain* (Oxford, 2010), 75; 142; 182; 218.
[92] P. Merriman, 'Materiality, Subjectification and Government', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23 (2005), 235-236; 240; P. Merriman, 'Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre', *The Sociological Review*, 54 (2006), 76; P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography* (Oxford, 2007), 9; 142-144.
[93] Doreen Massey has framed movement as central to the production and performance of space and place; how people create meanings from their surroundings, centring on class, family, gender: D. Massey, in P. Gilroy et al (eds), *Without Guarantees* (London, 2000), 225-227; 227-230; J. Urry, 'The System of Automobility', *Theory, Culture & Society* 21 (2004), 36.
[94] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991), 15; 33; 38; 50; 61-62; 97-99; 359.
[95] C. Pooley, 'Cities, Spaces and Movement', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 91; 94-96; 109.
[96] C. Pooley, 'Connecting Historical Studies of Transport, Mobility and Migration', *Journal of Transport History*, 38 (2107), 253; 252-255.

2000s and today, although transport and mobility historiographies have proliferated, increasingly using sociology and geography, they have failed to cohere a set of intellectual frameworks and goals.[97]

Indeed, with the growth of the history of mobility, we have seen the return of an 'on-going debate in transport history about how to maintain modern relevance'.[98] I address this by expanding the social history of the railways, bus, and car in the postwar period. Studying these modes together at the moment the car became a mass-owned item has not been done before.[99] Doing so reveals that it is inappropriate to frame the car as a wholly insidious cultural or environmental force due to its appeal and convenience, and the practical difficulties of providing alternatives.[100] The car should be framed more as another mode to expand the potential mobility of a demanding society, with its private ownership a secondary factor. It pushed successive governments to seek policy solutions, but as open as people were to using public transport that was fast and affordable, they often could not compete with the car in urban, suburban, and rural space. Therefore, in bringing together mobilities approaches, by looking at people's perceptions of these modes, with transport history's focus on policy and logistics, the car is revealed as less controllable than is assumed in this demanding postwar consumer society.

I also find people wanted the option of the 'intense flexibility' Urry stigmatised more than he and the historiography suggest they resisted or felt uprooted by it. Whether they used the different modes or not, they represented convenience to people. I also argue that the

---

[97] Demonstrated by Mom's plea in 2003, and then again in 2015, to turn transport history into the history of mobility through a set of frameworks: G. Mom, 'What Kind of Transport History Did We Get?' *Journal of Transport History*, 24 (2003), 122; 133-134; G. Mom, 'The Crisis of Transport History: A Critique, and a Vista', *Mobility in History*, 6 (2016), 7-8.

[98] J. Fowler, 'Historical Institutionalism, Hybridity', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 297; This was not helped by the termination of the master's course in Railway Studies at York University in 2022: M. Esbester, 'A Fundamental Threat to Our Field', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 351.

[99] An example of a social history of the railways is: S. Bradley, *The Railways: Nation, Network and People* (London, 2015).

[100] C. Pooley, 'Mobility in the Twentieth Century', in D. Gilbert et al (eds), *Geographies of British Modernity* (Oxford, 2003), 91.

'inflexible and fragmented' nature of public transport was as much due to the complexity of the historic transport system and the diversity of mobility demands across urban, suburban, and rural locations.[101] However, rather than the rise of the car hogging the postwar historiography, it has received surprisingly little attention in British social history, which this thesis seeks to correct. But it is also right that the desires of different groups without access to it should be explored further. As I do, I reveal women's mobility inequality in this period needs more nuance because more agency was shown by them than is currently known.[102]

Social and Cultural Approaches to Transport and Mobility History

I will study everyday mobility, exclusion, individualism, agency, and the material contingencies of policy in transport. But to do this, a wider historiographical field connected to how people perceived their mobility in relation to their social lives is needed. These fields include affluence, individualism, gender, popular individualism, and working class community. Rising car ownership did not just represent the entrance of a new technology into mass society. It was the result of and perpetuated the expansion of consumerism, private choice, and leisure as incomes rose for many though not all. A central point of contention within these historiographical fields is the extent to which individualism and privatism were in conflict with notions of community and collectivism in the postwar period. I seek to re-emphasise the practical uses and appeal of the car on the individual and household level, and people's non-ideological perceptions of transport more widely.

[101] J. Urry, 'The System of Automobility', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21 (2004), 28; M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'The City and the Car', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (2000), 745.
[102] C. Pooley, 'Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion', *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), 100.

In agreement with Lawrence and others, I find working class households valued greater individual choice over collectivism.[103] People embraced mobility choice for convenience and the selectivity it offered in where to work, live, and who to socialise with. This is not to argue that with greater choice people travelled much more or it entirely transformed how they lived. Pooley has found greater continuity in everyday mobility patterns than upheaval.[104] I stress people's desire for choice, whether they take it up or not, relative expansions in everyday movements in certain locations, and how the different modes could provide it for different social groups regardless of their public or private provision. Nor do I argue people simply sought privatism. Goldthorpe's study, *The Affluent Worker*, focuses on privatism and rejected Labour revisionists' idea that affluence caused embourgeoisement and found the working class in New Towns and suburban space had an instrumentalist view of work, replacing the old densely populated neighbourhood with the nuclear family, consumerism, and privacy without emulating middle class habits or abandoning the solidarity that protected working conditions. This was present among Luton car workers, and mechanical transport facilitated it.[105]

Indeed, a senior personnel officer at the Vauxhall plant admitted that 'participation in the firm's club was not nearly so great as had been originally expected' because people drove in and drove away according to their hours. 'Even people within an easy bus ride don't like coming back', he stated.[106] However, I also value the subsequent findings by Fiona Devine, showing that people moving to new suburban spaces were not solely doing so for materialist or wholly privatised lives. People moved to find a job, for affordable housing, or followed

---

[103] J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me* (Oxford, 2019), 7; 17; J. Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life', *Cultural and Social History*, 19 (2013), 289; L. Butler, 'Michael Young, the Institute of Community Studies', *Twentieth Century British History*, 26 (2015), 224.
[104] The speed and length of journeys have increased but the number and purposes of trips have stayed relatively stable, centring on local, essential trips: C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century? Changes in Everyday Mobility* (Aldershot, 2005), 1-4; 57-58; 187 224.
[105] J. Goldthorpe et al, *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour* (Cambridge, 1968), 26-31; 174-179.
[106] Ibid., 92.

kin, as well as the aspiration for more space and choice. Once there, they sought social groups, local events, and work colleague relationships rather than archetypal working class traditions, or total privatism.[107] As I will, Devine also stresses the disparities between different areas of the country so that the cultural associations of those moving out of London could be different to those in older industrial areas in other locations.[108]

Therefore, I do not seek to provide sweeping judgements on the mobility desires of whole classes by removing them from their varying local communities, income disparities, or locations. I seek to show that in the examples provided, in the suburbs especially, where so many moved in this period, people sought greater transport and mobility choice beyond the simple necessity of needing to travel further from their new homes, and in this, the car became central across class and for men and women. But I acknowledge the importance of income disparities in different local economies. The demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic holes in the narrative of affluence, discovered in the mid-1960s,[109] have been backed up by histories of inequality, dependence on poor suburban bus services, and the slowness of the car to spread.[110] Stefan Ramsden has also shown that community depended on the location's economy, incomes, housing, and characteristics, which in a moderately affluent Yorkshire town could see cars being used to maintain working class community through lifts.[111] Therefore, I do not try to plot a wholesale shift from the existing

---

[107] F. Devine, *Affluent Worker Revisited: Privatism and the Working Class* (Edinburgh, 1992), 6-7; 23-26; 22-36; 53-54; 202-206.
[108] Ibid.
[109] J. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (London, 1961), 200; B. Abel-Smith and P. Townsend, *The Poor and the Poorest* (London, 1965), 57-60; 66; K. Coates and R. Silburn, *Poverty: The Forgotten Englishmen* (Harmondsworth, 1970), 13-15; 25.
[110] S. Todd, 'Affluence, Class and Crown Street', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 509; S. Todd, 'Phoenix Rising', *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), 694; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 228; 232; P. Shapely, *The Politics of Housing* (Manchester, 2007), 149; T. Hatton and R. Bailey, 'Seebohm Rowntree and the Postwar Poverty Puzzle', *Economic History Review*, 53 (2000), 536.
[111] S. Ramsden, 'Remaking Working Class Community', *Contemporary British History*, 29 (2015), 12-15; S. Ramsden, *Working Class Community in the Age of Affluence* (Abingdon, 2017), 42-53; 71; 125-129; M. Hillman and A. Whalley, *The Social Consequences of Rail Closures* (London, 1980), 93-95; This was also evident in rural areas in this period, across class: Study of Rural Transport in West Suffolk, Report of the Steering Group, May 1971, TNA, Ministry of Transport Files [henceforth MT] 152/115.

historiography. In agreement with the notion that community could be reshaped in the suburbs, I stress people's relatively non-ideological perceptions of transport and the uses of the car, bus, and train in suburban and extra-urban space to expand individual choice.

The nature of working class social relations that were the focus of community and affluence studies at the time, looking at social stratification, neighbourhood, family, solidarity, and mobility,[112] have been re-evaluated by Savage, arguing working people did not have an intellectual insight into class, but had a keen sense of when inequality existed, including mobility inequality, and knew the importance of money in expanding choice. Working people were thus materially aspirational and saw the car as symbolising the good life.[113] I will argue that people's perceptions of transport were thus not as ideologically framed as the community studies or the historiography sometimes suggests. The working class embraced the choice and individualism of cars, but women, the elderly, and the middle class also resisted the closure of the publicly owned railways, and so the desire for individual choice ran across class, public or private provision, and the indices we must focus on are more fragmented according to gender, location, age, and income. This is supported when transport is placed within wider historiographical fields of individualism, expanding consumerism, and non-ideological political activism, including among women.[114]

---

[112] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, (London, 1957); F. Zweig, *Men in the Pits* (London, 1949); University of Liverpool, *Neighbourhood and Community: An Enquiry into Social Relationship on Housing Estates in Liverpool and Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1954); F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1961); R. Pahl, 'Class and Community in English Commuter Villages', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965); R. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure: The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire* (London, 1965); R. Pahl, 'The Two Class Village', *New Society*, 27 February 1964.
[113] M. Savage, 'Working Class Identities in the 1960s: Revisiting the Affluent Worker Study', *Sociology*, 39 (2005), 929-936; M. Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain* (Oxford, 2010), 37; 64; 142; 180-182; 218; 235; Similar found in: F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 133-138; 210.
[114] M. Hilton, 'Politics is Ordinary: Non-Governmental Organisations and Political Participation', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 232; 268; E. Jupp, 'Rethinking Local Activism', *Urban Studies*, 49 (2012), 3031; J. Graham and K. Gibson, 'An Ethics of the Local', *Rethinking Marxism*, 15 (2003), 71; A field of study in transport and political activism is the resistance to urban road building from the late 1960s and early 1970s: S. Gunn, 'Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse', *The Historical Journal*, 61 (2018), 234; J. Moran, *On Roads* (London, 2010), 199-240; J. Davis, in J. Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities* (Oxford, 2003), 254-260; 265.

The postwar community studies were partly critiques of mass consumerism threatening working class virtue,[115] but the historiographical literature has found the working class had individualist tendencies long before mass consumerism, and new suburban housing was perceived as an improvement on city life.[116] Indeed, the most credible complaint community studies made was not about alienation from traditional neighbourhoods, but the isolation of women in the suburbs, who lacked mobility.[117] I will show the private car could be a way to reduce that alienation for women, across class, but only if they could drive.

Nor do I frame the car as a purely material, practical purchase. It had multiple meanings and conferred aspiration and social status through classist and gendered paradigms.[118] Thus, another relevant strand of historiography is that reframing British attitudes and political movements as less ideologically bound, more cultural, democratic, and post-material than earlier narratives.[119] Swathes of society in the postwar period had political agency and high demands from government, but with little conscious ideological leaning.[120]

---

[115] An ongoing narrative since the nineteenth century in any case: J. Walton, in M. Daunton (eds), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2000), 741-744.
[116] M. Houlbrook, "A Pin to See the Peepshow', *Past and Present*, 207 (2010), 224; 242-243; P. Scott, 'Mr Drage, Mr Everyman, and the Creation of a Mass Market', *Economic History Review*, 62 (2009), 802; 815; P. Scott, 'Marketing Mass Home Ownership', *Business History*, 50 (2008), 7-14; A. Bain, 'The Growth of Television Ownership in the United Kingdom', *International Economic Review*, 3 (1962): S. Bowden and P. Turner, 'The Demand for Consumer Durables in the United Kingdom', *Journal of Economic History*, 53 (1993), 251-253; S. Bowden and P. Turner, 'Some Cross-Section Evidence on the Determinants of the Diffusion of Car Ownership', *Business History*, 35 (1993), 55-56; M. Clapson, 'The Suburban Aspiration in England', *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), 153-155; C. Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40 (2005), 351-352; 348.
[117] D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book One* (London, 2013), 293; M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs* (Manchester, 1998), 128-129.
[118] D. Thoms, in D. Thoms et al (eds), *The Motor Car and Popular Culture* (Abingdon, 1998), 41; 47-49; S. O'Connell, in D. Thoms et al (eds), *The Motor Car and Popular Culture* (Abingdon, 1998), 188-189.
[119] Earlier narratives stressed a sea-change of opinion and political culture after the economic shift of 1979, but the story of the railways and roads after 1979 are not so simple: J. Moran, *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London, 2010); T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002); Wider historiography on these postwar continuities: A. Davies et al, 'Everyman a Capitalist', or 'Free to Choose', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 499-501; J. Moran, "Stand Up and Be Counted: Hughie Green', *History Workshop Journal*, 70 (2010), 179; 194-195; R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Guildford, 1977), 29-33; Critique of Inglehart's approach as too simplistic: S. Majima and Mike Savage, 'Have There Been Cultural Shifts in Britain?' *Cultural Sociology*, 1 (2007), 311-313; F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 'Neo-Liberalism and Morality in the Making of Thatcherite', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 498; 512-514; 515; S. Brooke, 'Living in 'New Times: Historicising 1980s Britain', *History Compass*, 12 (2014), 24.
[120] L. Black and H. Pemberton, in L. Black et al (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013), 6; 8; L. Black, *Redefining British Politics* (Basingstoke, 2010), 1-7; M. Hilton et al, 'New Times Revisited: Britain in

Popular Individualism took this further, arguing that individualism is not a unitary phenomenon entirely rooted in consumerism or a 'me first' attitude.[121] Indeed, it was exhibited by many people, including women, who sought greater equality through the state as individuals, using only generally collective notions of social justice that were bolstered by the postwar welfare state.[122] This is the attitude many women took when objecting to rail closures in this period, and the private car was not seen in ideologically separate terms.[123]

Public provision also became more consumerist in these years. Housing was designed for affluent living, and residents of council estates embraced consumerism, forming ways of life that outmoded postwar planners.[124] This increasing demand for consumer, suburban living and cars by the 1970s has, however, been described as a 'proto-yuppy' tendency, which illustrates the way the car can be framed in the historiography.[125] The association of the car with the ideology of the private and neoliberalism, and public transport with collectivism, was influenced by the social scientific studies of automobility above, which characterised its expansion as marginalising public space.[126] But I show that during this period, it can be overemphasised how much political or ideological strategizing shaped transport policy, or the

---

the 1980s', *Contemporary British History*, 31 (2017), 147; 150; 152; A. Campsie, 'Socialism Will Never Be the Same Again', *Contemporary British History*, 31 (2017), 167-168; 172.

[121] F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, *Class, Politics and the Decline of Deference in England* (Oxford, 2018) 1-6; F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 'The Decline of Deference and the Left', *Juncture*, 23 (2016), 132; F. Trentmann, 'Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39 (2004), 376-378; 395-396.

[122] E. Robinson et al, 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism', *Twentieth Century History*, 28 (2017), 274; 289-290; Aspects of women's liberation in this period, however, were tied to the Left: P. Thane, in L. Black et al (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013), 174.

[123] Flores and Whiteley's modelling of voter choice suggests Tory votes among the individuals personally affected by closures fell in 1964 and those unaffected were more often men, who favoured Beeching's cuts: A. Flores and P. Whiteley, 'The "Beeching Axe"', *European Review*, 22 (2018), 365-366; 368-371.

[124] M. Hollow, 'The Age of Affluence Revisited', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 16 (2016), 286; 290; J. Greenhalgh, 'Consuming Communities: The Neighbourhood Unit', *Urban History*, 43 (2016), 159-160; 164-168; 174.

[125] T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 4; J. Moran, 'Imagining the Street in Post-War Britain', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 181.

[126] P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 63-67.

public's perceptions of these modes. The practical complexities of policy, and a broad demand for individual mobility across class were more important.[127]

It is also important to note that the social and cultural power of mobility was not solely picked up by sociology but was studied by geography and gender histories. However, postwar women's mobility remains understudied. In the late 1990s, Robin Law emphasised the importance of gender to transport and mobility history by putting it into five categories. Firstly, production and consumption divided labour along class and gender lines and forced men and women to take different journeys. Second, technology was divided between class and gender as women and poorer groups with fewer skills lived closer to work and accessed poorer public transport, organised for the male commute. Third, the Foucauldian notion of embodiment helped describe how the physical act of using different modes and limiting women's mobility was deemed appropriate for their bodies, and the needs of the old, mothers, and pregnant women were marginalised through public transport provision.[128] Fourthly, the ubiquity of masculine culture enabled wealthier men to be more mobile than poorer groups, and women were defined in more immobile domestic roles. Lastly, the organisation of urban space has been shaped by class and gender as land-use was valued according to male-centric economic forces, and the built environment organised primarily for the suburban middle class. This left poor housing, pedestrians, bus stops, and public facilities marginalised in space, revealing how intertwined mobility and transport infrastructure are in social life.[129]

Having started in the 1970s as part of transport geography's study of travel behaviour and urban policy, centring on the journey to work, transport and gender analysis expanded

---

[127] Indeed, there is a vast literature even on the relatively limited extent to which social democracy was overthrown by Thatcherism: D. Fraser, 'The Postwar Consensus: A Debate', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 53 (2000), 347-348; J. Meadowcroft, 'The Re-Nationalisation of Britain', *Economic Affairs*, 16 (2006), 74; G. Ortolano, *Thatcher's Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism* (Cambridge, 2019), 21-27; 59-60; 255-259; 403; The public's motivations were not as ideological or binary as postwar planners assumed: J. Le Grand, *Motivation, Agency, and Public Policy* (Oxford, 2003), 4-9.
[128] R. Law, 'Beyond 'Women and Transport': Towards New Geographies of Gender', *Progress in Human Geography*, 23 (1999), 577-583.
[129] Ibid.

slowly, looking at the mobility needs of marginalised groups and how household income was spent on transport.[130] Quantitative studies in the 1970s uncovered the difference in trips between men and women and feminist geography proliferated in the 1980s, looking at the spatial separation of production and reproduction.[131] There were early investigations into technology as a social construct controlled by men and requiring a skillset embedded in masculinity to utilise.[132] But most studies focused on travel patterns according to pre-accepted gender roles, women's fear of sexual violence while travelling, and not enough into how mobility inequality helped construct those gender roles through coercion and low incomes.[133] Colin Pooley, however, has since found that women from the nineteenth century onwards have been mobile and made decisions based on their own individual desires more than the feminist and gender historiography had assumed. This was a relative qualification. Women's mobility choices were always based on using what was available in their marginalised position, most often walking or finding public transport, but nevertheless using them to enact individual agency in everyday life.[134]

Therefore, rather than simply describing women's ancillary role and its impact on their mobility, gendered approaches have shown women's initiative in gaining mobility within existing gender roles. This, again, has been analysed more in the United States.[135]

---

[130] M. Walsh, 'Gender in the History of Transportation Services', *Business History Review*, 81 (2007), 545-546; 550-551; 555; R. Law, 'Beyond 'Women and Transport': Towards New Geographies of Gender', *Progress in Human Geography*, 23 (1999), 567-568.
[131] Ibid., 569; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 6.
[132] J. Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Cambridge, 1991), 8-23; 129.
[133] R. Law, 'Beyond 'Women and Transport': Towards New Geographies of Gender', *Progress in Human Geography*, 23 (1999), 568-169; 572; S. Bieri and N. Gerodetti, 'Falling Women' – 'Saving Angels', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 8 (2007), 217-221; 229; D. Drummond, in R. Roth and M. Polino (eds), *The City and the Railway in Europe* (Aldershot, 2003), 253-255.
[134] C. Pooley and M. Pooley, 'Young Women on the Move', *Social Science History*, 45 (2021), 495-497; 511-514; C. Pooley and S. Pooley, 'Constructing a Suburban Identity: Youth, Femininity', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 402; 408; C. Pooley, 'Cities, Spaces and Movement: Everyday Experiences of Urban Travel in England', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 99; F. Hodgson, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 31-45; Also: G. Clarsen, in G. Mom et al (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art* (Neuchatel, 2009), 238- 241.
[135] The number of female drivers and two-car households in the US grew much faster than in Britain with its higher incomes and suburb sprawl, but gender roles were still maintained: M. Walsh, in C. Divall (ed.), *Cultural*

There were transnational trends, as driving started as an upper and middle class pursuit in the United States and Britain by the interwar period, sometimes frames as the pursuit of female dilettantes and daredevils. But women's mobility was growing despite the female passenger being represented as decorative and passive, and the female driver coming second to the male breadwinner.[136] Margaret Walsh has stressed the importance of including British gender perspectives in mobility and transport history. She argues that transport history, which had focused so much on economic factors, can be used to show how political and business decisions impacted women, and the ways the same modes affected women and men differently in social life.[137]

Sean O'Connell's pre-1939 study of class, gender and the car shows how elite, masculine values shaped the way cars were designed, purchased, and how people behaved in relation to them, which limited women's, and to a lesser extent, poorer men's mobility and their relationship with the car. A laissez faire culture of car ownership and driving originating among higher class men in the early twentieth century associated it with status, autonomy, freedom, and masculinity. This gave the car disproportionate aspirational qualities compared to public transport as it reached the upper working class by 1939. The declining stigma around hire purchase and rising consumption gave the car an increasingly mass-market and feminised appeal, but the derogatory image of the woman driver endured.[138] I will show the car became less classist as it emerged as a mass item in the 1960s, though this conflicted with

---

Histories of Sociabilities (London, 2015), 37; V. Scharff, in C. Divall (ed.), *Cultural Histories of Sociabilities* (London, 2015), 24-28.

[136] V. Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York, 1991), 166-167; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 8-19; 44; 65-70; P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 98-110; P. Tinkler and C. Warsh, 'Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain and North America', *Journal of Women's History*, 20 (2008), 117-118; 122-128; 133.

[137] M. Walsh, 'Gendering Transport History', *Journal of Transport History*, 23 (2002), 1-7.

[138] S. O'Connell, S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society; Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester, 1998), 36-38; 51; 71; 112; 143; 220-221; Consumption as masculine, however, also proliferated in the 1950s and 60s: F. Mort, 'Cityscapes: Consumption, Masculinities', *Urban Studies*, 35 (1998), 892; 896; 901; Divall sees the battle over transport being won by the roads by the early 1900s: C. Divall, in M. Grieco and J. Urry (eds), *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society* (Farnham, 2011), 313.

sociological ideas of working class community.[139] By 1974, even the Automobile Association stated there 'is no longer any privilege vested in the ownership of a motor car', used for commuting, errands, and leisure.[140] I will also show that in this period the image of the woman driver improved as they became increasingly associated with safety rather than danger as efforts were made to increase their numbers and entrench mass motoring.

Thus, by the 2000s, the multi-dimensional and intersectional nature of transport and mobility was being explored in the historiography. With the greater engagement of interdisciplinary approaches and the broadening of concepts and definitions, they referred to the histories of technological advances in trains, road vehicles, but also societal changes in their use. There is a broad understanding that movement is a social activity shaped by people's relationship to work but also their cultural obligations.[141] The impact of mobility shapes urban development and the theoretical ideas associated with circulation in the transport and planning profession, on consumer choice, and identity. Transport and mobility are also understood as being directed by individual agency and the perceptions people have of those modes. However, I argue these latter perspectives require more attention – that of individual agency, the perceptions of everyday people, and how they affected policy.[142]

---

[139] A majority of Conservative and Labour voters owned a car by 1973: G. Gallup, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975, Vol. II* (New York, 1976), 1307.
[140] The Use of Leisure by the Motorist, July 1974, 5, Automobile Association Papers [henceforth AA], Documents on Railways and Misc., 1969-1983, 73M94/G1/1/742, Hampshire Archives [henceforth HA].
[141] P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 70.
[142] C. Divall and B. Schmucki, in C. Divall and W. Bond (eds), *Suburbanizing the Masses: Public Transport and Urban Development* (Oxford, 2017), 4-10.

Rationale and Research Questions

The above lays out the political, economic, and financial landscape of the historiography, as well as the literature on the social and cultural aspects of transport and mobility. Thus, this period poses questions that have hitherto gone understudied. Firstly, given the importance of location as transport choice fragmented between urban, suburban, and rural areas along the lines of income and class, what were the practical problems car ownership posed the large cities, and how could they be addressed with public transport?[143] Secondly, how draconian were Beeching's closures outside the narrative of his axe wielding if the railways' losses were so bad?[144] Third, as public transport declined and cars spread in this period, how did mass car ownership and Beeching's closures impact women? Fourthly, what were people's attitudes towards the car across class, how did they compare to contemporary sociological findings, and how did the car change men and women's everyday lives? Before now, the multi-modal studies of this period have consisted of early overviews of the different transport industries and their financial performance.[145] This thesis is a social history of how mobility transformed in the postwar period but also a transport history of how successive governments tried to deal with this upheaval in people's modal choices and movements. This requires the incorporation of the main modes together.

[143] Again, these issues and other germane questions concerning mobility and location, gender, race, and class in transport history were posed recently by: S. Gunn, 'Spatial Mobility in Later Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2021), 2-3.
[144] Early example of the use of the word 'axe' to describe Beeching's closures: *Financial Times*, 18 June 1962.
[145] For example: P. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (London, 1974), 295; P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Vol. II* (London, 1982); T. Barker and C. Savage, *An Economic History of Transport in Britain* (London, 1974), 211-249.

Methods and Sources

Transport and mobility history has acquired a wide range of approaches and definitions immersed in interdisciplinarity, but these do not cohere to a single set of methods.[146] These definitions, however, do help us understand the nature of mobility and transport without dictating how historical sources should be interpreted. For example, the different parts of the transport system, and how people experience them, have previously been put into three categories. Firstly, 'mobility-subjects' are the individuals or groups who used or worked in the transport industry, such as passengers or rail staff. I look at rail passengers, which have been a powerful minority in transport policy, but their class, location, and the nature of their opposition to rail closures in the Beeching period has not been sufficiently explored. The bus user and car driver are further examples of mobility-subjects, the latter becoming the pre-eminent mobility subject in the 1960s, which is why I study their perceptions and experiences.[147]

Secondly, 'mobility-objects' are the physical and symbolic perception of hardware such as trains, stations, motorways, and rail track. I stress the physical and financial advantages of the car had over the bus, the lengths people went to oppose local rail closures despite their retrograde image, and the demands bus and rail users put on government. This made policy very complex but reveals people's non-ideological view of the modes, whether publicly or privately provided. Within this, attitudes turned against the urban motorway in the 1970s, and the bus has long been perceived as the least desired mode. Thus, the meanings these objects had were multiple and unstable, and based on individual desires for mobility. Thirdly, 'mobility-scapes' are the spaces that roads and railways reshape, and the ways those

[146] M. Moraglio, 'Transport History Methodology: New Trends and Perspectives', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 169-171.
[147] This approach comes from: J. Beckmann, 'Automobility – A Social Problem', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 19 (2001), 593-594; 597; 599; G. Mom et al, in G. Mom, G. Pirie, L. Tissot (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art* (Neuchatel, 2009), 29-30; C. Divall, P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 38.

new spaces are perceived. Both urban and extra-urban areas have been seen as rail-scapes, but became seen as new modern spaces for the car before many urban highways, in turn, came to be seen as landscapes of decay, blight, and pollution.[148]

Thus, I focus on mobility subjects and objects rather than the spatial approaches to mobility-scapes. Mobility-objects such as train services and stations about to close, and the mass-produced car are studied in the context of mobility subjects – the people using them, who were highly diverse, particular, and increasingly demanding in this period. However, it is only when you link these concepts and study the modes, classes, and genders together, that the complexity of transport policy and the extent of people' demands in this period become clear.[149]

This fragmentation was by definition particular to location, incomes, gender, and age, and will not form part of a uniform narrative about postwar mobility or provide a retrospective policy solution to the disruption brought by the car. There is a wide desire in the historiography to do just that by showing why transport and mobility discourses are 'irreducible to other social or technological processes' in order to frame movement and the modes of transport themselves as the forces behind historical change. This explains the expansion of transnational comparative approaches and the search for common patterns in power relations to underline how mobility and transport played its part.[150] But I look at the connections mobility and transport have within a society, not to limit it, but expand it in social history without the need for a distinct ontological language, a set of methods, or

---

[148] G. Mom et al, in G. Mom, G. Pirie, L. Tissot (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art* (Neuchatel, 2009), 29-30; M. Moraglio, 'Seeking a (new) Ontology for Transport History', Journal of Transport History, 38 (2017), 5; P. Thomas, in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 215-216; O. Saumarez Smith, 'Inner City Crisis and the End of Urban Modernism', *Twentieth Century History*, 27 (2016), 581; 592; 595; J. Davis, in J. Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities* (Oxford, 2003), 254-264; S. Gunn, 'Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse of the Motor City Ideal', *The Historical Journal*, 61 (2018); 238; J. Moran, *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London, 2017), 10-30.
[149] C. Divall, P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 38.
[150] Ibid., 37.

potentially reductive comparisons.[151] Out of the main forms of mobility – everyday mobility, travel, changes in residence, and migration – I concentrate on everyday mobility, and the policy initiatives surrounding it.

Although chapter two analyses transport in postwar Western Europe, I do not take a comparative, multinational approach overall. Transport is an intersectional, multifarious, historically-specific subject where comparative approaches can bear fruit in only limited areas, and over-arching comparisons have to be heavily caveated.[152] Indeed, Revill argues the railway carriage could produce very different perceptions and forms of behaviour in different countries compared to Schivelbusch's more unitary vision.[153] Comparisons between modes within Britain have also not yet been studied enough.[154] Thus, by looking at the bus, car and train, the full complexity of mobility and policy in Britain through location, income, and gender, emerges.

Transport history has also been self-critical for focusing too much on economics, the Anglosphere, the railways, and on the nineteenth century.[155] I, therefore, take a social and gendered approach, looking at the three main modes, in the period after 1945. But there are aspects of this period that this thesis can not explore. These include road and rail industry administration, safety and accidents, road policing, coaches, cycling, the car industry,

---

[151] Gijs Mom has sought a set of methods for mobility history: G. Mom, 'The Crisis of Transport History: A Critique, and a Vista', *Mobility in History*, 6 (2016), 7-8. This has not come to fruition, but has been tried: P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014); M. Moraglio, 'Seeking a (new) Ontology for Transport History', Journal of Transport History, 38 (2017), 4-6; A recent article argues business management and government bureaucracies still use an ontology of mobility associated with time-keeping, budgetary restraint and control, when communication, spontaneity and collaboration are as important: D. Normark, 'Ontologies on Collision Course', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 287-290; Robin Law uses the term 'daily mobility' rather than 'transport' to better target the role of gender in mobility history: R. Law, 'Beyond 'Women and Transport': Towards New Geographies of Gender and Daily', *Progress in Human Geography*, 23 (1999), 568.

[152] This may be why such approaches are often found as single chapters in edited volumes, for example: C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics: Studies in Management and Efficiency* (Aldershot, 1985).

[153] G. Revill, in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 512-513.

[154] G. Mom, 'The Crisis of Transport History: A Critique, and a Vista', *Mobility in History*, 6 (2016), 7-8.

[155] J. Fowler, 'Historical Institutionalism, Hybridity', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 297-298.

children, labour relations, and race. It focuses on the three main mechanical modes, and thus cycling, walking, and motorcycling can not receive full attention.[156]

I will also focus primarily on the passenger side of the railways rather than freight. But freight is important to incorporate to some extent for several reasons. Freight was the railways' main source of revenue, which, by 1959, was in decline, making the railways' deficits irrecoverable. Profitable freight came mainly from heavy industrial resources,[157] the production of which was declining, and much freight was transferring to roads.[158] In 1955, there 5,000 heavy lorries in Britain. By 1975, there were 96,000.[159] Localised haulage also contributed to urban congestion, and so congestion does not refer simply to cars. Also, as freight was the railways' major financial asset, when individual passengers closures were considered, they were easier to save if they shared their line with local freight services, providing higher (or sometimes negligible) revenues for the area's rail finances.[160]

I will touch on rail finance and accounting, but both are outside the scope of this work, are highly variable, and open to different modelling and formulation. There has been much work on price optimisation, exploring price elasticities in public transport to model if demand would be boosted by raising fares on the least elastic customers, lowered for those

---

[156] After the bus, cycling was the most popular mode to commute before 1950, concentrated in smaller settlements and liked by men for its autonomy: C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Modal Choice and Modal Change', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 14; Cycling is another mode not studied enough: S. Gunn, 'Future of Mobility: The History of Transport Systems in the UK', Government Office for Science, 5 December 2018, 2-4; M. Hillman, in J. Whitelegg and G. Haq (eds), *The Earthscan Reader on World Transport* (London, 2003), 142; Motorcycling: S. Koerner, in D. Thoms et al, *The Motor Car and Popular Culture in the 20th Century* (Abingdon, 1998), 151; R. Church, *The Rise and Decline of the British Motor Industry* (Cambridge, 1995), 88; T. Whistler, *The British Motor Industry, 1945-1999* (Oxford, 1999), 1-7; On race: C. Seiler, 'The Significance of Race to Transport History', *Journal of Transport History*, 28 (2007), 307-310; P. Merriman, 'Operation Motorway: Landscapes of Construction', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31 (2005), 128; M. Beaumont and M. Freeman, in M. Beaumont and M. Freeman (eds), *The Railway and Modernity* (Oxford, 2007), 189; G. Pirie, in C. Divall (ed.), *Cultural Histories of Sociabilities, Spaces and Mobilities* (London, 2015), 40-42.
[157] In 1972, nearly 90% of freight tonnage came from coal, iron, steel, and aggregate: T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 53; First Meeting of the Working Group, 15 January 1963, 3-11, TNA, MT 124/930.
[158] The coal business was the only part of BR to cover its full costs: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 7.
[159] T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 6; *The Guardian*, 26 February 1963; *Financial Times*, 3 April 1963; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 149.
[160] C. Loft, 'Reappraisal and Reshaping: Government and the Railway Problem', *Contemporary British History,* (2001), 84; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 17; 24.

less willing to pay more, or whether to cut services.[161] There have also been efforts in the historiography to stress the inclusion of haulage, lorries, and vans within road transport, rather than simply concentrating on cars. However, I analyse the car from a social and gendered perspective, which has not been done enough in Britain in the postwar period. But it will also analyse bus use from a social and policy perspective, the other major mode of passenger road transport.[162]

Mobility history and its emphasis on cultural forces insists on the study of the human decisions and perceptions involved in transport and movement rather than deterministically describing economic and technological advances as driving change. Indeed, transport is a ''junction' connecting politics, technology, and culture'.[163] So, why have there not been more approaches akin to that taken by this thesis that incorporates politics, technology, and culture? One reason is that continuities are often more prevalent than discontinuities in mobility, and transport and mobility are deeply embedded in wider social and economic processes. Indeed, despite new approaches framing transport and mobility history as a vast upheaval to societal norms, Kaufmann caveated this view with four complications which are relevant to the potential of sources.[164]

Firstly, increased speed of movement via new technology does not necessarily vastly increase how much people travel.[165] Second, people's choices have become more

---

[161] S. Glaister, 'Some Characteristics of Rail Commuter Demand', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 17 (1983), 131; S. Glaister, *Fundamentals of Transport Economics* (Oxford, 1981), 2-12; 61; 161.
[162] T. Barker, 'Slow Progress: Forty Years of Motoring Research', *Journal of Transport History*, 14 (1993), 157-160; Corinne Mulley and John Hibbs have provided the core research on bus administration from the interwar period to the 1980s: C. Mulley, 'The Nationalisation of the Bus Industry', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 122-136; J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989).
[163] C. Divall and B. Schmucki, in C. Divall and W. Bond (eds), *Suburbanizing the Masses* (Oxford, 2017), 18.
[164] V. Kaufmann, 'On Transport History and Contemporary Social Theory', *Journal of Transport History*, 28 (2007), 304-305.
[165] A point also made by Merriman, Cresswell, and Pooley: P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 5; D. Cresswell, 'Towards a Politics of Mobility', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28 (2010), 29; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century? Changes in Everyday Mobility* (Aldershot, 2005); V. Kaufmann, 'On Transport History and Contemporary Social Theory', *Journal of Transport History*, 28 (2007), 304-305; V. Kaufmann, *Re-Thinking Mobility* (Aldershot, 2002), 3-14; 100-104.

individually-based, but that can lead to people migrating or moving less, not more. Third, being able to move more does not automatically come with social mobility.[166] Fourth, greater automobility actually amounts to a fragmentation of movements, as some groups use new technologies more than others and their journeys occur over different locations and distances and at different times.[167] Therefore, the sources describing this complexity are themselves fragmented, diverse, and difficult to collate, and the sources needed to incorporate gender, age, location, income, and individual circumstances are equally diverse.[168]

The importance of land use and existing power structures in producing continuities in people's movements, despite advances in transport technology, is a theme of historical geographer Colin Pooley, showing class, location, and gender to be crucial indices of study.[169] Therefore, rather than transport being a transformational force, as mobilities studies wants to frame it, it is linked to a wider web of contingent social factors, making it a subject for social history. However, the sources evidencing the transport choices of actual people over time are often contained in quantitative data. Indeed, a major reason the experiences and perceptions of transport from people in everyday life have not been studied enough is the depth of qualitative historical sources can be relatively scant.

As Pooley describes, 'not surprisingly, most transport histories focus mainly on matters of infrastructure, usage, and technological change'. Bus also, 'few conventional sources provide information' on individual 'experiences of movement', and those that exist often touch on transport and mobility indirectly through a different topic due to transport being such an everyday occurrence. Oral histories can be used, but often memory is

---

[166] Mobility in the 1970s was found to be lower for home-owners than renters: J. Quigley and D. Weinberg, 'Intra-Urban Residential Mobility', *International Regional Science Review*, 2 (1977), 59.
[167] V. Kaufmann, 'On Transport History and Contemporary Social Theory', *Journal of Transport History*, 28 (2007), 304-305; V. Kaufmann, *Re-Thinking Mobility* (Aldershot, 2002), 3-14; 100-104.
[168] J. Hopkin, *The Role of an Understanding of Social Factors in Forecasting Car Ownership* (Crowthorne, 1981), 12-15, TRL.
[169] C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century? Changes in Everyday Mobility* (Aldershot, 2005), 1-4.

unreliable, especially for everyday movements. Photography, magazines, newspapers, literature, and television can be useful, but often produce representations shaped by the attempt to sell, or the distinct political or cultural inclinations of the producer.[170] There are, however, as we will see, sources that provide insights into how everyday people perceived transport and demanded mobility. These can reveal abrupt changes to their movements in the suburbs rather than continuities alone, and this thesis seeks to bring these diverse factors together. The matters of infrastructure, policy, location, technological change, individual perceptions of transport, and experiences of movements will be studied to provide a picture of the extent and limits of change in transport and mobility in this period.

Thus, why people were travelling, what it was like, policy, and how they perceived it, is hard to recover without consulting a range of sources. Pooley has used and is using diaries to fill some of these gaps, although diary entries can be sensationalising and not always representative.[171] Therefore, one way to achieve a wider social view of transport and mobility is to study a range of modes together. Divall has stressed that the historiography has focused too much on singular modes of transport rather than wider selections, or the 'transport regime'.[172] This thesis takes the approach of recent suggestions that acknowledge the interconnected nature of transport between business, government, institutions, individuals, consumer choice, and the economy, requiring a range of sources.[173] It should also be stated in relation to sources that travel writing is not used as it relates to the subjectivities and

---

[170] C. Pooley, 'Spotlight on the Traveller: Individual Experiences of Routes Journeys', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 214-217; C. Pooley, 'Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion', *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), 101-102.
[171] C. Pooley, 'Spotlight on the Traveller: Individual Experiences of Routes Journeys', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 216-218.
[172] C. Divall, in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 38; Often in the context of trying to encourage the choice of public transport over the car: B. Elzen, in B. Harbers (ed.), *Inside the Politics of Technology* (Amsterdam, 2005), 173; 194; C. Divall, in M. Grieco and J. Urry (eds), *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society* (Farnham, 2011), 313.
[173] J. Fowler, 'Historical Institutionalism, Hybridity and Institutional Logics', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022).

identities of people while travelling, which is not always linked to the materiality and embodiment of their everyday physical movement.[174]

Thus, I will analyse people's uses and perceptions of the car, the railways, the bus, and note the importance of walking for many people as transport choice fragmented,[175] using a wide range of sources, connecting transport to social history, family, gender, age, and also disability.[176] I also use sources that informed debates on policy and urban issues, and consult the public policy historiography. Taken together, these chapters provide an analysis of how policy was carried out, its effect on the public in certain locations, but also the agency of an increasingly demanding and diverse public, and their perceptions of these modes. Much of the historiography has focused on the periods before 1945 as they reveal how urbanisation, industrialisation, and vast social changes shaped transport policy and people's choices. But the postwar period offers an insight into an increasingly fragmented and demanding public, seeking mobility across the three modes, and how government reacted to them.

The evidence used in chapter one comes from multiple surveys of the Transport Road Research Laboratory to show who was using cars and where in this decade, and the nature of investigations into transport. Chapter one includes discussion on the RRL's data on public transport use and how it changed its methods for predicting car ownership rates. These sources include large quantitative, sample, and local studies of transport choice and demand, and thus provide the largest source of mobility information available, including qualitative studies of the different modes, which have until now, gone largely unused. The National

---

[174] C. Divall, in C. Divall (ed.), *Cultural Histories of Sociabilities, Spaces and Mobilities* (London, 2015), 6.
[175] It has been argued that walking in cities has not been analysed enough and has not been seen within the social system of transport enough: P. Norton, in G. Mom et al (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art* (Neuchatel, 2009), 111-112. It has been given more attention recently: C. Pooley, M. Emmanuel, T. Männistö-Funk, P. Norton, 'Introduction: Historical Perspectives on Pedestrians', *Urban History*, 48 (2021), 205; C. Pooley, 'Walking Spaces: Changing Pedestrian Practices in Britain', *Journal of Transport History*, 42 (2021), 228; B. Schmucki, 'Against "The Eviction of the Pedestrian"', *Radical History Review*, 11 (2012), 121-124; T. Männistö-Funk, 'The Gender of Walking', *Urban History*, 48 (2021).
[176] A. Ahern and J. Hine, in C. Divall, C. Pooley and J. Hine (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 68-71; 73; J. Farrington and C. Farrington, 'Rural Accessibility, Social Inclusion and Social Justice', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 13 (2005), 1-2; 5-7.

Archives' government and rail files are used to uncover how Buchanan, Beeching and government ministers tried to handle falling bus demand, the growth of car ownership, and the railways' plunging finances. These sources reveal the lengths government went to provide transport for all of society and gain data on them, including individual people unable to reach a local bus stop or train station, rather than simply containing dry political decision-making.

Ernest Marples' private papers in Churchill College, Cambridge, provide further insight into his decisions and the great lengths he went to, to provide public transport in urban areas, contradicting his image as Beeching's anti-rail accomplice. His papers field as much data as possible but in the process show the impossibility of quickly providing a uniform transport system across different locations, either financially or logistically. The development plans of different provincial cities from their local archives are also used to show their different approaches to dealing with rising car-use. However, they also show the limited financial and logistical room to provide a public transport alternative, often presenting overly optimistic plans for a public transport-led future. Chapter two then studies local authority papers and newspaper literature to show their strategies of resistance to rail closures. These files show how much the legal procedure to closing rail lines was taken advantage of by local authorities to slow down the process, often compared to relatively low public use. As a result, the views of local people are less present in local authority protests than in the objections to closures at the public hearings that are, again, held in the National Archives.

The records of road lobbying groups and the unions from the Modern Record Centre, Warwick, are also used, providing a fuller range of perceptions of the railways and roads, of course, from the partisan view of the transport unions and road lobbyists. Chapter three uses government and British Railways records to relay the objections by women to local rail closures at their public hearings. These objections provide specific detail into how individual people used the railways and how they felt about their closure. It also uses RRL studies of

female mobility, showing how stark the inequality was with men. The records of car lobbies and a vast array of newspaper commentaries on the 'woman driver' are also used, which demonstrate a clear effort to improve the image of the woman driver but also their own commercial and advertising interests.[177] Chapter four then analyses the field notes of postwar social surveys and published works into working class community. It evaluates the ways in which they sought to frame increased mobility as a threat to traditional forms of everyday life. I will contrast the published findings with their field notes to reveal working class people desired greater mobility than the published reports suggest. These sources focus on wider issues than mobility alone but provide qualitative and consistent evidence for a wider aspiration for mobility by the three main modes.

Chapter Contents

Chapter one studies the difficulties of providing a public transport alternative to the car in provincial cities, making three points. Firstly, the bus was already the most used mode and main alternative to the car, not the railways. As homes and business decentralised beyond the railways' radial lines, the main modal transfer came from bus to car rather than from bus to rail.[178] This was compounded by the middle class domination of rail use and the continually disorganised and complex administrative structure of buses.[179] However, the spread of the car in Britain was slow and uneven, conflicting with predictions of near-

[177] Another parallel with the United States was the folklore of the inferiority of female driving as a result of their feminine bodies and temperament, as well as their increased mobility posing a threat to traditional family life. The faster spread of the car in the US saw earlier challenges to the stereotype than in Britain: M. Berger, 'Women Drivers! The Emergence of Folklore', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 9 (1986), 257-263.
[178] C. Pooley, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 437-439.
[179] J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 243-251.

universal use over a 20 year timescale.[180] This produced a complex web of mobilities in cities by the early 1960s.[181] Overestimates of car ownership triggered road-building schemes, which made the provision of an alternative public transport system even harder. The gradual pace of the car's spread also meant parking spaces were plentiful in cities and there was insufficient political will to limit them.[182] Thus, the catastrophic levels of congestion needed to trigger a policy reckoning did not arrive, and policy took an excruciatingly incremental rather than radical path.

Chapter one then looks at a range of Beeching's closure cases in urban areas, which do not adhere to the historiographical notion that his and successive governments' approach was dogmatically financial.[183] Demand in British cities could be insufficient to prevent the scrutiny of some urban services, and more consideration went into assessing them than is assumed due to their importance in protecting the urban form.[184] Theoretical alternative systems to the car in cities were explored but proved impracticable compared to the policy of maintaining public transport and mitigating growing congestion.[185] The historiography has often focused on the prospect that other policies besides the 'predict and provide' model could have been followed in this crucial period.[186] But I stress that such a possibility, although theoretically enticing, was too complex to practically deliver.

---

[180] G. O'Hara, 'Temporal Governance. Time, Exhortation and Planning', *Journal of Modern European History*, (2015), 342; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 229.
[181] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Commuting, Transport and Urban Form: Manchester and Glasgow', *Urban History*, 27 (2000), 382-383.
[182] P. Gray, *Private Motoring in England and Wales* (London, 1969), 79.
[183] C. Wolmar, *British Rail: A New History* (Shepperton, 2022), xi; 9; 62.
[184] Charles Loft has shown this on the nationwide governmental and political level: C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation of Britain* (London, 2006).
[185] P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 3, TRL.
[186] Predict and provide consists of predicting future transport trends and shapes policy to cater to that demand rather than interventionist planning restrictions on cars: G. Vigar, *The Politics of Mobility* (London, 2002), 1-2; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 112; D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 25.

By looking at both policy and the social issue of people's mobility demands, chapter two assesses some of the most contentious of Beeching's rail closures in provincial Britain. I show that many were reprieved due to sophisticated and coordinated resistance from middle class institutions, including local authorities, MPs, and the press. But the simple logistical issue of the failure to provide replacement bus services was also key. The historiography has emphasised central government decision-making or even local popular protest in closures.[187] In the cases studied here, emphasis is put on the resistance of local authorities making technical arguments about the railways and the closure process. As in urban areas, demand for many of these services was relatively low in the 1960s, thus it is teleological to argue that Beeching was mistaken as some have been reopened due to rising demand decades later.

Chapter two then shows that, despite discontinuities in policy and administration, there were more continuities in transport demand in European countries than the historiography assumes.[188] It has been argued that the railways would have fared better without governments' dogmatic acceptance of the competition from roads.[189] And yet, in many cases, Beeching coincided or lagged behind European rail rationalisation, and the density of Britain's network was not an outlier after his closures. Indeed, Beeching was described in 1966 as 'no more than a continuation' of the belated closures started in Britain in the 1950s.[190] Motorway building on the Continent was also continually ahead, and levels of car ownership accelerated past Britain in the 1960s even with earlier subsidisation regimes for public transport. Lastly, the technical arguments against Beeching's approach are assessed and I argue that he, and successive governments, were not dogmatic towards the railways.[191]

---

[187] C. Loft, *Last Trains: Dr Beeching and the Death of Rural England* (London, 2013), 1-7; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation of Britain* (London, 2006), 14.
[188] P. Rietveld and R. Stough, 'Institutions, Regulations and Sustainable Transport', *Transport Reviews*, 24 (2004), 715-717; 718.
[189] C. Wolmar, *The Great British Railway Disaster* (Shepperton, 1996), 11-12.
[190] J. Patmore, 'The Contraction of the Network', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (1966), 105.
[191] In agreement with Loft's political perspective: C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation* (London, 2006).

Chapter three looks at how the fragmentation of transport choice caused by car ownership advantaged men, and rail closures in provincial areas could be detrimental to women and the elderly.[192] As bus provision remained higher in urban areas where there was more demand, in provincial areas, where journeys were longer and more difficult, the convenience of the railways could be a real loss. Women of all ages and occupational statuses were affected by the closure of these cross-country services, and their objections to government attest to their agency in resisting them, and their sense of mobility inequality when car ownership was rising for men. Chapter three also assesses the gradual and relative improvement in economic and cultural attitudes towards the 'woman driver' in postwar Britain.[193] As the market became aware of women's potential to increase the number of drivers and their superior safety record protected the car's status at a time of high accident rates, representations of women drivers improved. Female licence holding, however, increased only slowly, and when women did drive, those that worked had only slightly more access than housewives despite contributing their wages to buy a car.[194]

Chapter four argues the historiography has not shown how much the car was seen as a positive by working people, or how much their everyday mobility changed in the suburbs. Compared to the railways' fixed radial routes, the bus and car often provided better choices for people across the increasingly diverse residential locations, work habits, and domestic roles in Britain. Decentralisation and suburbanisation were not just spatial and economic forces, but social forces. This view reshapes two assumptions about the working class in this period. Firstly, on moving to the suburbs, journeys could be longer and more expensive as the

---

[192] Elderly mobility receives attention today and can be better than thought due to the car: I. Shergold and G. Parkhurst, 'Transport-Related Social Exclusion Amongst Older People', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 28 (2012), 419.

[193] The 'woman driver' issue is ongoing across cultures: M. Li and Z. Luo, 'The 'Bad Women Drivers' Myth', *Information, Communication & Society*, 23 (2020), 776; 787-788.

[194] This is part of a wider framework for women's postwar experiences looking at the expansion of the partnership model, their power in family decisions due to their wages, and increased autonomy, such as: H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work in Post-War Britain', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 52-56.

distance between work, the shops, and home grew. But I show people were prepared to endure these very different and often difficult journeys for the greater space and choice in the suburbs compared to the traditional working class urban districts they came from. The suburban bus was the primary mode initially, but they and cars were used to expand people's choices. Second, this complicates the notion that working class movements in the postwar period saw greater continuity than change by showing, outside the quantitative analyses of the growing distances travelled, that daily routines could be transformed after making the move.[195] Despite longer daily journeys, the suburbs, the bus and car had greater appeal to the majority than the traditional working class neighbourhood and its 'walking distances'.[196]

A common refrain in the historiography is that because transport finances, and rail finance in particular, are intractable, policy decisions were inherently political.[197] But I stress, in culmination, that explanations are more contingent. Transport decisions were not taken by people or governments in such a political or ideological way.[198] Successive Conservative and Labour governments sought the maintenance of public transport with limited financial resources, immense logistical complexities, and enabled the growth of car ownership due to their practical as well as their cultural force. But the public also demanded that all modes of transport be made available due to their individual desire for mobility choice, not through notions of collectivism or public versus private provision.[199]

---

[195] C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century? Changes in Everyday Mobility* (Aldershot, 2005), 1-4.
[196] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 158.
[197] This has been argued recently: that transport history should embrace a framework of political interactions between public and private institutions in which transport is unavoidably immersed – the mix of self-interested politicians, state managers, private business, and the social norms and political culture they work in: J. Fowler, 'Historical Institutionalism, Hybridity and Institutional Logics', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 304; J. Shaw and I. Docherty see transport as 'intensely political', in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 31.
[198] The approach I take already exists in eclectic forms: G. Vigar, *The Politics of Mobility* (Abingdon, 2002); P. Rietveld and R. Stough, 'Institutions, Regulations and Sustainable Transport', *Transport Reviews*, 24 (2004), 715-717; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005); C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation* (London, 2006); G. Ortolano, *Thatcher's Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism* (Cambridge, 2019).
[199] Pooley writes that mobility, transport, and its infrastructures are linked through the perspectives, experiences, and agency of individual people: C. Pooley, 'Connecting Historical Studies of Transport', *Journal of Transport History*, 38 (2017), 255-256; Moritz Föllmer has argued people across Western Europe wanted all modes of

I find that location, income, gender, and age were more important in forming perceptions of mobility in connection to these three modes than political affiliation or ideology. Indeed, the archetypal division between public and private transport breaks down when the importance of the railways to the middle class, and the practical as well as cultural attraction of the car to the working class are explored. The bus, although the least preferred mode, was also used across socioeconomic groups, especially by women, to expand consumer choice before cars were affordable. Indeed, the car was seen more as a progressive force as it spread across society, enabling greater choice in the early 1960s than a threat to collectivism, a view held by a small faction within Labour.[200]

transport at their disposal regardless of their public or private provision: F. Föllmer, 'Cities of Choice: Elective Affinities', *Contemporary European History*, 24 (2015), 582; J. van der Bergh et al, in P. Rietveld and R. Stough (eds), *Institutions and Sustainable Transport* (Cheltenham, 2007), 74-80; 83; Other historical works have looked at whether people may have chosen public transport over the car: D. Davis, 'North American Urban Mass Transit', *History and Technology*, 12 (1995), 309-326; A majority in Britain were, however, in favour of rail nationalisation in 1945: J. Singleton, in R. Millward and J. Singleton (eds), *The Political Economy of Nationalisation in Britain* (Cambridge, 1995), 22.

[200] L. Black, 'Social Democracy as a Way of Life', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 533; E. Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life* (London, 2002), 88; C. Ellis, in L. Black and H. Pemberton, *An Affluent Society?* (Oxford, 2004), 76-78; G. Strauss, *HC Debs*, vol. 654, cc. 1374, 28 February 1962; O. Saumarez Smith, 'Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment', *The Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), 232.

Chapter 1: Predictions, Timescales and Complexities in the Major Cities

This chapter studies the struggles of successive governments in adapting to mass car ownership in different British cities between 1959 and 1974. It makes three points. Firstly, as Beeching and Buchanan's plans were published local and central governments used a wider range of statistics beyond those reports to anticipate demand and formulate alternatives to the car. Secondly, far the most used alternative to the car was the bus, not the railways,[1] despite the latter's fares often being competitive. The low demand for many of the closure proposals studied here show they were not immediate alternatives, and, in any case, urban closures often resulted in the consolidation of services rather than outright closure.[2] Thirdly, the complexity of urban movements as cars and suburbanisation spread[3] made restrictions on cars absolutely essential for any public transport alternative to work.

There are three themes needed to understand how difficult providing an alternative to the car was in urban areas. These are: predictions, timescales, and complexities.[4] Firstly, the vigorous production of statistics in this period sought to understand the economy and shape

---

[1] C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 7; 18-21; 76; 116; R. Bentley, 'Sustainable Transport: The Role of the Bus', *Transport Reviews*, 18 (1998), 199-200.
[2] S. Glaister et al, *Transport Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, 1998), 19.
[3] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Commuting, Transport and Urban Form', *Urban History*, 27 (2000), 383.
[4] This approach follows the work of Glen O'Hara, Simon Gunn, and Charles Loft, such as: C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain* (London, 2006), 153-154; C. Loft, 'Reappraisal and Reshaping', *Contemporary British History,* 14 (2001), 82; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problems of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011).

policy.[5] This created varying prediction in the growth of car ownership, the economy and population, using different methodologies, which presented fluctuating and often unreliable visions to government.[6] Either British cities would need to be transformed by the 1980s to enable population growth and widespread car ownership.[7] Or the rise of the car would be slower and fragment according to income and population density.[8] These predictions came from different cultural and economic influences and the resulting policies ranged from radical urban renewal to road pricing and the maintenance of public transport.[9] The size and insolvency of the railways by 1960 also pressed the need for closures based on forecasts for future demand that lent credence to road-building.[10]

This chapter focuses on the complexities caused by the fragmentation between the three modes: their different levels of demand and financial health; the timescales it took for cars to spread; for suburbanisation to advance; for urban roads to be built; and for incomes and populations to rise and threaten congestion, which all varied within and between cities.[11]

---

[5] Policy formation is an 'unstable process of managing incomplete information and incompatible interests': A. Green, *Policy and Public Purpose* (London, 2016), 7.

[6] G. O'Hara, 'Towards a New Bradshaw? Economic Statistics and the British State', *Economic History Review*, 60 (2007), 1-2; 22-23; 26; G. O'Hara, 'We Are Faced Everywhere with a Growing Population', *Twentieth Century British History*, 15 (2004), 244; G. O'Hara, 'Temporal Governance. Time, Exhortation and Planning', *Journal of Modern European History*, 13 (2015), 342; G. O'Hara, 'Dynamic, Exciting, Thrilling Change', *British Contemporary History*, 20 (2006), 383.

[7] This was shaped by the idea of the 'car owning democracy' under Buchanan, but urban highways had been planned since the beginning of the century, and there were other theories as to how to cope with urban car ownership such as widespread population dispersal to nearby towns and New Towns: M. Abrams, 'Sociology of the Motor Age', *Town and Country Planning*, 32 (1964), 230-234; C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963).

[8] M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership and Public Policy', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 179-182; 185; 195; A. Sanghi, 'The Relationship between Population Density, Automobile Ownership and Automobile Use', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 10 (1976), 118-122; 125-126; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problems of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 532.

[9] S. Gunn, 'The Rise and Fall of British Urban Modernism', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010); S. Gunn, 'Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse of the Motor City Ideal', *The Historical Journal*, 61 (2018); S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problems of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011).

[10] C. Loft, *Last Trains: Dr Beeching and the Death of Rural England* (London, 2013), 284; G. Vigar, *The Politics of Mobility* (London, 2002), 45; 58; S. Harris, *The Railway Dilemma* (Addleston, 2016), 144.

[11] P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 12-15; 'Economic Trends', June 1963, xiv-xix, Roads and Town Planning, Mark Abrams Papers [henceforth ABMS] 5/36, Part 1, Churchill College Archives, Cambridge [henceforth CCA]; K. Morrison and J. Minnis, *Carscapes: The Motor Car* (London, 2012), 348; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problems of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 525; K. Button, A. Fowkes and A. Pearman, 'Disaggregate and Aggregate Car Ownership Forecasting in Great Britain', *Transportation Research*, 14 (1980), 265.

Transport studies also took years to compile and gave official but ambiguous results on how to deal with urban movements.[12] They could overestimate future car ownership growth within cities and ignore the uses of the bus in city centres.[13] Indeed, by 1970, Britain's 10 million cars covered just less than half of households, and even then, they were skewed towards the South, the affluent, and suburban and rural areas.[14] This produced an incongruity in urban plans from our view in 2023, that sought to accommodate cars coming in from the suburbs but did little more than preserve existing demand for public in inner urban areas.[15]

However, this was not an incongruity in practice because of the complexity of devising that system to displace cars, compounded by local and central governments dealing with the different levels of transport demand, incomes, and the physical structures of their cities.[16] The sheer complexity of providing an alternative is underappreciated by the historiography.[17] But these difficulties were not just logistical, but social, historical, political, technical, and financial.[18]

---

[12] Information lags in the Treasury: G. Peden, *The Treasury and British Public Policy* (Oxford, 2000), 454; Statistics then create heuristics that are hard to counter: T. Crook and G. O'Hara, in T. Crook and G. O'Hara (eds), *Statistics and the Public Sphere* (New York, 2011), 13-15; Time Requirement for the Structure Planning Process, November 1970, 6, TNA, Department of Environment [henceforth AT], AT 36/36.

[13] G. O'Hara, 'Temporal Governance. Time, Exhortation and Planning in British Government', *Journal of Modern European History*, 13 (2015), 342-343; M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership and Public Policy', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 185.

[14] S. Divey, *Regional and National Convergence to Common Car Ownership Levels* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-4, TRL; C. Pooley, 'Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion', *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), C. Pooley, 'Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion', *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), 105; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 228; Department of Transport, 'Transport Statistics Great Britain', online edn, 2021 [http://maps.dft.gov.uk/tsgb-table-catalogue, accessed 23 November 2021].

[15] The definition of city centre used here is the concentric Chicago or 'Burgess' model, with a core commercial zone and inner suburbs surrounding it. The decentralisation of homes and jobs has, however, led to more polycentric urban structures with unaligned employment nodes, but the central area can often be between 4 to 6 miles in radius, the borders of which contain congested road junctions: A. Andrews, 'Multiple Deprivation, the Inner City, and the Fracturing of the Welfare State', *Twentieth Century British History*, 29 (2018), 616; Department of Environment, *Better Use of Town Roads* (London, 1967), 48; J. Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York, 1991), 3; 37.

[16] P. Scott, in R. Floud and P. Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2008), 337-338.

[17] S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 112; On the challenges facing all ministers: R. Rhodes, *Everyday Life in British Government* (Oxford, 2011), 56-60; 102-105.

[18] Gender and age were crucial too and will be the focus of later chapters; M. Hillman et al, *Personal Mobility and Transport Policy* (London, 1973), 40-41.

Background to the Complexity of Transport

The proliferation of various transport modes and the movement of homes and jobs away from city centres starting in the nineteenth century, as well as the lack of will to limit cars, made an alternative system harder to form. By 1963, Colin Buchanan's concept of the motor city reflected this, seeking to accommodate the car without obstructing urban life by recreating the structure of cities.[19] In the same year Dr Beeching's rail closure plan listed services across many urban areas.[20] In trying to provide for future demand by building urban motorways and closing unprofitable rail lines, both men are seen today to have impeded urban public transport and city life in favour of cars.[21] However, a public transport system for inner areas, which would require a check-point, toll, restrictions, or transfer to buses or trams on its border, was problematic for many reasons.

Firstly, a system to displace the car was problematic due to social changes in the working class. Rising incomes and suburbanisation coincided with the decline of bus demand more than rail use.[22] Indeed, rail demand stayed relatively stable in this period.[23] Instead, new suburban dwellers, who had previously walked or bused when they lived within cities, rather than using the railways, more often used the bus in the suburbs, or a car to access work.[24] The working class still lived closer to work than higher earners even as suburbanisation continued

---

[19] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 178-179.
[20] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways, Part 1* (London, 1963), 20-22; 102.
[21] R. Roth and M. Polino, in R. Roth and M. Polino (ed.), *The City and Railway in Europe* (Aldershot, 2003), xvii; C. Divall, in M. Emmanuel et al (eds), *A U-Turn to the Future: Sustainable Urban Mobility* (Oxford, 2020), 97.
[22] Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 9.
[23] Especially rail journey lengths, showing the average journey lengthened: Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 9; 113; Department of Transport, 'Transport Statistics Great Britain', online edn, 2021, [http://maps.dft.gov.uk/tsgb-table-catalogue, accessed 23 November 2021].
[24] J. Wabe, 'Dispersal of Employment', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1 (1967), 345-351; J. Westergaard, 'Journeys to Work', *Town Planning Review* 28 (1957), 40; A. Warnes, 'Estimates of Journey to Work Distances from Census Statistics', *Regional Studies*, 6 (1972), 316-322; P. Daniels, 'Employment Decentralisation and the Journey to Work', *Area*, 3 (1970), 49; R. Lawton, 'The Journey to Work in Britain', *Regional Studies*, 2 (1968), 30-32; C. Pooley, 'Landscapes without the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 273; R. Haywood, 'Mind the Gap', *European Planning Studies*, 6 (1998), 194; West Midlands County Councils, *Transport Policies and Programme: Submission*, 1975, 1-14, Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, Birmingham [henceforth WCB].

but increasing numbers on rising wages bought cars in outer urban areas from the late 1950s.[25]

Historically, employment also moved away from city centres long before 1945, thought it lagged behind housing. In 1920, urban areas covered 5.9% of England and Wales. By 1960 it was around 10%, and the decentralisation of homes and jobs increasingly included manual workers.[26] London's economic power meant it had suburbanised earlier over a greater area, which maintained demand for its extensive over and underground rail network. Provincial conurbations, however, saw their incomes rise slower and suburbanise over a smaller area. This preserved demand for the bus in the absence of underground rail networks. However, the slower outward movement of jobs in provincial cities maintained demand for inward-moving commuter transport in the 1960s.[27] Therefore, the dominance of the bus in provincial cities is evident into the mid-1960s as table one shows.

Table 1. Modes of Travel to Work into the Centre of Major Cities, 1966:

	Population	Commuters	By Train	By Bus	By Car
Birmingham	1.1M	108,550	7%	60%	27%
Manchester	616,520	139,640	14%	59%	23%
Liverpool	705,310	138,400	14%	59%	19%
Newcastle	251,650	76,600	8%	62%	23%
Glasgow	960,530	126,460	20%	61%	14%
London	7.8M	1.3M	62%	18%	12%

Source: The British Road Federation, *The Conurbations* (London, 1969).

[25] C. Pooley, in D. Gilbert et al (eds), *Geographies of British Modernity* (Oxford, 2003), 87; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 8; 112-116; 128-130; M. Dasgupta, *Access to Employment Opportunities by Car and by Bus* (Crowthorne, 1982), 1-5, TRL.

[26] P. Scott, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2000), 495; 500; 512-514; 517-20; R. Best, 'Extent of Urban Growth', *Urban Studies*, 5 (1968), 18-21; R. Best, *The Major Land Uses of Great Britain* (London, 1959), 62-78.

[27] J. Armstrong, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 229; C. Pooley, 'Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion', *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), 103; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century? Changes in Everyday Mobility* (Aldershot, 2005), 113-114; A. Warnes, 'Commuting Towards City Centres', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (1975), 88.

Suburbanisation had occurred among the upper and middle class first and transport facilities followed them outwards in an unplanned way. This meant manual workers in most cities who did not walk used bus or tram networks more than the radial corridors of the railways used most by the suburban middle class.[28] Additionally, rather than coordinating the modes as bus demand started to eat into rail and tram use in the interwar period, rail companies bought bus stocks to bolster their incomes and legislation such as the 1930 Road Traffic Act protected current operators.[29] Instead of providing efficient routes from suburban areas by linking the modes before mass car ownership arrived, demand was consolidated on the modes' separate routes.[30] Also, if trams and railways had been allowed to develop housing on their land, their routes may have offered a way to suburbanise without building so many roads by the 1930s.[31] But they were not, and tram networks were expensive, took up street space, and middle class opposition to working class suburbs meant richer outer areas connected to railways most of all.[32]

Many manual workers on rising incomes also suburbanised, but their housing was often linked to roads long before 1945. Indeed, the growth of Britain's classified road network, among the most developed in the world by 1939, was a long-term process growing

---

[28] M. Law, 'The Car Indispensable', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 38 (2012), 425-426; A. Jackson, *Semi-Detached London* (London, 1973), 183; 333; J. Wheeler, 'Occupational Status and Work', *Social Forces*, 45 (1967), 511-513; S. O'Connell, in F. Carnevali et al (eds), *20th Century Britain* (London, 2007), 112-113; 119-121; Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 14-15; R. Bentley, 'Sustainable Transport: The Role of the Bus', *Transport Reviews*, 18 (1998), 199; B. Jones, *The Working Class in Mid-Twentieth Century England* (Manchester, 2012), 39; A point also raised by Buchanan: C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 53-54.

[29] C. Mulley, in M. Walsh (ed.), *Motor Transport* (Aldershot, 1997), 123; C. Mulley, 'Passenger Transport in the UK, 1920-1950', Business and Labour History Group, University of Sydney, 2009, 7; Working Agreements with Bus Companies, 16 September 1963, TNA, British Railways Files [henceforth AN] 167/11.

[30] J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 207-12; J. Hibbs, *The Bus and Coach Industry* (London, 1975), 41-50; C. Mulley, 'Passenger Transport in the UK, 1920-1950', Business and Labour History Group, University of Sydney, 2009, 9.

[31] J. Armstrong, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 237; R. Dennis, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1984), 111-114; M. Daunton, in T. Gourvish and A. O'Day (eds), *Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900* (London, 1988), 40; Development on railway land did, however, happen a little with 'Metro-land' in London: D. Levinson, 'The Orderliness Hypothesis', *Journal of Transport History*, 29 (2008), 102-103; 111.

[32] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Coping with Congestion', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31 (2005), 85; J. Armstrong, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 237; 239; 241-244.

after turnpikes and the invention of asphalt from 1869.[33] Roads catered to diffused populations more than trams and railways, which gave the faster, cheaper bus an advantage from the 1920s.[34] As trams had taken over from the horse-drawn bus after 1860, the motor bus spread after 1918, and was prioritised for being more 'modern' than the tram by city planners.[35] As car ownership among skilled manual workers then increased from 20% to 40% between 1955 and 1965,[36] patterns of land use and transport had already decentralised along roads and it was harder for coordinated public transport alternatives, especially with government slum clearance and dispersal schemes to come.[37]

Therefore, at the heart of what Beeching and Buchanan had to contend with was the changing transport choices people made in expanding suburbs with the advent of mass car ownership, extending the fragmentation of transport that begun generations earlier. But what could be done as transport choice diverged between the suburbs and central areas? The main deterrents against car ownership were, and remain today, low-incomes, high population densities, and the availability of good public transport, and all of these occur most in city centres.[38] However, there is not, of course, a clear cut spatial separation in cities between

---

[33] Classified roads are those smaller than dual carriageway size; C. Pooley, 'Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion', *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), 102-105; J. Armstrong, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 244.
[34] By 1930, road transport had already taken 21% of tram demand and 17% of rail demand: C. Mulley, in M. Walsh (ed.), *Motor Transport* (Aldershot, 1997), 123.
[35] C. Pooley, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 437; G. Cherry, 'Town Planning and the Motor Car', *Journal for High Speed Ground Transportation*, 4 (1970), 74; C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Coping with Congestion', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31 (2005), 84; 90; C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Commuting, Transport and Urban Form', *Urban History*, 27 (2000), 382-383; C. Divall and W. Bond (eds), *Suburbanizing the Masses* (Oxford, 2017), 2.
[36] *The Motorist Today*, 2, AA, 73M94/G1/1/594, HA.
[37] A. Kefford, 'Actually Existing Managerialism', *Urban Studies*, 58 (2021), 2447; 2452; Comprehensive urban redevelopment could break up supply chains with road-centred planning: A. Kefford, 'Disruption, Destruction and the Creation of the 'Inner Cities', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 495-496; 502; 508-510; P. Daniels, 'Some Changes in the Journey to Work of Decentralised Workers', *The Town Planning Review*, 44 (1973), 183-185; 180; C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Commuting, Transport and Urban Form', *Urban History*, 27 (2000), 382-383; P. Scott, 'Industrial Estates and British Industrial Development', *Business History*, 43 (2001), 73-75; 79.
[38] S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-5; 25-26, TRL; J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 6-8; 22; 38-53, TRL; C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 2-3, TRL; P. White, *Public Transport: Its Planning, Management* (London, 1995), 84-85; J. Button, 'The Geographical Distribution of Car Ownership', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 14 (1980), 28-29; 35.

public and private transport. Residents in central areas tend to have lower average incomes and use public transport or walk. But working class suburban commuters also used buses if they could not afford a car, and richer suburbanites used the railways to commute most of all.[39]

Due to these complexities, the car did not dominate commuting in major city centres by 1971 even without restrictions on them, shown in table two. Class played a crucial role in this. Higher earners used the railways most in society because they connected their outer suburbs with services jobs in city centres more conveniently than their cars. Poorer households, often working closer to home or in more decentralised areas, continued to walk or use buses.[40] In London, however, by 1971, its extensive rail network proved crucial as over 60% of households owned a car but a clear majority still commuted by train.[41] But in the absence of vast rail networks elsewhere, the car's threat to the bus was detrimental. By 1970, 74% of all journeys were taken by car, halving bus patronage to 15% of journeys, and these journeys became concentrated in provincial cities.[42]

---

[39] F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-6, TRL; J. van der Bergh et al, in P. Rietveld and R. Stough (eds), *Institutions and Sustainable Transport* (Cheltenham, 2007), 75-80; 83; M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 182.
[40] R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 194-195; M. Mogridge, 'Changing Spatial Patterns in the Journey to Work', *Urban Studies*, 16 (1979), 180-181; 183-185; 189; N. McAlpine and A. Smyth, in R. Roth and M. Polino (eds), *The City and the Railway in Europe* (Aldershot, 2003), 178; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 16-17, TRL.
[41] C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 3, TRL; Indeed, between 1966 and 1971, as car ownership was accelerating, rail's share of commutes in London increased: M. Mogridge, 'Changing Spatial Patterns in the Journey to Work', *Urban Studies*, 16 (1979), 180-181; 183-185; 189.
[42] The British Road Federation, *The Conurbations* (London, 1969); R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Car Ownership on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-2; 17, TRL; C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 3; 6; 10-11, TRL; Department of Transport, 'Transport Statistics Great Britain', online edn, 2021 [http://maps.dft.gov.uk/tsgb-table-catalogue, accessed 23 November 2021].

Table 2. Journey to Work by Private Transport in Conurbation Centres, 1966-71:

Conurbations	1966		1971		1966-71
	Total	% of all journeys	Total	% of all journeys	% increase
West Midlands	27,137	25	34,524	33	27
South-East Lancashire	29, 324	21	36,711	30	25
Merseyside	23,528	17	24,845	27	6
Tyneside	15,320	20	19,113	29	25
Clydeside	16,439	13	19,416	18	18

Source: D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 54.

Therefore, by 1971, only around a third of daily commuters into the centres of Birmingham and Manchester went by car, which was the highest proportion of the conurbations.[43] But as the bus lacked the railways' fixity and comfort, or the car's speed and flexibility, as well as its image as 'the margarine of transport', it was critically disadvantaged as an alternative to the car.[44] The tram perhaps could have been an alternative, working as a supplement to the rail system, but it was slower, expensive, and took up more space than buses, thus its potential can be exaggerated. The last trams in Britain, in any case, were removed from Glasgow in 1962, deemed out of date.[45]

Government policy could not cohere this fragmentation into a set policy, and the cultural power of the car was supported by statistics on growing ownership rates.[46] Buchanan estimated there would be 12 million cars in Britain by 1970, and 19 million by 1980, an overestimation by 2 million and 5 million respectively.[47] This overestimation was backed up

[43] D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 54.
[44] Newspaper cutting, Motor Car Research (RIBA), 1963, AA, 73M94/G1/1/169, HA; Shaw and Docherty call the bus the 'option of last resort' for most: J. Shaw and I. Docherty, *The Transport Debate* (Bristol, 2014), 3; J. Hibbs, *The Bus and Coach Industry* (London, 1975), 77; 79; C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 3-5, TRL; M. Hillman and A. Whalley, *The Social Consequences* (London, 1980), 109.
[45] Trams were abandoned in Manchester in 1949, in London in 1952, in Birmingham in 1953, in Leeds in 1960; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 24-32; P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 20; 70.
[46] T. Cook and G. O'Hara, in T. Cook and G. O'Hara (eds), *Statistics and the Public Sphere* (New York, 2011), 264-267; D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 1-6; 28-31.
[47] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 35; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 16; Department of Transport, 'Transport Statistics Great Britain', online edn, 2021, [http://maps.dft.gov.uk/tsgb-table-catalogue, accessed 23 November 2021].

by the RRL, the government-funded research unit.[48] RRL surveys, however, also saw that the higher car ownership rose nationally, bus demand fell less in city centres.[49] But it was not until the late 1970s that numerous such studies concluded that reduced fares and high quality public transport services had an impact on limiting car ownership. By 1968, the decline of buses in cities was around a third lower than national trends, but car ownership only accounted for around half of this fall. The other half came from cuts to services and fare increases by bus companies and local authorities as demand scattered with dispersal schemes.[50] This belated finding aided the car's dominance, and the bus and rail subsidies that grew through the 1968 Transport Act only aimed to mitigate the shift to the car rather than stop it, being based on services' future financial prospects, not purely social grounds.[51]

However, these later studies also showed the impact of public transport subsidy was limited, helping existing customers to use it more than pushing swathes of car drivers back to public transport.[52] Even if the right data was available earlier, then, and buses given endless support, car purchases as the combustion engine became mass-produced would have

---

[48] K. Button, A. Fowkes and A. Pearman, 'Disaggregate and Aggregate Car Ownership Forecasting in Great Britain', *Transportation Research*, 14 (1980), 267-269.

[49] Good public transport access suppresses car use: M. Fairhurst, 'The Influence of Public Transport on Car Ownership', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 9 (1975), 206-207; C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 3, TRL; Subsidy could be used to provide more and cheaper services: P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 1-8, TRL.

[50] P. Goodwin, 'Car Ownership and Public Transport Use: Revisiting the Interaction', *Transportation*, 27 (1993), 21-24; 32; J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 4-7; 22; 38, TRL; R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Car Ownership on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-2; 16-17, TRL; F. Webster and P. Bly, 'The Demand for Public Transport: Part I', *Transport Reviews*, 1 (1981), 339-341; P. Bly, *The Effect of Fares on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1976), 5; 12-13, TRL; J. Downes, *The Distribution of Household Car Ownership* (Crowthorne, 1976), 5, TRL; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-14, TRL; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-6; 25, TRL; P. White, 'Use of Public Transport in Towns and Cities of Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 26; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 1; 20, TRL; J. Hopkin, *The Ownership and Use of Cars by Elderly People* (Crowthorne, 1981), 21, TRL.

[51] The 1968 Act also ended the direct links between the railways and buses, hampering coordination: J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 250.

[52] *Daily Telegraph*, 29 August 1973; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 5, TRL; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-6; 26, TRL; S. Glaister, in R. Layard and S. Glaister (eds), *Cost-Benefit Analysis* (Cambridge, 1994), 426-427.

continued, unless it was restricted, which brought political and technical problems.[53] Successive governments investigated whether that for an alternative system in inner cities to work, restrictions on cars and more public transport would be needed.[54] But restrictions on cars were politically unpalatable. In 1959, Ernest Marples' efforts to introduce a new parking scheme in London was controversial, and opinion polling showed a 15-point lead for parties opposing road tolls.[55] This atmosphere, as well as predictions for economic and population growth in the early 1960s led to the over-estimation of car ownership in city centres.[56]

There were others, however, who used different methods of prediction. The transport economists at the RRL, which developed into a policy arena as car ownership grew in the early 1960s, argued for road pricing (a charge to drive) to limit car-use and emphasised the correlation between income and population density in contemporary data to argue car ownership would not rise as much as Buchanan assumed in city centres.[57] However, in turn, they were unable to make road pricing technically, financially, or politically workable.[58] But there was another problem. The diverse characteristics and levels of demand for each mode across different British cities made a charge difficult to cohere nationally. At a time of statistics showing rising car ownership, and drives for slum clearance and modernisation,

---

[53] J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 1-43; 133; Gunn has also shown the British car industry was a powerful force lobbying against car restrictions: S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problems of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 535.
[54] Transport – In Perspective: Buchanan – Government's Part, October 1959-November 1963, 3, Private Papers of Ernest Marples, [henceforth MPLS], 1/3/4, CCA.
[55] Opinion Research Centre: Snap Survey on Motorways and Housing, 1963, 2-3, MPLS 1/3/4, CCA; *The Guardian*, 1 December 1959 and 8 December 1959; W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 351; Haulage restrictions were also unpopular: C. Loft, 'Reappraisal and Reshaping', *Contemporary British History,* 14 (2001), 74.
[56] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 36-43.
[57] S. Glaister, 'The Smeed Report at Fifty', Smeed Memorial Lecture, October 2014, 15; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problems of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 532; G. Charlesworth, *A History of the Transport and Road Research Laboratory* (Aldershot, 1987), 1; 67-69; C. Foster, 'Michael Beesley and Cost Benefit Analysis', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 35 (2001), 11.
[58] D. Rooney, 'The Political Economy of Congestion', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (2014), 637; D. Rooney, *Spaces of Congestion and Traffic* (Abingdon, 2019), 119.

comprehensive redevelopment appeared a more effective policy than creating a series of new transport systems.[59]

Lastly, it will be shown that Beeching and successive governments were sensitive to the use of commuter railways to prevent congestion and protect the urban form.[60] The cases studied here do not suggest a dogmatic approach. The closure of services with demand below a level that offered a credible alternative to the other modes was aimed at consolidating existing urban demand rather than reducing it overall. Successive governments had watched the railways' annual deficit surge over £100 million, and passenger numbers failed to grow even as fares were kept down.[61] Given Britain's network had been oversized since the Victorian 'mania', Beeching initiated a belated closure programme after years of inertia.[62] The railways were, also, already subsidised. Governments had provided periodical debt write-offs long before the 1968 Transport Act made them official for the first time.[63]

Predictions, Timescales and Complexities: The Roads

By 1958, the main political parties recognised road congestion would no longer remain self-regulating as it had when the car was the preserve of the middle class.[64] From 1957, the Minister of Transport attended Cabinet, and the Minister Harold Watkinson and his successor Ernest Marples, initiated research into car ownership, road safety, policing, and the

---

[59] Stopping car use would have required 'third order change' in policy – Hall's policy paradigm: P. Hall, 'Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State', *Comparative Politics*, 25 (1993), 279; 287-288; P. Hall, 'The Buchanan Report: 40 Years On', *Transport*, 157 (2004), 7-89; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 522.
[60] T. Barker and C. Savage, *An Economic History of Transport in Britain* (London, 1974), 227; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 10-11.
[61] D. Munby and A. Watson, *Inland Transport Statistics, Vol. I* (Oxford, 1978), 20-21; W. Ashworth, *The State in Business* (London, 1991), 122-123; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 469-471.
[62] M. Bonavia, *The Birth of British Rail* (London, 1979), 12; J. Patmore, 'The Contraction of the Network of Railway Passenger Services', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (1966), 111; 114-117.
[63] C. Loft, 'Reappraisal and Reshaping', *Contemporary British History,* 14 (2001), 74; 86; 88; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain* (London, 2006).
[64] S. O'Connell, *The Car and British* Society (Manchester, 1998), 37; P. Hall, *Great Planning Disasters* (London, 1980), 62.

decline of public transport, much of which came to fruition under Labour in the 1960s.[65] However, in just five years, between 1958 and 1963, the price of cars fell by nearly 20%, and their numbers grew from around 4 to 7 million on Britain's roads.[66] The social make-up of car owners was changing. Most new owners were manual workers, and 1958 saw an early attempt to consider what this meant for urban life by Colin Buchanan.[67] His publication, *Mixed Blessings*, foreshadowed *Traffic in Towns*, arguing the car represented a social advance, but that endless road building threatened the urban form and would only fuel congestion.[68] So, by 1958, there was little political appetite to stop car ownership, but discourse sceptical of the 'predict and provide' model was also expressed.[69]

Why was their little political appetite to stop the car? This was due to long-term developments in car-use and the car industry. As cars spread, first across the upper-middle class for leisure and then an everyday item by 1939, their influence on politics and media framed car ownership as an example of liberty expanding horizons.[70] Alongside this, the car industry had been central in influencing government regulation since its emergence in 1896, and its macroeconomic importance to employment and exports grew after 1945. The Exchequer also received rising revenues from car taxes and haulage from the interwar period, without dampening demand for them. Another factor came with the end of austerity after 1951, which, after so much hardship, would have made restricting car ownership with rising

---

[65] W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 349; B. Luckin, 'Anti-Drink Reform in Britain', *Addiction*, 105 (2010), 1538; 1541-1544; R. Butler, *HC Debs*, vol. 596, cc. 225, 25 November 1958.
[66] W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 347; Department of Transport, 'Transport Statistics Great Britain', online edn, 2021, [http://maps.dft.gov.uk/tsgb-table-catalogue, accessed 23 November 2021].
[67] S. Gunn, 'People and the Car', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 228.
[68] C. Buchanan, *Mixed Blessings* (London, 1958), 208-210.
[69] M. MacEwan, 'Motropolis: A Study of the Traffic Problem', *The Architects' Journal*, 130 (1959), 254; S. Owens, 'From 'Predict and Provide'', *Transport Policy*, 2 (1995), 43-44; K. Liepmann, *The Journey to Work: Its Significance for Industrial and Community Life* (London, 1944), 193-194.
[70] M. Law, 'The Car Indispensable', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 38 (2012), 431-2; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 143; 218.

wages and production, politically unrealistic.[71] By the late 1960s, the most common mode to commute nationally was by car, although its spread was slower in cities. Its image changed from one of extra-curricular privilege, to that of everyday use across wider society.[72]

As these factors prevented a long-term discourse over how to restrict car use, central government sought the belated use of information, forecasting, and technology to increase its understanding of the issue and formulate policy when car use was already accelerating. Indeed, a report of the statistical working party on long term transport needs, as late as 1957, was Whitehall's first forecast of demand beyond basic trends. But it vastly underestimated road use and fueled skepticism over the railways' future viability. Indeed, in 1954, the MOT was preparing for a 75% increase in road traffic by 1974, but this was reached in 1962. In 1959 it then predicted there would be 12.5 million vehicles on the roads by 1969, but this figure was reached in 1964.[73] We will see that this lagging information[74] led to an overestimation of car ownership trends, but in August 1960, the MOT started by asking the Central Statistical Office for a series of Social Surveys to provide 'data about the way in which motorists used cars and their expenditure on running them'.[75] Within these studies it was stated 'it may also be possible to elicit information about the driver and the owner – who drives, the length of experience, the income of the owner etc'. Therefore, these early surveys were quantitative, but also sought to find out how the car fitted into daily life and people's

---

[71] W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 126; 322; 343; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 78; 107; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problems of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 535.
[72] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'The Journey to Work: A Century of Change', *Area*, 31 (1999), 287-288; History of Motor Tax Since 1920, Pollution/Green Issues, 1960-1990, AA, 73m94/G1/1/685, HA.
[73] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 56; 61-62; W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 326; D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 11; Traffic Census: Comparison of Vehicle Miles of Travel, August 1963, TNA, MT 97/641; K. Liepmann, *The Journey to Work: Its Significance for Industrial and Community Life* (London, 1944), 191-194.
[74] Beeching's plan itself was a belated attempt to gather statistics on rail demand: British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 1.
[75] Ministry of Transport Internal Brief, 30 September 1960, TNA, General Register Office, Social Survey Department [henceforth RG] 40/217; 'Economic Trends', June 1963, xiv-xix, Roads and Town Planning, Part 1, ABMS 5/36, CCA.

perceptions of them. Data was harvested through Local Taxation Offices for vehicle licences, Family Budget Surveys, electoral registers, and interviews carried out with households.[76]

Four sample surveys were agreed with the Social Survey Division in October 1960, stressing that the first investigations should look at private transport because it was the area of 'which we have the least knowledge'. An annual sample was also requested for a continuing survey to yield annual estimates from 1962.[77] The RRL, which had focused on road safety and new technologies, but done some traffic counts, asked these surveys to look at the miles travelled by drivers according to age and income, their commuter use, and where the car was kept, whether in a garage or on the roadside.[78] Central government was thus seeking to understand the car's spread according to income and location, and how it was imbedding into everyday life, but slower than the speed of change.[79]

There was a delay between transport surveys being carried out, a consensus forming as to what the factors were shaping modal choice, and policy formation. These early investigations saw problems with funding, field work logistics, and computing issues and were delayed except for an initial study until 1965 due to errors made at IBM.[80] It was also not until 1974 that the RRL changed their methods of predicting car demand as they had underestimated how long reaching car ownership saturation would take and underestimated the consumer appeal of high quality public transport in the meantime.[81] It was then not until

---

[76] Ministry of Transport Internal Brief, 30 September 1960, TNA, RG 40/217.
[77] Letter from M. Venning to Louis Moss, 14 October 1960 and 15 November 1960, TNA, RG 40/217.
[78] Letter from R. Smeed to M. Venning, 24 November 1960; Motoring Survey: Notes of a meeting at Berkeley Square House on 9 December 1960 to discuss the Roads Research Laboratory's interest in the Survey, 9 December 1960, TNA, RG 40/217.
[79] The Ministry of Transport also initiated Social Survey studies into the sales of new and second-hand cars in 1962: Motor Transactions Survey, W. Kemsley for the Social Survey, TNA, RG 23/232; Investigations into company cars were conducted from the 1950s: Social Surveys for the Central Statistical Office Other Than Family Budget, 1954-1960, Letter from H. Bishop to M. Venning, 14 December 1960, TNA, Cabinet Papers, [henceforth CAB] 139/531.
[80] Letter from A. Watson to L. Moss, 4 January 1965, TNA, RG 40/217.
[81] The RRL's new equations sought to acknowledge the factors shaping car ownership were not uniform. The factors of income, household size, population density, public transport provision and fare levels fluctuate and are shaped by unexpected changes in economic and population growth, and motoring costs. It took longer to reach the saturation level than was assumed but the saturation level was also higher than assumed: K. Button, A. Fowkes and A. Pearman, 'Disaggregate and Aggregate Car Ownership Forecasting in Great', *Transportation*

the later 1970s that enough data had accrued to show that competitive fares and high quality provision had a relative but significant impact in reducing car use in cities, but this time lag was detrimental.[82] There was also a significant lag taken to decide Beeching's rail closures, with each individual case taking on average over 14 months to conclude and many of the more contentious cases took much longer, which, as we will see, could help retention.[83]

So, the MOT sought to understand changes in modal choice but struggled due to the quickening fragmentation between public and private transport, different locations, methodological approaches, and the time needed to investigate. Predicting future demand 'had become much more difficult with the rapid growth in car ownership'.[84] No longer was it 'enough to apply a simple growth factor uniformly over an urban area' to predict these shifts.[85] People's use of the car was also changing. Social Surveys initially found the majority of people used their car for extra-curricular leisure, but there were local examples of nearly 40% commuting by car as early as 1961.[86] As car ownership and suburbanisation effected dozens of British cities, 'an improved method of predicting transport requirements 20-30 years in the future' was needed that linked 'the interaction of land use and transport planning' with 'the balance between private and public transport'.[87]

The technically ambitious way to do this was the Land Use Transportation Study, developed since the mid-1950s in the United States.[88] This survey was designed for

---

Research, 14 (1980), 265; 267-269; J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-39, TRL.

[82] P. Goodwin, 'Car Ownership and Public Transport Use: Revisiting the Interaction', *Transportation*, 27 (1993), 21; 24; 32; P. Bly, *The Effect of Fares on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1976), 8, TRL; R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Car Ownership on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-2; 16, TRL.

[83] T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 444; 642.

[84] Notes on Comprehensive Transport Surveys – Their Purpose and Nature, November 1964, TNA, MT 136/14; This improved by the 1970s: M. Dasgupta, *Manchester Travel-to-Work Survey* (Crowthorne, 1980), 1-8, TRL.

[85] Notes on Comprehensive Transport Surveys – Their Purpose and Nature, November 1964, TNA, MT 136/14.

[86] Economic Trends, June 1963, xiv-xix, Roads and Town Planning, Part 1, ABMS 5/36, CCA.

[87] One study in 1976 found land use should be shaped for transport as population density was as powerful at limiting car ownership as income: A. Sanghi, 'The Relationship between Population Density, Automobile Ownership and Automobile Use', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 10 (1976), 118-122; 125-126; Notes on Comprehensive Transport Surveys – Their Purpose and Nature, November 1964, TNA, MT 136/14.

[88] D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 24-26; 203; Wider American traffic engineering models were also influential: S. Gunn, 'European Urbanities since 1945', *Contemporary European History*, 24 (2015),

'continuing revision' over the long term. Indeed, it was not a 'once-and-for-all plan for the future', rather, it provided a model for a city, based on a survey of land use and transport patterns using a computer and updated over time. A detailed survey of goods and passenger movements would be conducted in relation to the distribution of land use, population, employment, and car ownership.[89] However, it is instructive to remember that major road projects, even after policy had been decided, took between 5 to 7 years to go from the planning to the building phase, underlining the complexity of different timescales.[90]

The data collection involved was also complex. It drew a boundary line in many of Britain's agglomerated and decentralised conurbations, which was itself arbitrary, but sought to capture as much internal movement as possible.[91] The Study Area was then divided into zones, such as 500 for the West Midlands conurbation and 250 for Teeside, in which land use and traffic data was collected, identified by purpose of trip, mode, length of journey, time of day, as well as the zone's population, income levels, number of employees, property types, and distance from the central area.[92] This relationship between land use and patterns of movement were then numerated and provided data for a projection with shifts in population for a forecast year. This prediction then informed the formulation of a list of potential transport systems to cater to these new movements based on their financial cost.[93]

However, these studies only formed one layer of local transport analysis. Urban authorities had already undertaken City Plans for transport infrastructure since 1945, many of which had become obsolete by the later 1950s due to the rise of cars and road haulage.[94] Into

---

619-620; H. Fagin, 'The Evolving Philosophy of Urban Planning', *Urban Research and Policy Planning*, 1 (1967), 311.

[89] Notes on Comprehensive Transport Surveys – Their Purpose and Nature, November 1964, TNA, MT 136/14.

[90] G. Charlesworth, *A History of British Motorways* (London, 1984), 82.

[91] Notes on Comprehensive Transport Surveys – Their Purpose and Nature, Outline of Method, November 1964, TNA, MT 136/14.

[92] Framework for Data Collection: Notes on Comprehensive Transport Surveys – Their Purpose and Nature, November 1964, TNA, MT 136/14.

[93] Notes on Comprehensive Transport Surveys – Their Purpose and Nature, Outline of Method, November 1964, TNA, MT 136/14.

[94] S. Glaister et al, *Transport Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, 1998), 133-134.

the 1960s and 70s, the conurbations undertook Structure Plans and Transport Policy and Programme reports, which also developed over time, and took years to conclude. Tyneside's Structure Plan for 1970, for example, took five years, the West Midlands conurbation, three years, and Teesside two years.[95] These plans were essentially bids to central government for a limited fund for infrastructure investment, which also needed wider input and consent from entities such as British Railways. By the early 1970s, as conurbation Passenger Transport Executives took increasing responsibility for transport provision, these plans could be approved in principle, but before the financing was organised, all of which created further lags behind changes in transport choice.[96]

The alternative to adapting to the car in cities was preventing its use, but this brought technical and political problems. This was demonstrated by deliberations of Labour's Cabinet Sub-Committee on transport in 1965. They noted that London Transport's bus traffic had 'decreased by one-third' since 1955 and was making a loss for the first time, a 'trend…not confined to London'.[97] The balancing act between choosing policies to boost demand against reducing public transport's financial losses were key. 'If fares are increased too much', they stated, it 'will intensify the move away from public transport'. But 'if fares are not raised at all, the deficit will grow steadily and intensify the difficulties of finding a longer term solution'.[98]

Thus, even London, with all its public transport alternatives, struggled to balance financial losses with preserving demand for public transport by 1965. The government had stopped London Transport from increasing fares that year, in order to maintain demand, but

---

[95] Time Requirement for the Structure Planning Process, November 1970, 6, TNA, AT 36/36.
[96] Manchester Central Area Tunnel and Associated Network Proposal, 8 October 1974, 1-3, TNA, AN 129/27; *Guardian*, 18 July 1967.
[97] Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development Sub-Committee on Transport Policies: A Review, 8 November 1965, 109-135, TNA, CAB 134/1766.
[98] Ibid.

rises were needed to plug the deficit of £3.85 million.[99] But there was also 'no prospect' that cuts to services or restrictions on cars would 'enable London Transport to pay their way in 1966 or 1967. And yet, 'without an increase in fares', the deficit would 'rise from £4.5 million in 1965 to £10 million' by 1968. This meant that even 'after 1970' there were 'considerable doubts about long term viability' for London's public transport system.[100]

Financial costs were clearly critical, and six options were laid out. Firstly, London Transport could raise fares considerably to cover their losses. Second, subsidies could be provided by the Exchequer. Third, the Greater London Council could cover the losses with their own taxes. Fourth, taxes on public transport provision such as fuel duty could be lowered.[101] Fifth, road pricing or congestion charges could be used to reduce the numbers driving.[102] Sixth, bus services could be rationalised to cut costs. The Cabinet Steering Group concluded several of these should be tried, but none offered a solution. They recommended a 10% increase in bus fares in 1966, but admitted there would be 'considerable difficulties in referring this to the National Board for Prices and Incomes', adding another complexity. They also argued the Exchequer should pay a subsidy on top of a fare increase, and bus fuel taxes should be reduced, both of which were sanctioned through the 1968 Transport Act.[103]

Thus, the Committee concluded that a solution 'could only be brought about by deliberate discrimination in favour of public transport'.[104] This could come in part by traffic

---

[99] This had come with the 'assurance by the Government that they would not have to bear the loss in revenue caused by this postponement': Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development Sub-Committee on Transport Policies, 8 November 1965, 109-135, TNA, CAB 134/1766.
[100] Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development Sub-Committee on Transport Policies, 8 November 1965, 109-135, TNA, CAB 134/1766.
[101] Ibid; The Greater London Council would propose a congestion charge in 1976: *The Observer*, 24 October 1976.
[102] However, Labour Minister Tom Fraser also looked at whether city dwellers could be exempt from a road pricing charge: *Daily Mail*, 15 December 1965; Castle also assessed the possibility of road pricing in London: *The Times*, 17 October 1966; *Guardian*, 24 October 1966.
[103] Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development Sub-Committee on Transport Policies, 8 November 1965, 109-135, TNA, CAB 134/1766; J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 245-247; *Daily Telegraph*, 13 July 1965.
[104] Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development Sub-Committee on Transport Policies, 8 November 1965, 109-135, TNA, CAB 134/1766.

management: introducing bus lanes and the restriction of parking spaces. But there were two problems here. First, there would be 'considerable public objection to measures which make it very much more difficult or more expensive to use cars'. But also, the practical opportunities for reserving bus lanes would also 'not be large' and would 'occur at random where actual road layout would permit', rather than targeting the most congested areas. The restriction of parking also had 'severe manpower and administrative difficulties because of the considerable privately owned parking spaces in central London', and other cities, and the number of parking staff required to administer harsher controls.[105]

Another factor was the conflicting political attitudes towards the city, the car, and suburbanisation.[106] Colin Buchanan's fear of suburban sprawl was shared in warnings in Britain and the United States,[107] and he sought to preserve city life by vertically segregating walkways and high-rise buildings from urban roads.[108] The fear of sprawling 'subtopia' was voiced by politicians including Gaitskell and Crosland in the early 1960s due to the fear of destroying rural areas and dissipating city life.[109] However, Marples and Buchanan also stressed the need for public transport to 'limit' car use because rebuilding city centres would rip up the urban fabric and fail to eradicate congestion.[110]

---

[105] Ibid., 109-235; Controlling parking was not as effective as population density or income at limiting cars: A. Sanghi, 'The Relationship between Population Density, Automobile Ownership and Automobile Use', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 10 (1976), 118-122; 125-126.
[106] This has been studied by: S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011); and D. Rooney, 'The Political Economy of Congestion', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (2014).
[107] J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1961), 134-135; 352; K. Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass, 1960), 12; 97-99; G. Darley, 'Ian Nairn and Jane Jacobs, the Lessons from Britain and America', *Journal of Architecture*, 17 (2012), 733-734; 737-738; 741; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 542; *The Economist*, 9 June 1962.
[108] A method he called traffic architecture: C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 67; S. Gunn and S. Townsend, *Automobility and the City in Twentieth-Century Britain and Japan* (London, 2019), 14; 46; 61-65; The TUC also looked at intrusive urban highways in the US as reason for more co-ordination with public transport: Urban Motorways Conference, 18-20 September 1956, 2, MSS. 292/654/8/1-2, MRC.
[109] O. Saumarez Smith, 'Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment', *The Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), 230-231.
[110] Handwritten Notes, Long-Term in Towns – Buchanan, 1963, 2, MPLS 1/3/4, CCA; Conservative Pamphlet, 'Roads for Britain', 1963, 3; 26, MPLS 1/5/2, CCA; C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 57; Interdepartmental Committee to Consider the Study of the Long-Term Problem of Traffic in Towns, 30 September 1963, 2, TNA, MT 128/112.

Therefore, public transport was considered important, but road building in cities appeared unavoidable. In 1963, Minister of Transport Ernest Marples wrote in his personal papers that the 'USA was at our present stage 30/35 years ago', and that Britain would need urban highways as people bought cars. Such projects would, as we have seen, take years to undertake. But Marples also knew the road pricing approach by the transport economists, in a nation as urbanised as Britain, would not be a winner in terms of 'votes'.[111] Comprehensive redevelopment and urban motorways were thus favoured, to stream the rising tide of cars into corridors flowing away from cities centres in an attempt to preserve the urban form.[112]

The transport economists, however, used traditional economic methods to provide a different vision. They stressed that population density correlated with income and thus a period of suburbanisation would continue as incomes rose, leaving many on lower wages in central areas. Buchanan, an opponent of sprawl, did not factor in this decentralisation enough, and envisaged rising car ownership throughout the city.[113] But the transport economists knew this was not the pattern unfolding. In dense city centres public transport would compete with cars for longer. Crucially, however, the studies that confirmed this did not materialise until a decade later. In 1974, the numbers of households with a car in city centres across Britain was estimated to be barely above a third, compared to 7 in 10 in many areas outside.[114] A 1980 study also concluded that on average the population and number of jobs in the centres of conurbations were 12% lower than estimated, and car ownership 20% lower.[115] These complex variations in transport choice, relatively low rail use, and the differences between

---

[111] Handwritten Notes, Long-Term in Towns – Buchanan, 1963, 2, MPLS 1/3/4, CCA; G. Ortolano, *Thatcher's Progress* (Cambridge, 2019), 4; 8-17; *Guardian*, 1 April 1965.
[112] Interdepartmental Committee to Consider the Study of the Long-Term Problem of Traffic in Towns, 30 September 1963, 2, TNA, MT 128/112; C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 58-59; 65; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 542.
[113] C. Foster, 'Michael Beesley and Cost Benefit Analysis', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 35 (2001), 14; M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 184-186; 192-194; C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 38-41; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 532.
[114] J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 6; 38-53, TRL.
[115] D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 31.

cities are seen in table three.

Table 3. Estimated shares of Transport Modes for City Centre Travel, 1965, in %:

	Bristol	Leicester	Glasgow	Liverpool	Newcastle	National Average
Car	48	53	14	16	18	66
Bus	48	41	69	61	75	21
Rail	2.5	0.6	14	21	6	12

Source: C. Sharp, 'East Midlands Economic Planning Council', 1967, 9-12, LEI 3 G20 SHA, Nottingham University Manuscript and Special Collections Archive [henceforth NMSC].

Buchanan's attempt to accommodate the car into Britain's cities led him to lament in 1973 that more urban public transport was needed, and in 1983 that he had neither the time nor the terms of reference to 'explore the versatility of the bus', which table three shows was prevalent.[116] Buchanan's influence on planning then saw cities such as Manchester build roads premised on over-estimates of future car ownership, population, and investment that meant its 1972 Structure Plan was 'invalid almost as soon as' it was published.[117] By the mid-1970s, the city recorded the 'blight caused by highway proposals which are unlikely to go ahead for a long time', coupled with the 'lack of mobility…for all those without access to a car', who were 'concentrated among households in inner areas'.[118] Buchanan's confidence in planning for vast increases in population and economic growth across urban locations had

[116] September-October 1973 Edition of Transport 2000, West Midlands, 1973, 2-3, TNA, AN 156/1026; C. Buchanan, 'Traffic in Towns: An Assessment after Twenty Years', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 96.
[117] J. Nickson and P. Batey, 'The Analysis of Transport within a Metropolitan County Structure', *Town Planning Review*, 49 (1978), 286.
[118] Greater Manchester Council, *Greater Manchester Structure Plan: Alternative Strategies Report*, 1977, 38, Manchester Archives and Local History, Central Library [henceforth MA], Q711.3Gr1/a.

come in the 'heady days of the early 1960s'.[119]

While policy formulation was transfixed by rising affluence, population, and car ownership in the early 1960s,[120] the transport economists argued Buchanan failed to understand modal choice. In the absence of state edicts, it was the price mechanism that directed choice.[121] They argued house prices near newly built urban roads would indicate their social value through compensation schemes, pre-empting the 1973 Land Compensation Act.[122] Road spending aligned to GDP would also peg construction to rising real incomes and not in the areas where incomes were lowest, inner cities. Alongside this, parking restrictions and one-way streets would make public transport more appealing.[123] Thus, charging people to choose their car was itself a test in competition with public transport, revealing the social value of both in real time rather than over twenty or forty year timescales.[124] This market metric, however, was deemed politically perilous and illiberal in the dirigiste planning culture of the 1960s.[125]

Buchanan's vision for the city in the age of mass car-use went with this eye-catching culture of planning[126] with simplistic and populist images of the cities of the future.[127] But he

---

[119] C. Buchanan, 'Traffic in Towns: An Assessment after Twenty Years', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 93; 95-96; R. Bird to R. Hall letter, 14 February 1963, TNA, MT 96/174; K. Button, A. Fowkes and A. Pearman, 'Disaggregate and Aggregate Car Ownership Forecasting in Great Britain', *Transportation Research*, 14 (1980), 267-269.
[120] G. O'Hara, 'We Are Faced Everywhere with a Growing Population', *Twentieth Century British History*, 15 (2004), 253; 257.
[121] G. Roth, *Paying for Roads: The Economics of Traffic Congestion* (Harmondsworth, 1967), 17-19; A. Walters, 'The Theory and Measurement of Private and Social Cost of Highway Congestion', *Econometrica*, 29 (1961), 697; M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 181-182; M. Beesley and Roth, 'Restraint of Traffic in Congested Areas', *Town Planning Review*, 33 (1962), 195.
[122] M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 179; D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 80-81; K. Morrison and J. Minnis, *Carscapes: The Motor Car, Architecture and Landscape* (London, 2012), 350-360; Department of Environment, *New Roads in Towns: Report* (London, 1972), x; 20-26.
[123] M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 179-82; 185; 195; 200; M. Beesley and J. Roth, 'Restraint of Traffic in Congested Areas', *Town Planning Review*, 33 (1962), 184; 190.
[124] C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 256; 280-283; 314; R. Goodin and J. Le Grand (eds), *Not Only the Poor* (London, 1987), 103-104; C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 10-11.
[125] D. Rooney, 'The Political Economy of Congestion', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (2014), 633-5; 649; D. Rooney, *Spaces of Congestion and Traffic* (Abingdon, 2019), 119; *The Times*, 10 October 1966.
[126] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 178.
[127] Buchanan was persuaded by the ubiquity of the car during a visit to the United Sates, but tried to use it as a warning: S. Ward, 'Colin Buchanan's American Journey', *Town Planning Review*, 88 (2017), 227.

was not against restrictions on cars, arguing that parking limits and his environmental areas would combat congestion while protecting the urban form. But his method sought to enable car-use in available space.[128] Buchanan combined the historic plans for pedestrianisation and new roads by Tripp in the 1940s, American traffic engineering, and the densely planned modernism of the 1960s.[129] However, the sophistication of his approach came in its rhetorical strategy. Buchanan's solution to the growth of congestion, population, and consumption, insightfully offered a range of options of how much to allow the car to infiltrate cities, which in itself made the upheaval they would cause glaringly and visually obvious to the reader.[130]

Buchanan also knew mass car ownership was inevitable and restrictions a last resort politically.[131] Crucially, he argued congestion charges would need to be several pounds a day to put people and businesses off driving and saw subsidised public transport as a supplement.[132] The transport economists countered by arguing a driving charge would ration road space and fund public transport.[133] But again, although the transport economists argued that people used public transport if it was as fast and cheap as the car,[134] the increase in evidence to support this arrived in the 1970s, and it showed there were limits to how much public transport could compete and how many people would transfer back from their car.[135]

---

[128] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 41; 54.
[129] D. Bayliss, 'Traffic in Towns Twenty Years On', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 122-123; P. Hall, 'The Buchanan Report: 40 Years On', *Transport* (2004), 8; W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 348.
[130] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 73; 88; 160; 178; C. Buchanan, 'Traffic in Towns: An Assessment after Twenty Years', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 95; W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 348-351; M. Bianconi and M. Tewdwr-Jones, 'The Form and Organisation of Urban Areas', *Town Planning Review*, 84 (2013), 323; 331-332; 329; I. Pugh to C. Scott Malden letter, 10 April 1963, TNA, Department of Housing and Local Government [henceforth HLG] 131/185; His influence was seen in other transport plans: G. Ortolano, 'Planning the Urban Future', *Historical Journal,* 54 (2011), 503-504; 505-6.
[131] T. Williams, 'Informal Discussion: Traffic in Relation to Town Planning', *Institution of Civil Engineers*, 24 (1963), 12-13.
[132] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 13; 239-241; *The Times*, 19 September 1966; *Guardian*, 27 November 1967.
[133] R. Smeed, *Road Pricing* (London, 1964), 32-33.
[134] M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 182.
[135] P. Goodwin, 'Car Ownership and Public Transport Use: Revisiting', *Transportation*, 27 (1993), 21; 23-24; 32; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-6; 26, TRL; Shown in Runcorn: R. Vincent, R. Layfield, M. Bardsley, *Runcorn Busway Study* (Crowthorne, 1976), 1; 8; 16, TRL; 6-8; 16; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 5; 29, TRL; J. Hopkin, *The Role of an Understanding of Social Factors in Forecasting Car Ownership* (Crowthorne, 1981), 12-15, TRL.

Indeed, Pooley has found men were reluctant to switch from cars to public transport in the 1960s and 70s.[136] Thus, it is probable the charge would have had to be set very high,[137] and Buchanan's futuristic vision of a multi-layered city should thus be read as a representation of the multi-dimensional intractability of solving the issue without such restrictions.[138]

A panel to investigate road pricing within the RRL, chaired by Reuben Smeed in 1962, recommended an optimum charge of 2d. per minute in cities such as London and Cambridge, as well as parking charges and one-way streets.[139] But road pricing or congestion charges were practically problematic. A congestion charge point, where a driver paid to enter the central area was 'almost impossible to establish satisfactory criteria' for and required 'an army of bureaucrats to operate'.[140] A permit could be issued to pass into the centre, but then any price at which it was set would favour richer drivers. Road pricing would also 'involve every vehicle in the priced area being fitted with a metering or identifying device', so that 'each of the 10 million, and ultimately, perhaps 30 million vehicles' in the country 'would have to be correctly identified.' Every movement 'would have to be converted into a debit charge, with little or no chance of error'.[141]

Labour's Cabinet committee stated the 'difficulties in this are very great'. The Smeed Panel agreed, admitting 'such a system was not within the present state of development of electronics' in 1965.[142] The transport economists also believed road pricing would be more politically feasible if existing road taxes were reduced so that drivers paid no more overall.[143]

---

[136] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Modal Choice and Modal Change', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 22.
[137] C. Sharp, 'The Choice between Cars and Buses', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1 (1967), 104; 111; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 29, TRL.
[138] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 178-179.
[139] R. Smeed, *Road Pricing* (London, 1964), 1; 30-34; S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 526.
[140] Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development Sub-Committee on Transport Policies, 14 December 1965, 265-268, TNA, CAB 134/1766.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.,; *Guardian*, 7 July 1966.
[143] R. Smeed, *Road Pricing* (London, 1964), ii; 4.

This would have made road pricing a hypothecated tax, as well as reducing revenues, which the Exchequer rejected.[144] Road pricing also posed questions about liberal democracy. It might 'be considered to be an invasion of privacy, in that it would be a means of checking on the movements of vehicles', and Fraser and Marples were publicly reticent.[145] As a result, more parking restrictions and traffic management through bus lanes and traffic lights were deemed some of 'the most important' tools available. But even so, it was concluded that it was 'unlikely that any benefit' from traffic management would arrive in 'less than three years at least'.[146] This would take transport policy to 1968, and as stated, nationally bus demand had already halved by then.[147]

Yet another complexity in the 1960s was that because the car spread gradually across Britain, and slower in city centres, it was often a faster, cheaper alternative to the bus exactly because cars were not widespread yet. The MOT knew in 1965 from RRL research that not only was the car on average 1.5 minutes per mile faster than the bus, even in London, it was cheaper per journey.[148] Traffic management schemes were successful at maintaining average speeds for buses, but this helped cars too.[149] Private parking in cities was also widespread, making controls difficult. A government funded survey in 1964 found two thirds of commuters in London had off-street parking and over 80% in other cities could find off-street parking.[150] Thus, a study of car-use in urban areas in 1967 found the conditions to give buses

---

[144] D. Rooney, 'The Political Economy of Congestion', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (2014), 637-638.
[145] Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development Sub-Committee on Transport Policies, 14 December 1965, 265-268, TNA, CAB 134/1766; *The Times*, 11 June 1964; *The Times*, 15 April 1965; Left intellectuals in this period also sought freedom of choice for the working class: A. Campsie, 'Mass-Observation, Left Intellectuals and the Politics of Everyday', *English Historical Review*, 131 (2016), 93.
[146] Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development Sub-Committee on Transport Policies: A Review, 8 November 1965, 109-135, TNA, CAB 134/1766.
[147] Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 42; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-3, TRL.
[148] Public and Private Personal Transport in Towns, February 1965, 2, TNA, HLG 136/140; R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Income on Bus Travel* (Crowthorne, 1981), 6, TRL; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 5, TRL.
[149] F. Webster, *Priority to Buses as Part of Traffic Management* (Crowthorne, 1972), 1; 11, TRL; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 5, TRL; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 6, TRL; D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 56.
[150] P. Gray, *Private Motoring in England and Wales* (London, 1969), 26; 79.

an advantage did 'not yet exist'.[151] A study of car journey times in London by 1970 still found average speeds even in the central area had not declined since 1962.[152]

On top of this, taxes on road vehicles produced substantial revenues for the Exchequer. By 1965/6 it accrued £898 million, creating a £462 million surplus over road costs. By 1972/3, revenues were over £1.8 billion, creating £842 million in surplus.[153] However, what could the railways do when they had so many fewer customers than the bus in provincial cities? It must be remembered that Dr Beeching led an industry less competitive than other nationalised undertakings, losing over £100 million a year by 1961 with few signs of rejuvenation in demand.[154] Technological investment had already been undertaken, and increasing fares, which could never eliminate that deficit, risked putting existing customers off, as was the case with the buses.[155] Indeed, Beeching, rather than bringing an axe to urban railways, also sought to address highly complex issues and timescales.

Predictions, Timescales and Complexities: The Railways

In 1958 the government was looking for a new rail policy. This came after an investment programme into dieselisation and unneeded marshalling yards failed to address the railways' losses.[156] Roads, which were more flexible for users, carried two thirds of freight by 1958, and as freight was the railways' main profit source, its finances declined.[157]

---

[151] C. Sharp, 'The Choice between Cars and Buses', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1 (1967), 105-106; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 5, TRL.
[152] D. Lynam and P. Everall, *Car Journey Times in London* (Crowthorne, 1971), 8, TRL; In other areas speeds had even increased: F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 6, TRL.
[153] R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 222-223; *Daily Herald*, 29 May 1963.
[154] G. O'Hara, 'What the Electorate Can Be Expected to Swallow', *Business History*, 51 (2009), 519; Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 4; 113.
[155] W. Ashworth, *The State in Business* (Basingstoke, 1991), 122-123; 153; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 18; 22.
[156] British Transport Commission, *Modernisation and Re-Equipment of British Railways* (London, 1955); D. Aldcroft, *British Railways in Transition* (London, 1968), 175-6; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 290.
[157] P. Scott, 'British Railways and the Challenge from Road Haulage', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13 (2002), 119-120; 'The Growth of Road Haulage', *Journal of Transport History*, (1998), 152-153.

Beeching knew as much in 1963 as correspondence with Marples stated the transference of freight from road to rail 'would not have much effect' because 'they carry such a large proportion of general goods traffic already'.[158] Indeed, 70% of all road haulage in the 1960s was hauled over distances of only 25 miles or less, which was more competitive by road.[159] This included over 90% of road haulage in conurbations, which travelled within their boundaries rather than coming in from outside. Only 6% of freight travelled 100 miles or more.[160] Despite uncompetitive freight pricing over a longer period, the decline of the railways was thus a wider structural shift to the roads.[161]

Beeching's report also came after interwar investigations had failed to specify what transport co-ordination meant in practice, and how it would relate to decentralisation. The 1931 Royal Commission on Transport concluded vaguely that co-ordination between the modes should be the 'aim' and suggested state subsidy.[162] However, plans for slum clearance, dispersal, and the better organisation of residential and industrial areas to modernise Britain centred on roads more than railways, seen in the garden city ideal and Abercrombie's road plans.[163] The Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population in 1940 had described how residential suburbs and industrial ribboning along arterial roads had already

---

[158] R. Beeching to E. Marples letter, 11 February 1963, TNA, MT 96/174; Some railwaymen opposed this view: R. Calvert, *The Future of Britain's Railways* (London, 1965), 25-29.
[159] Both Labour and the Conservatives agreed that freight and passenger rail were 'not generally in competition' with the average journey of less than 25 miles and thus renationalisation or restrictions on road haulage or the private car were scant: Prepared Paper by the MOT and DEA, December 1965, 2-3, TNA, HLG 131/181; British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 37; 41; J. Richardson, 'The Administration of Denationalisation', *Public Administration*, 49 (1971), 387; 391; 402; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-74* (Cambridge, 1983), 393; 546; J. Hillman, *The Parliamentary Structuring of British Road-Rail Freight Coordination* (Evaston, 1973), 141-142; 154-168; 222.
[160] Department of Environment, *Better Use of Town Roads* (London, 1967), 16; *Financial Times*, 3 April 1963.
[161] P. Scott, 'British Railways and the Challenge', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13 (2002), 120; J. Richardson, 'The Administration of Denationalisation', *Public Administration*, 49 (1971), 393; 401.
[162] Royal Commission on Transport, *Final Report: The Co-ordination and Development of Transport* (London, 1931), 45; G. Crompton, in R. Millward and J. Singleton (eds), *The Political Economy of Nationalisation in Britain* (Cambridge, 1995), 116; 122-124; 138.
[163] R. Haywood, 'Railways, Urban Form and Town Planning', *Planning Perspectives*, 12 (1997), 50; 52; 63; 65; S. Wetherell, *Foundations: How the Built Environment Made Twentieth Century Britain* (Woodstock, 2020), 37.

grown 'beyond easy reach of trains'.[164] When Beeching's report was published on 27 March 1963, it also came after the 1947 Transport Act nationalised rail and parts of the bus and haulage industries into separate Executives with the aim of breaking even, but with no specifics on how coordination would be achieved.[165]

This was compounded by the Modernisation plan to invest in the railways from 1955, which ended with the government stopping its wasteful initiatives.[166] By 1958, the railways' annual deficit stood at £104.8 million.[167] This decline shaped the 1962 Transport Act by making rationalisation and investment decisions more centrally controlled. Limits were placed on the amount BR could invest without government permission and its administration was centralised under Beeching. So, from 1963, Beeching proposed rail closures, but it is important to remember the Minister retained the final say on whether a rail service proposed by BR would be closed or not.[168]

Unlike Buchanan's imaginative report, Beeching's had a list of stated aims based on commercial viability, termed 'normal economic forces'.[169] To approach commercial viability, the report listed 337 named rail services proposed for closure and 2,363 stations, which amounted to the withdrawal of 5,000 route miles, or 29% of the network and around a third

---

[164] The Royal Commission, *The Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population* (London, 1940), 41; 69; 45-46.
[165] Indeed, the lack of formal coordination allowed figures such as Gerard Fiennes to argue for voluntary coordination between the modes, which was never likely: *The Times,* 15 January 1963; C. Mulley, 'The Nationalisation of the Bus', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 125-126.
[166] G. Peden, *The Treasury and British Public Policy* (Oxford, 2000), 497; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 303.
[167] D. Munby and A. Watson, *Inland Transport Statistics, Vol. I* (Oxford, 1978), 20-21; P. Smethurst to M. Barnett, Statistics Division, Prospects for Future Viability of the Railway System, 17 May 1963, TNA, MT 65/422; The deficit was made worse by pay rises from 1960: G. Freeman Allen, *British Rail After Beeching* (London, 1966), 12-16; J. Glover, *BR Diary, 1958-1967* (London, 1987), 32-33; 119; C. Guillebaud et al, *Report of Railway Pay Committee* (London, 1960), 43.
[168] British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 97; Central Transport Consultative Committee, *Handbook on Transport Users Consultative Committees* (London, 1963), 5-6; W. Ashworth, *The State in Business, 1945 to the Mid-1980s* (Basingstoke, 1991), 167; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 307; 330; G. Dudley and J. Richardson, *Why Does Policy Change?* (London, 2000), 61.
[169] British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 22.

of stations.[170] This plan aimed to save between £34 and 41 million with closures, but a total of between £115 and 147 million hoped to be saved by investing in inter-city passenger services, diesel traction, containerised freight, raising fares, and cuts to rolling stock and staff, although further capital expenditure would reduce this overall.[171]

The stark facts about how little demand there was for rail services in provincial areas outside the South East were stressed. One half of the rail network's total route mileage carried just 4% of total passenger miles. 3,500 stations produced only 2% of the network's income, while 34 stations, mainly in the corridor between the South East and North West, provided 26% of its income. For freight, one half of the network's mileage carried only 5% of total freight-ton miles.[172] A complication was that there was no one half of the network losing money that could be separated from the viable half. Local loss-making services connected to profitable ones, shared the same junctions, track, signalling, through-routes, and their costs. But Beeching argued that there were few realistic ways to save many services as they would have to increase their fares by 8 or 10 times to cover their own costs. Thus, closures had to be central to tackle an annual deficit that, by 1963, had reached £135.6 million.[173]

However, Beeching was not oblivious to the significance of railway commuter lines in urban areas. At a press conference in 1961 he stated that he would preserve many commuter railways 'even if they are caused to operate uneconomically'.[174] The financial thrust of Beeching's report was not as acute as is sometimes suggested. Whitehall was also assessing town traffic and the Buchanan report at this time and Beeching agreed to exclude

---

[170] Ibid., 19; 102; A. Root, in A. Halsey and K. Webb (eds), *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends* (Basingstoke, 2000), 448; J. Patmore, 'The British Railway Network', *Economic Geography*, 41 (1965), 72.
[171] British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 15; 25; 42; 54-55; 57; 142; T. Gourvish, in R. Roth and C. Divall (eds), *From Rail to Road and Back Again?* (Farnham, 2015), 138-140; T. Barker and C. Savage, *An Economic History of Transport in Britain* (London, 1974), 227; J. Patmore, 'The Changing Network of British Railways', *Geography*, 47 (1962), 404.
[172] And one half of stations produced only 2% of passenger receipts: British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 7; 10-11; 64-66.
[173] Ibid., 5-6; 17-18; 58; D. Munby and A. Watson, *Inland Transport Statistics, Vol. I* (Oxford, 1978), 20-21.
[174] R. Beeching, 'Can British Railways Pay?', Remarks at a Press Conference, 12 June 1961, 3; 7, MSS. 379/PC/4/5/1, MRC.

from his report a range of urban lines across Britain's conurbations that were losing over £25 million a year. There were suburban services in the major cities outside London such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham and Cardiff, and the nation's suburban services as a whole produced £39.8 million in revenue in 1961.[175]

The problem was that £33 million of that £39.8 million in revenue came from London's suburban services alone. Thus, 'none of the services' outside London broke-even or were 'loaded as heavily as many London services' and even then their fares were kept 'low', showing the peripheral role of many commuter railways in provincial cities by 1963.[176] Beeching also stated that the fragile position of provincial commuters meant he could not raise fares to boost revenues there. He argued local authorities should fund them within integrated systems, or for 'social benefit studies' to determine which to save, approaches that would develop with cost-benefit analyses and conurbation Passenger Transport Authorities later in the decade.[177] However, Beeching had made 'clear' and specific allowances that provincial suburban rail closures in the big cities could 'conflict with a decision based on total social benefit'.[178] It may 'be cheaper to subsidise' them 'than bear the extra cost arising if they are closed', his report stated, based on consultations with the Ministry of Transport.[179]

Indeed, Beeching's closures should not be seen as dogmatically financial. He stated in his report that it would be wrong to only keep parts of the network that were certain to break-even as it risked 'destroying assets' that might have proved valuable.[180] Transport officials estimated in 1963 that if his closures could halve the deficit by 1970 that would be a 'major

---

[175] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain* (London, 2006), 87; British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 20.
[176] Ibid., 20-21; 22.
[177] Ibid., 22; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain* (London, 2006), 87; Although there was an over-reliance on what results torrents of new data could produce: T. Crook and G. O'Hara, in T. Crook and G. O'Hara (eds), *Statistics and the Public Sphere* (New York, 2011), 266.
[178] British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 56.
[179] Ibid., 22; 56; 'Criteria Used in Proposing Passenger Closures', May 1963, TNA, MT 124/928.
[180] British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 2.

achievement'. Indeed, without them, it concluded the deficit would 'grow at a rate approaching £20M' a year. Rail's high fixed costs and interest payments meant there was 'no prospect of the Board wiping out the deficit', making an official system of subsidy impossible without first seeking to reduce costs.[181] Also, Beeching himself described 1970 as 'merely an indication of the rate of progress' he hoped to achieve, highlighting that his timescale was not inflexible or final. Indeed, his forecast on deficit reduction was 'about as cautious a forecast as could be made', and trade bodies concluded in 1963 that 'it was unlikely to receive 100% implementation'.[182] Beeching had also 'made it plain' to the MOT before closures started, that any need for subsidy was 'not attributable to the commercial failure of the BRB'. He was aware his closures may not be completed and thus sought financial assurances from the government to cover its costs.[183]

It is also clear from the private papers of Ernest Marples that he was concerned about the commuter services actually included in Beeching's report. On receiving it, Marples showed unease that although Beeching had 'avoided in the main putting suburban commuter closures in' his report, 'some are in'.[184] Indeed, in Marples's personally annotated copy of the Beeching report, his note of most alarm was where he wrote 'OH!' in the margin next to where Beeching suggested loss-making suburban services outside London should risk pricing themselves at realistic break-even fares if local authorities were unwilling to contribute to their subsidy.[185] Marples linked these proposals to his ability to refuse closures, noting that

---

[181] P. Smethurst to M. Barnett, Statistics Division, Prospects for Future Viability of the Railway System, 17 May 1963, TNA, MT 65/422; D. Munby and A. Watson, *Inland Transport Statistics, Vol. I* (Oxford, 1978), 20-21; BRB, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 4; 9.
[182] BR Joint Consultative Council: Meeting between Beeching and Unions, 4 April 1963, 5-10, MSS. 292B/653.7/3, MRC; Meeting of the Standing Committee of Traders' Co-Ordinating Council on Transport, London, 2 April 1963 and 2 May 1963, 120; 154, MSS. 200/F/1/1/107, MRC; D. Munby, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 11 (1963), 166; *Sunday Times*, 31 March 1963; BRB, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 54. Savings were made: *Financial Times*, 26 November 1964.
[183] Subsidies to the Railways Board, April 1963, 1-3, TNA, MT 124/836.
[184] Long-Term – In Towns – Buchanan – Government's Part. Rail: Beeching On Suburban Services, March 1963, 2-3, MPLS 1/3/4, CCA.
[185] Ernest Marples's annotated copy of: *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 26, MPLS 1/3/2, CCA.

'only the minister can close' rail services, and that he would 'obtain views' from a range of sources before deciding. Marples also stressed that 'Buchanan was appointed before Beeching' and that urban closures would appear incoherent if Buchanan was to stress, after rail closures had begun, the danger cars posed to cities. He thus wrote that Buchanan's report was 'in no sense a 'Beeching of the roads'' in that it offered no cut and dry solutions in the way Beeching had.[186]

However, although rail closures were to be accelerated, Marples retrained the final decision on whether to close each service or not. Indeed, he stated that the 1962 Transport 'Act procedure for [rail] closures was deliberately framed to meet this point'.[187] Even before closures began, just a month after Beeching's report was published, the MOT stated that BR 'will need financial assistance, from one source or another' and partly for the 'cost of unremunerative rail services that they are obliged to continue by Government decision on grounds of social or material need'.[188] Marples stated at an opening of a transport depot in Manchester in 1963 that 'one man one car will doom cities', and that 'the answer must' include 'public transport in one form or another'.[189] He thus stressed that urban bus services 'must be in on planning' and made 'more attractive' to help mitigate urban congestion.[190] Despite this, accusations came that Beeching's closures were taking place in a 'policy vacuum'.[191] But the formulation of Beeching's plan had actually stalled closures to give government time to assess them.[192] In this time, civil servant consultations across many departments did not contradict the need for closures and found that if all the passengers

---

[186] Ibid; These concerns were voiced: *The Guardian*, 18 December 1963.
[187] Long-Term – In Towns – Buchanan – Government's Part. Rail: Beeching on Suburban Services, March 1963, 2-3, MPLS 1/3/4, CCA; E. Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 686, cc. 1661, 20 December 1963.
[188] Subsidies to the Railways Board, April 1963, 1-4, TNA, MT 124/836.
[189] Marples Speech at Manchester Corporation Opening of Transport Depot, 22 March 1963, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/3, MRC.
[190] Long-Term – In Towns – Buchanan – Government's Part. Rail, March 1963, 2-3, MPLS 1/3/4, CCA; *The Guardian*, 18 December 1963; *Sunday Times*, 31 March 1963.
[191] *Financial Times*, 20 April 1964.
[192] D. Munby, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 11 (1963), 165-166.

affected by Beeching were to switch to cars it would add between 50 to 100,000 new cars to the roads. This amounted to just 2% of total current road users, and about two months of ongoing growth in car ownership.[193]

It has been argued that Marples was influenced by a market-driven bias for the car.[194] This comes from his allusions to the railways' subsidies compared to the private sector, his own road building business, his flamboyance, and his appointment of Beeching.[195] However, as Beeching's closures began, the approach of the MOT was very different. It was stated repeatedly that it would 'be necessary to refuse to allow closure of some railway services in urban areas' and those costs would be 'met out of general subsidy by the government to meet the Board's annual deficit'.[196] Indeed, no blanket approach to loss-making suburban rail services was to be taken 'until the surveys of major conurbations', and 'the "Buchanan" surveys of all large towns, were completed'.[197] As a result, as early as 1964, the advocacy coalition between Marples and Beeching had 'significantly weakened' because Marples had delayed around 30 closure proposals as he studied them more closely.[198] The data Marples increasingly also had on the roads showed the 'very difficult choices' ahead for the 'car owning democracy' in the context of the 'American experience' of 'letting existing urban public transport systems run down while trying to cater in full for the private car'.[199]

Thus, as the railways' deficits increased, Marples' approach came more from the

---

[193] Departments included: Highways, HLG, Treasury, BT, DEA, local authorities and more: Beeching Report: Implications for Investment in Roads, 22 April 1963, TNA, MT 65/422; Draft Summary of a Meeting at the BTC, 25 October 1962, 1-5, TNA, MT 124/665; Road Engineers Meeting on the Consequences of Closures, 25 June 1963, TNA, MT 106/418.
[194] I. Marchant, *Parallel Lines* (London, 2003), 135; 300-302; M. Hamer, *Wheels Within Wheels* (London, 1987), 50; 54; 57.
[195] O. Saumarez Smith, 'Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment', *The Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), 226; *Guardian*, 21 Mach 1963; S. Ward, 'Colin Buchanan's American Journey', *Town Planning Review*, 88 (2017), 208.
[196] Unremunerative Services: Subsidies, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928.
[197] Interdepartmental Committee to Consider the Study of the Long Term Problem of Traffic in Towns, 30 September 1963, TNA, MT 128/112; Meeting to Discuss Subsidies of Unremunerative Passenger Services, 11 October 1963, TNA, MT 124/836.
[198] G. Dudley and J. Richardson, *Why Does Policy Change?* (London, 2000), 60; 63.
[199] Interdepartmental Committee to Consider the Study of the Long Term Problem of Traffic in Towns, 30 September 1963, TNA, MT 128/112.

contingency and complexity felt within the MOT than ideological convictions. In 1963, the Exchequer had only just written off over £1 billion in rail debt through the 1962 Transport Act.[200] Thus, rail subsidies were already substantial, but there were concerted efforts to discover which modes had most potential in British cities outside London, the latter seeing 'very few closures proposed' under Beeching.[201] Indeed, nationally, rail demand had declined since the 1920s,[202] and rail services in provincial conurbations had levels of demand, despite efforts to increase them, that prompted closer scrutiny by BR and Marples.

The Fate of Buses and Rail Services in Provincial Cities

This section will assess bus and rail demand in a range of provincial cities. It will show that, far from the government and BR embracing closures, there were concerted efforts to maintain public transport in the major cities. However, the railways lacked the demand to provide a sweeping alternative to the car in many cities compared to their costs. Indeed, it was the bus that offered the best alternative, but it lacked the speed, flexibility, and solvency of the car. The themes of this chapter are predictions, timescales, and complexities, and these factors shaped how local as well as central government tried to adapt urban transport to the car's gradual and uneven rise.[203]

The structure of bus administration and transport nationalisation was another factor hampering co-ordination as car ownership rose. Municipal ownership and the 1930 Road Traffic Act's licencing system had stopped internal competition between bus operators before

[200] By 1963, the government was subsidising the railways by £150 million a year: P. Smethurst to M. Barnett, Statistics Division, Prospects for Future Viability of the Railway System, 17 May 1963, TNA MT 65/422.
[201] Some examples were the Broad Street to Richmond; the St Pancras to Barking; the Woodside to Sanderstead, all of which were refused; The Road Programme: Reports from Road Engineers, April 1963, 3, MT 124/928; D. Levinson, 'The Orderliness Hypothesis', *Journal of Transport History*, 29 (2008), 111; P. Waller, *Rail Atlas: The Beeching Era* (Hersham, 2013), 44; 78-79.
[202] G. Crompton, in R. Millward and J. Singleton (eds), *The Political Economy of Nationalisation in Britain* (Cambridge, 1995), 118; 138.
[203] J. Downes, *The Distribution of Household Car Ownership* (Crowthorne, 1976), 5, TRL; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 15.

1945, organising services into a complex system of route-based monopolies.[204] The 1947 Transport Act then placed few specific demands on the British Transport Commission regarding operation, the purchasing of bus companies, or coordination between modes as strong urban demand had made bus nationalisation less urgent.[205] Bus operators and local authorities also opposed the Attlee government's attempt to co-ordinate modes of passenger transport through regional authorities that would have cut across the separate transport Executives within the British Transport Commission.[206]

Their successful opposition to these regional authorities meant bus operators provided services without coordinating with rail, and without control over prices and costs as demand declined with rising car ownership. This decline led a major firm, British Electric Traction, to be bought by the National Bus Company as late as 1967 after its executives sold out before the share price dropped further.[207] Greater subsidy from central government and local control through the 1968 Transport Act and 1972 Local Government Act then sought to enable the conurbations to maintain public transport and coordinate the modes. They created PTAs with financial and administrative responsibilities and PTEs that controlled operation. However, the separate legal channels for bus and rail subsidy from central government led to their independent treatment by local authorities as they took financial responsibility for transport, with limited budgets hampering co-ordination further. These financial and administrative

---

[204] J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 226; 244; 243-255.
[205] C. Mulley, 'The Nationalisation of the Bus', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 126; 134; G. Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy* (London, 1985), 140-141; Contrasting to the nationalisation suiting rail's monopoly: J. Singleton, in R. Millward and J. Singleton (eds), *The Political Economy of Nationalisation in Britain* (Cambridge, 1995), 17-18; 28.
[206] The Executives were arranged by mode, and these Area Schemes were one of the few aspirations under section 63 of the 1947 Transport Act relating to road passenger transport: C. Mulley, 'Passenger Transport in the UK, 1920-1950', Business and Labour History Group, University of Sydney, 2009, 11; C. Mulley, 'The Nationalisation of the Bus', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 128.
[207] The BTC already owned a large stake in the company: R. Pryke, *Public Enterprise in Practice* (London, 1971), 12-13; J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 244; J. Hibbs, *The Bus and Coach Industry* (London, 1975), 16-24; 66; 143-145; 153; 157-167; P. Bly, *The Effect of Fares on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1976), 1; 7; 10, TRL.

complexities then led to bus and rail rationalisation as well as subsidy.[208]

Leeds

As suburbanisation and employment decentralisation increased in the 1960s, the number of people commuting into cities grew, prompting questions over what to do about rising car ownership. Leeds's transport movements in the 1960s reflected these changes in its compact population, set within the west Yorkshire conurbation. Before 1945, the tramway system in Leeds served a population occupying a concentrated urban area with 'high density housing'.[209] But trams were abandoned by 1960 and rising wages and slum clearance triggered 'considerable movement of population from the overcrowded and congested inner areas of the city to the new suburban housing estates', particularly to the northern and eastern fringes. The population shifted to the north of the river Aire so that by the early 1970s there were 2 residents to the north compared to the south of the city.[210] Thus, there was an increase of commuting towards the city centre, but this came alongside significant decentralisation and complication of movements.[211]

This made transport provision harder. There were 134,000 people entering the city centre every day in Leeds in 1961, out of a total population of 511,600. By 1967, there had been a 30% increase in the population living in the surroundings areas and a c.12% decline in

[208] C. Mulley, 'The Nationalisation of the Bus', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 133; J. Hibbs, *The Bus and Coach Industry* (London, 1975), 16-24; 66; 143-145; 153; 157-167; P. Bly, *The Effect of Fares on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1976), 8, TRL; J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 250-253; M. Eyre and C. Heaps, *Manchester and Salford: A Century of Municipal Transport* (Hersham, 2001), 97-100; John Hibbs writing for the Institute of Economic Affairs arguing for more free enterprise in the bus industry so bus companies could align costs with fares: *Guardian*, 23 September 1963.
[209] Bus Services in Leeds – A Discussion Paper, 15 January 1973, 1-2, Transport Planning Group, LLDI/2/847763, Leeds Archive Service [henceforth LAS].
[210] Leeds City Transport – The Commuter in the Future', 1966, 1, TNA, HLG 136/222; Bus Services in Leeds – A Discussion Paper, 15 January 1973, 1-2, Transport Planning Group, LLDI/2/847763, LAS.
[211] R. Lawton, 'The Daily Journey to Work in England and Wales', *The Town Planning Review*, 29 (1959), 249; 252; 255; R. Lawton, 'The Journey to Work in Britain', *Regional Studies*, 2 (1968), 30-32.

central Leeds residence.[212] The abandonment of the tram system as the city expanded 'afforded an opportunity for a recasting of the [bus] network', allowing people to make through journeys with fewer interchanges compared to stopping tram services.[213] But, 'even more important' was that as people moved out, these commutes would get longer, 'further restricting the number of effective journeys which individual buses' (or the closed trams) could provide for rush hour.[214]

But despite this suburbanisation, Leeds kept a relatively compact structure with a small proportion of the working population living more than five miles from the city centre by the early 1970s.[215] The heaviest movements on individual trains were in affluent areas of Leeds, 'from origins at Headingley and Cross Gates', and Garforth.[216] But rail only made up 2% of commuter journeys in Leeds.[217] The railways, therefore, faced a difficult task in becoming a major part of the Leeds' public transport alternative. Three quarters of residents in the conurbation lived and worked in the same town or local authority, and 70% of all bus routes were local, which made buses major asset servicing this 'complex network' of movements.[218]

Car ownership was also low in Leeds, at around 130 cars per thousand people in 1966.[219] But the West Yorkshire Transportation Study,[220] carried out between 1966 and 1969, revealed how much the conurbation depended on the bus, not the railways.[221] Within the

---

[212] Leeds City Transport – The Commuter in the Future', 1966, 1, TNA, HLG 136/222; Ministry of Transport, *Cars for Cities: A Study of Trends in the Designs of Vehicles* (London, 1967), 5.
[213] Bus Services in Leeds – A Discussion Paper, 15 January 1973, 1-2, LLDI/2/847763, LAS.
[214] Leeds City Transport – The Commuter in the Future', 1966, 3-4, TNA, HLG 136/222.
[215] Bus Services in Leeds – A Discussion paper, 15 January 1973, 1-2, LLDI/2/847763, LAS.
[216] West Yorkshire Transportation Study: Technical Report, 1969, 26-27, LMT/MO/TCF/Box12/2, LAS.
[217] British Road Federation, *The Conurbations* (London, 1969), 68.
[218] West Yorkshire Transportation Study: Technical Report, 1969, 21-25, LMT/MO/TCF/Box12/2, LAS.
[219] J. Sleeman, 'A New Look at the Distribution of Private Cars in Britain', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1968), 311-313.
[220] This dealt mostly with conurbation travel rather than internal Leeds travel – A Leeds Transportation Study was not done until 1977: E. Judge, 'Leeds since Buchanan, 1963-1983', *Built Environment*, (1983), 114-117.
[221] Other Studies too: P. Else and M. Howe, 'Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Withdrawal of Railway Services', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 3 (1969), 180.

Study Area, the main mode of travel to work by rail made up 0.9% of journeys. This was at a time when 43.8% of commuter journeys were by bus, 21.8% by foot, and 21.4% by car.[222] The majority of rail journeys making up this 0.9% were inter-urban, between Leeds, Castleford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Bradford, Wakefield, and Dewsbury. But rail travel made up just 2.5% of total inter-urban travel compared to the bus at 50.2% and the car at 41.5%.[223] Indeed, only 30 passenger trains started and finished within the conurbation area during the morning peak, and large movements of workers (train loads exceeding 100 passengers) 'only occur[ed] on 15' of those routes.[224]

However, these movement patterns also made the bus vulnerable to the car over a longer timescale. By 1966, transport surveys had concluded there was 'every indication that…only small numbers of car owning workers' in the conurbation 'choose to use public transport in preference to the car', and that 'within the analysis of 'choice', people use the bus mainly because they could not yet afford a car. This meant future investment in public transport would have to help maintain bus services. Indeed, the Transportation Study's main recommendation was for express bus services to receive priority on the city's roads.[225] But this approach was also based on the skepticism of Buchanan's predictions of future car ownership.

When assessing the Buchanan report in early 1964, the Leeds City planning office felt Buchanan's report was too confident in its ability to predict future car ownership levels.[226] Buchanan claimed these could be accurately predicted through transport surveys, but this was 'exaggerated'.[227] Surveys of existing traffic flows 'can only show the position as it exists at

---

[222] Leeds City Council, Leeds Inner Ring Road booklet (London, 1966), 5, TNA, HLG 136/222; West Yorkshire Transportation Study: Technical Report, 1969, 111, LMT/MO/TCF/Box12/2, LAS.
[223] Ibid.
[224] West Yorkshire Transportation Study: Technical Report, 1969, 26-27, LMT/MO/TCF/Box12/2, LAS.
[225] Ibid., 21-25; West Yorkshire Transportation Study: Summary Report, May 1969, 48, TNA, MT 120/207.
[226] Gunn has analysed the 'Leeds Approach': S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problem', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 536-538.
[227] Report of the City Engineer and Planning Officer, 17 January 1964, 5, TNA, HLG 136/222.

the time the survey is undertaken', and that it is 'felt that there are too many uncertainties for them to be accepted as providing a basis for scientific long-term projection'. Surveys of population and car ownership growth could be extrapolated into 'reasoned assumptions of change', but increasing their number brought different predictions, and they could not be relied upon.[228]

In any case, congestion levels in Leeds were not calamitous in 1966. It was only apparent for a period of about 25 minutes during the morning and evening peaks. Indeed, 'the introduction of the central area traffic management schemes', meant congestion did 'not now disrupt public transport operating schedules', and 'no serious difficulty' was experienced in the central area.[229] Although there was 'no need in Leeds for reserving lanes or streets for buses on any substantial scale', the rate of car purchasing, which increased by 35% in 1965 alone, showed that congestion was 'not a restraining factor' on car usage. In the absence of road pricing, then, a wider policy had to focus on traffic management and parking restrictions.[230]

The HLG, as a result of this, knew that 'whatever the ultimate scale of road building', it was 'very unlikely' that there would be major changes to the physical structure of Leeds 'over the next 10/15 years' compared to the pattern already 'foreseen at present'. There was thus a recognition in central government that local authorities had 'to come to terms with this increase of vehicle ownership before Buchanan-style solutions can possibly be effective'.[231] Thus, there was some recognition that the planning of new residential areas and road systems

---

[228] Ibid; G. O'Hara, 'Temporal Governance. Time, Exhortation and Planning', *Journal of Modern European History*, 13 (2015), 342; Economic Study of West Yorkshire by the Research Group of the Economic Planning Board, 12 March 1970, TNA, MT 120/207.
[229] Special Partnership: Leeds City Council – Ministry of Transport, 3rd Meeting, 15 December 1965, 1, TNA, HLG 136/222.
[230] Ibid; These were not particularly effective before the late 1970s: E. Judge, 'Leeds since Buchanan, 1963-1983', *Built Environment*, (1983), 115-116.
[231] The Leeds Project, UPC Division, June 1965, 1-3, TNA, HLG 136/140; *Guardian*, 1 April 1965; Memorandum: Transport and National Plan, 7 April 1966, TNA, Department of Economic Affairs [henceforth EW] 14/6; *The Times*, 9 April 1963.

worked on timescales detached from the availability of funds and how transport demand was fragmenting, and faith in planning and the amounts investment in it were already declining by 1965.[232]

Despite Buchanan's report, then, the MOT could see there was a series of complexities and costs pushing them to more immediate practical solutions that would 'certainly influence our ultimate solution and may in fact even set the pattern for it'.[233] Rather than following Buchanan, their aim was 'to find alternative means of coping' with congestion.[234] Marples' concern over the urban closures in Beeching's report shown above, as we will see, rather than ignoring them as alternative means of coping, studied them carefully in the context of their demand and their finances. What Leeds had to do was make 'the best use of road space already in existence or likely to be provided'. It was also clear that controlling car-use, in 'a free society' would mean 'altering the balance of attraction between public and private transport' towards the former. This was 'the main field of work' for Leeds, but without the technological and legal tools for road pricing, or the laws to stop people buying cars, maintaining public transport provision financially was a difficult task over the long term.[235]

Planning alternative systems to the car was equally difficult and expensive.[236] A study was produced in early 1966 for a new public transport system to cater to commuters from the new Seacroft and Whinmoor housing estates which would have a combined future population of over 70,000.[237] This study showed the difficulties attached to the railways being made the main mode of public transport for new developments. Of the options explored, an underground railway into Leeds was by far the most expensive, at £937,418, followed by an

---

[232] G. O'Hara, *From Dreams to Disillusionment: Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), 27; 84; 121; 206-208.
[233] The Leeds Project, UPC Division, June 1965, 1-3, TNA, HLG 136/140.
[234] Ibid., 1-3.
[235] Ibid.
[236] *Guardian*, 29 November 1967.
[237] Leeds City Transport, 25 February 1966, TNA, HLG 136/222.

overground line at £764,918. This compared to an express double-decker bus system costing £230,300.[238]

Neither was providing buses for peak hour commuting over an expanding area practically or financially easy. In 1966, 600 buses were run during the peak morning and evening hours by Leeds's municipally owned services. A significant 380 of these buses were run at peak hours and at no other time, such was the demand by commuters. During the off-peak period, 220 buses were needed for all-day services. The peak hour buses also travelled over shorter distances, on average around 48 miles a day compared to the basic day service which travelled 194 miles. Peak hour buses thus earned less than the day services because their outward journeys, after dropping off large numbers in the city, were almost empty. Although they travelled four times as many miles, basic day services earned on average £38 a bus compared to £10 per bus at peak times. This meant peak hour bus fares needed to be raised periodically to remain financially viable as car ownership spread.[239] In this context of increasing costs over time, buses were thus far more cost-effective to run below maximum capacity than the railways, which were already loss-making.[240]

Leeds's policies thus focused on 'containing the adverse effects of traffic conditions of increasing car ownership', through 'the extension of controls on parking in and about the central area', and the 'development of public transport as a satisfactory alternative to the use of private transport'.[241] Leeds conducted bus service experiments, such as bus lanes, more suburban services, and routes to car parks on the edge of the city, but these did not stop

---

[238] Ibid.
[239] Leeds City Transport – Peak Period Operation, 1966, TNA, HLG 136/222.
[240] E. Smith, 'An Economic Comparison of Urban Railways and Express Bus Services', *Journal of Economics and Policy*, 7 (1973), 26-27; 31; J. Todd, J. Baggs and E. Smith, 'An Economic Comparison of Urban Railways and Express Bus Services: Comment and Rejoinder', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 89-90; 92-94.
[241] Special Partnership: Public Transport – Note by MOT as Basis for Discussion on 27 January 1966, TNA, HLG 136/222.

transfer to the car over time.[242] This was demonstrated in 1966 with a park and ride scheme by Leeds City Council. It was 'publicised by the press and the BBC and leaflets were issued to motorists held up at intersections on the route'. It 'failed', partly because there was not enough appetite from people to switch back to the bus from the car, but there were still vast numbers of private parking spaces in the city centre.[243] Leeds then followed this in 1970 with pedestrianisation in its centre, bus-only roads, and car parks around it, linked to a motorway ring outside that, providing an example of greater car mitigation.[244]

However, as enticing as it is to plan land use around transport, rather than restrict parking or try tolls,[245] this was a hugely complex task, shown in a land use transport study of Cardiff in 1966.[246] If the railways were to be used to 'counteract the attractiveness of the private car', cities would need to be replanned. New residential areas would have to be built in 'compact nodes' near stations 'at a critical distance' from the city centre, involving vast and disruptive construction. They would also have to be located 'far enough away' from the work place 'to ensure that door-to-door travel times by rail' were faster than by car, but they would also need to be 'near enough for the total time to be acceptable' to passengers.[247] This would have been almost impossible with the urban decentralisation and dispersal taking place, which was 'not the result of any carefully prepared strategy linking industry,

---

[242] Leeds City Transport – Leeds Public Transport Policy: Aims of the City Centre Bus Experiment, 1970, LLD1/2/837078, LAS; Leeds City Engineers Department, February 1973, Policy Committee, LLDI.2/847676/1-2/2, LAS.
[243] Special Partnership Between Leeds City and the Ministry of Transport: Note of a Meeting Held at the Civic Hall, Leeds, 22 June 1966, 2, TNA, HLG 136/222; Park and Ride Documents, TNA, MT 97/843.
[244] P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 105.
[245] A. Sanghi, 'The Relationship between Population Density, Automobile Ownership and Automobile Use', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 10 (1976), 118-122; 125-126.
[246] The difficulties of building homes and offices near suburban rail stations and providing a comprehensive bus system are shown in Birmingham: City of Birmingham Structure Plan: Report on Options, 1973, WCB; West Midlands Transport Executive, *Development of Bus Services: Birmingham City Centre*, January 1974, 1-7, LP47.64, WCB; E. Judge, 'Leeds since Buchanan, 1963-1983', *Built Environment*, (1983), 119.
[247] Cardiff Development and Transportation Study, April 1966, 15-22, by Colin Buchanan and Partners, TNA, Welsh Office Papers, [henceforth BD] 4/134.

population and housing'.[248]

Leeds's Railways

The Beeching report stated that there were rail commuter lines in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, and Cardiff that were 'major contributors to the total daily flux of people in and out of the local cities'.[249] Other than duplicate inter-city services, those proposed for closure in the West Yorkshire conurbation included loss-making services going between Leeds and nearby towns. The West Yorkshire conurbation's transportation study in 1966 found that some inter-urban rail services were carrying around 50 passengers per train during the morning peak.[250] This trend is backed up by the closure proposals studied here, which were proposed for closure if they could not cover even their own movement costs, let alone their wider track, signaling and administrative costs.[251]

However, the approach by BR and the MOT was not to close services without an assessment, and in the Leeds area some were amalgamated rather than closed altogether. The Leeds Central to Pontefract via Castleford service was proposed for closure in October 1963.[252] The hourly service covered 18.5 miles in the West Riding of Yorkshire, consisting mainly of coal mining areas, glass and confectionery makers, and light engineering. The service was 'mainly used by workmen, shop assistants and office staff' who travelled 'daily to and from Leeds', but it lost £40,000 a year. It also shared its track with other rail services,

---

[248] R. Smith, 'Post-War Birmingham: Planning and Development', *The Town Planning Review*, 45 (1974), 189; R. Haywood, 'Britain's National Railway Network: Fit for Purpose in the 21st Century?', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 15 (2007), 202.
[249] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 20.
[250] West Yorkshire Transportation Study: Technical Report, 1969, 21-23, LMT/MO/TCF/Box12/2, LAS; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 14.
[251] Services needed at least 6,000 passengers a week just to cover their own costs, let alone these other costs: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 17-18; This point was underlined in Marples's annotated copy of: *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 37, MPLS, 1/3/2, CCA.
[252] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 103.

which meant regardless of the closure, Castleford and Pontefract would continue to be served by trains to Leeds.[253]

However, the TUCC found the service transported around 500 regular passengers a day despite fares on the service often being lower than local buses.[254] This was below the demand Beeching argued would make a service viable in future, of 10,000 passengers a week.[255] Indeed, the TUCC hearing saw just 58 individuals voice their objections, with another letter of objection with 415 further signatures.[256] It was also concluded that 'the majority of present passengers using public transport' in the area 'seemed to favour bus travel'.[257] The local press also conceded that rail passenger traffic 'had declined greatly in the past 10 years' due to the car, and this was 'adding apathy' to the opposition to closures. However, the newspaper then asked: 'But what of the future?', suggesting as there were already 18 bus services in the area, the railway could be used instead.[258] This question is appealing, but it ignored in this case the speed and cost of the rail service which was not sufficiently advantageous to attract enough people from buses. Indeed, rail travel fares nationally rose half as much as bus fares between 1955 and 1975.[259]

The amalgamation of rail services rather than outright closure, however, was made

---

[253] British Railways Board North Eastern Region: Proposed Withdrawal of the Passenger Train Service Between Leeds (Central), Castleford (Central) and Pontefract, September 1963, TNA, AN 168/33; C. Scott-Malden letter to P. Davies, 30 July 1964; Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Train Services, 24 January 1964, TNA, MT 124/785.
[254] Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Services Between Leeds (Central) and Pontefract Via Castleford Central, 5 October 1964; D. Hill, Railway Passenger Closure Proposals, 1 November 1963, AN 168/33; Borough of Castleford letter to the TUCC, 12 December 1963, TNA, MT 124/785.
[255] With freight using the lines. 17,000 passengers a week were needed with no local fright services: British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 17-18; 97-101.
[256] Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Services Between Leeds (Central) and Pontefract Via Castleford Central, 5 October 1964; D. Hill, Railway Passenger Closure Proposals, 1 November 1963, AN 168/33.
[257] Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Train Services Between Leeds and Pontefract, Appendix D, TUCC Findings, TNA, MT 124/785.
[258] *Pontefract and Castleford Express*, 31 October 1963.
[259] Beeching held this view, arguing buses were locally plentiful, cheaper, and should be linked to urban rail, and paid for by local authorities, pre-empting the PTAs initiated in 1968: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping* (London, 1963), 13-19; 59; Proposed Withdrawal of the passenger train service between Leeds and Pontefract, Appendix D, TNA, MT 124/785; E. Smith, 'An Economic Comparison of Urban Railways and Express Bus Services', *Journal of Economics and Policy*, 7 (1973), 30; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends* (Crowthorne, 1977), 29, TRL.

easier in the Leeds area due to heavy freight. Even if a passenger service was closed, the track might remain due to the freight using it, and therefore, a rationalised service over the surviving lines could be possible. Beeching had highlighted in his report that the Leeds area had much higher freight demand than passenger traffic, but local BR staff then sought to maintain local passenger services where they could.[260] The Leeds City to Knottingley service, which was proposed for closure in late 1963, travelled south-east from Leeds to Knottingley over 15.25 miles. This service too was an inter-urban commuter but its potential savings were lower at only £5,400 because the line would be kept open due to freight to two nearby coal power stations, the line's main source of income.[261]

The TUCC hearing found that the passenger service had only 270 daily passengers on weekdays, 'used mainly by commuters to and from their places of employment in Leeds'.[262] However, because there was a cheap day rail return in operation, 'return fares by rail' were 'less than those by bus'. Despite these advantages, the service carried just 55 people on average on each train, and a 'large movement of passengers already' went 'by road'.[263] This demonstrated that despite rail fares being lower, bus and increasingly car transport were more competitive forms of transport.

The Wakefield to Goole passenger service to the south of Leeds was a 27.25 mile service through the industrial and mining areas between Wakefield and Knottingley and agricultural land to Goole, proposed for closure in August 1963. As with the services above, it had on average 50 to 60 passengers on each train, which were used for a mixture of shopping and commuting. There were around 600 daily passengers, mostly coming from

---

[260] British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 24; 65; Proposed Withdrawal of the passenger train service, 16 October 1963, 5, TNA, AN 168/33.
[261] Withdrawal of Passenger Train Services, September 1963, TNA, MT 124/786.
[262] Rail Passenger Closure Proposal, July 1964, 7; Report of the transport users consultative committee for the Yorkshire Area on the proposal of British Railways (North Eastern Region) to withdraw the passenger train service between Leeds (City) and Knottingley, 19 February 1964, 2-4, TNA, MT 124/786.
[263] Ibid; Highways Division, Railway Passenger Closure Proposals, August 1963, 4, MT 124/786.

intermediate stations towards Goole, and the service lost around £25,000 a year.[264] However, this service was contentious because the replacement bus services were far more problematic. The TUCC hearing in February 1964 concluded that 'severe hardship' would be caused to some regular travelers as, on the replacement bus services, 'fares will be higher' and journeys times 'in many cases will be greatly increased'.[265]

As this line was being used by freight, the Ministry of Transport Working Party of Passenger Closure Proposals suggested in July 1964, that, 'if fares were raised by about' 10 pence 'a head per week' the service would 'come near to breaking even', especially 'in view of the recent increase in bus fares'.[266] Closures were, therefore, not sought blindly in comparison with other modes. In July 1966, officials at BR proposed a modified service between Leeds, Pontefract, Knottingley and Goole, which still lost over £20,000 a year, but saved over £12,000 in the process.[267] The MOT agreed with the proposal, and despite this process having started under the Marples, officials at the MOT knew in 1966 that, as this decision included 'two refusals (with special regard to commuter services)', that 'the Minister may wish to take public credit for them'.[268]

Indeed, Barbara Castle's press notice in September 1966 declared that the hardship caused from closure meant this could 'only be alleviated by the retention of certain train services'. She refused to the consent but closed one of Pontefract's stations.[269] The Leeds Central to Bradford via Pudsey services was also proposed for closure in 1963. This centred on the closure of two stations in Pudsey – Pudsey Greenside and Pudsey Lowtown. The closure would save £26,300, and a rail service to Pudsey Stanningley station to Leeds and

---

[264] Working Party on Passenger Closure Proposals, 1 July 1964: Wakefield – Goole; Report of the Transport Users Consultative Committee, 7 April 1964, TNA, MT 124/787; Highways Division, Railway Passenger Closure Proposals, August 1963, 4, MT 124/786.
[265] Working Party on Passenger Closure Proposals, 1 July 1964: Wakefield – Goole, TNA, MT 124/787.
[266] Ibid.
[267] J. Baxter to Mr Scott-Malden letter, 1 July 1966; J. Beeton note, 30 June 1966, TNA, MT 124/787.
[268] C. Scott-Malden to Mr Baxter letter, 4 July 1966, TNA, MT 124/787; Other examples: *The Times*, 23 April 1966.
[269] Minister of Transport Letter and Press Release, 14 September 1966, MT 124/787.

Bradford would continue, albeit one mile from the centre of Pudsey.[270] Indeed, the TUCC hearing in November 1963, in which there were 24 objectors and 207 signatories, found that trains were rarely loaded by more than 40 people at Pudsey, and 120 people used the two stations a day to Leeds, in a town of 34,000.[271] The TUCC also found that the 'vast majority already travelled by bus' in the area.[272] This service was thus consented to close along with the two Pudsey stations in April 1964.[273]

Other Major Cities

There was, therefore, nuance to how closures developed in the conurbations. The Birmingham to Lichfield service, which is now part of the Cross-City commuter service, was a 16.25 mile suburban commuter via Sutton Coldfield listed for modification in the Beeching report.[274] It ran north through a densely populated residential area, and industrial districts on the north-east side of Birmingham, new housing developments beyond Sutton Coldfield, and the rural area around Lichfield. However, it was estimated that, although the service was unprofitable, closure would lose the wider local network £84,800 a year in revenue.[275]

The service's 'commuter traffic into Birmingham' at peak morning and evening times, at around 7,000 a week in 1964, had also seen 'continued expansion' since diesel trains

[270] Report of the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for the Yorkshire Area on the proposal of British Railways (North Eastern Region) to withdraw the passenger services between Leeds (Central) and Bradford (Exchange) via Pudsey, 2 December 1963; Working Party on Passenger Closure Proposals, 18 March 1964, TNA, MT 124/782.
[271] Ibid; Report of the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for the Yorkshire Area, 2 December 1963, TNA, MT 124/782.
[272] Report of the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for the Yorkshire Area, 2 December 1963, 3, TNA, MT 124/782.
[273] *Yorkshire Post*, 8 April 1964; J. Baxter Letter of Withdrawal, 1 April 1964, TNA, MT 124/782.
[274] Financial Assessment – Complete Withdrawal of Existing Services; Birmingham-Lichfield: Summary of Present Position, 8 November 1966, TNA, AN 155/12; British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 108; J. Boynton, *Rails Across the City* (Kidderminster, 1993), 3.
[275] Financial Assessment – Complete Withdrawal of Existing Services; Birmingham-Lichfield: Summary of Present Position, 8 November 1966, TNA, AN 155/12.

replaced steam in the late 1950s.[276] The 'scope for considerable expansion' of housing at the northern end of the line around Lichfield was also taken into account.[277] A 30% reduction in trains was thus decided upon, which saw a rationalised service introduced on 7 September 1964 concentrating on commuter peaks.[278] However, already by 1966, of the 3.72 million journeys made in the West Midlands conurbation on an average week day, 1.62 million were made by car due to its decentralisation, links to the car industry, relatively high incomes, and road-centric planning choices.[279] The efforts of the conurbation's local authorities to expand rail services from 1970 were checked by the large sums needed, and this service required subsidy by 1968.[280] Thus, it should be remembered that many useful services were also loss-making in the 1960s, but the track was kept for retained services and freight.[281]

The forces of decentralisation and rising car ownership left a difficult task for public transport in Birmingham. In 1951, 30.5% of Birmingham families lived in densities of over 1 person per room, and debates in favour of slum clearance had been present for generations.[282] As a result, suburbanisation and overspill schemes saw over 250,000 people leave the city and building outside the centre meant the city's total residential acreage went from 21,371 acres in 1949 to 27,386 acres in 1971, with council estates built further out, such as

---

[276] Proposed Modification of Passenger Train Service Between Birmingham New Street and Lichfield, 11 June 1964, 2, TNA, AN 155/12.
[277] Re-Shaping of the Railways: Proposed Rationalisation of Passenger Service Between Birmingham New St. and Lichfield, 1964, 4, TNA, AN 155/12.
[278] Note from C. Haygreen at BRB to London Midland Region, 16 June 1964, AN 155/12.
[279] *Birmingham Post,* 22 January 1966; S. Gunn, 'Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse of the Motor City Ideal', *The Historical Journal*, 61 (2018), 228; 238; 241; 248.
[280] *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 23 November 1970; City of Birmingham Structure Plan: Report on Options, 1973, WCB; Birmingham – Lichfield Service, London Midland, 16 October 1967, TNA, AN 155/12.
[281] Services in the Birmingham area were closed by both Conservative and Labour, but both Marples and Fraser insisted on being informed if the track itself was to be pulled up: Report of the Proposal of British Railways to Withdraw Passenger Services between Walsall and Rugeley, May 1964, TNA, AN 155/86; Tom Fraser letter favouring closure of Nuneaton-Coventry-Leamington Spa service, 15 January 1965, TNA, AN 155/10; Notice Published: 18 January 1965, TNA, MT 124/705; Letter of Consent from J. Baxter, 10 September 1964, TNA, AN 155/87.
[282] R. Smith, 'Post-War Birmingham: Planning and Development', *The Town Planning Review*, 45 (1974), 190; 198; J. Yelling, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 469-470; 487.

Chelmsley Wood.[283] In this period, rail struggled to contribute more than a minor part of local transport provision with this decentralisation. Outward migration and the car 'produced a diverse pattern of travel' in some areas 'more easily satisfied by the private vehicle' that the conurbation's local authorities sought to address with a 'more flexible mode' than rail, the bus. Rail made 'less than 5%' of county-wide commutes by 1975, although Birmingham instituted plans for more services parallel to the A38 corridor and on the Birmingham-Dorridge/North Warwick line. However, timescales were a major obstacle for Birmingham in protecting the city from the blight of the car as there was 'little time remaining' to conduct the rail building projects needed to make it work.[284] For Manchester the roads were also central as it made belated attempts to increase demand for its loss-making railways. Even though rail fares were kept low, it had 25 million rail passengers a year 'strongly oriented' to the centre in 1971 compared to 480 million by bus, the latter catering to all 'non-rail corridors and the shorter journeys'.[285]

In contrast, the value of the rail network to London was clear. In the 1950s, 800,000 people moved out of London into towns within a 40 mile radius, and between 1952 and 1962, London's inner city population fell by 180,000 as employment increased by 150,000. Greater London's population also grew by 470,000, preserving London's vast inward commuter movements.[286] This maintained rail demand so that by 1964, over one million people a day

---

[283] City of Birmingham Structure Plan: Report on Options, 1973, WCB; R. Smith, 'Post-War Birmingham: Planning and Development', *The Town Planning Review*, 45 (1974), 195; 199.
[284] City of Birmingham Structure Plan: Report on Options, 1973; The Midlands Transport Study, Appendix, 1-8, 1973, WCB; West Midlands County Councils, *Transport Policies and Programme: Submission*, 1975, 22; 24-27, WCB; P. White, 'Use of Public Transport in Towns and Cities of Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 29; British Road Federation, *The Conurbations* (London, 1969), 40.
[285] Greater Manchester Council, *SELNEC Transportation Study – Sterling Committee Meeting, 8 October 1970,* 1970, 1-5; 16; F711.73So4, MA; SELNEC PTA and PTE, *A Summary of a Report on the Future Public Transport for Greater Manchester*, 1972, 1-5; 23-25, 33-37, F711.73So(063), MA; *Daily Telegraph*, 11 August 1964.
[286] Interdepartmental Committee to Consider the Study of the Long Term Problem of Traffic in Towns, 30 September 1963, TNA, MT 128/112; P. Hall, 'The Buchanan Report: 40 Years On', *Transport*, (2004), 8.

commuted into London on public transport, but only 100,000 by car.[287] As table one showed, the usefulness of dense underground rail networks as an alternative that are as convenient as the car is crucial to limiting its use. Indeed, by 1968, still only 98,000 people commuted into London by car.[288] However, decentralisation was a growing issue in London too, as around 7 in 10 Londoners worked outside the central area, which was dominated by the car by 1971.[289]

The difficulties of deciding which rail services to keep and which to close in urban areas were encapsulated by deliberations of BR's North Eastern Region in 1963. They were looking at the services in the Tyne area between Monkseaton, Blyth and Newbiggin.[290] As often happened, the management side of BR, in charge of the finances, put the case for closure while the staff side, in charge of operation, argued for retention. Management stressed the services' 'low level of passenger carryings' and new 'housing estates were being developed away from the railways', so that 'bus competition had increased and private cars were now the rule rather than the exception'. Indeed, it was found that 'few trains' in the area 'were carrying even a bus load of passengers' in 1963.[291]

The staff side stressed services and stations could be retained with efficiency savings. They argued that although the services' costs were £66,800 a year, its total receipts were £58,723, including £35,600 from passenger fares, £20,888 from parcels, and £2,235 from freight. If rail fares were increased to the level of local bus fares, stations reduced to unmanned halts, and fast trains from Blyth to Newcastle central implemented, the annual loss would fall. The management retorted that 'previous experiments had been made…in an

---

[287] F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends* (Crowthorne, 1977), 2-5, TRL; J. Westergaard, 'Journeys to Work', *Town Planning Review* 28 (1957), 40; *The Observer* 24 January 1965; *The Times*, 9 October 1963; G. Allen, *British Rail After Beeching* (London, 1966), 215.
[288] Press Notice 'A Car Owning Democracy Can Miss the Bus', 14 November 1968, 3-4, TNA, MT 152/115; British Road Federation, *The Conurbations* (London, 1969), 28; 40; 50; 57; 68; 80; 92; *The Times*, 17 July 1968.
[289] J. Westergaard, 'Journeys to Work', *Town Planning Review* 28 (1957), 43; M. Mogridge, 'Changing Spatial Patterns in the Journey to Work', *Urban Studies*, 16 (1979), 183-186.
[290] Parts of which were proposed for closure: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 103-104; 110; 113-114.
[291] British Railways North Eastern Region: Memorandum of Consultation Meeting held at York on 16 October 1963, 2-5, TNA, AN 168/33.

endeavour to make these passenger services worthwhile. These had failed'. Fares had also 'been pegged during the previous 18 months so as not to provide anyone with the argument' that management was 'driving traffic away by increased fares'.[292] Again, rail demand was often low compared to the bus, despite fares being intentionally low.

The staff side then argued that motorists 'having to use parking meters in Newcastle' would be attracted to the railways with faster services into Newcastle Central. Management's argument, however, used wider discourses as well as existing patterns of movement. 'This was the modern trend', they stated, 'short distances by bus or car, long distances by high speed train'. They also showed that the 'introduction of parking meters had made no material difference to the number of cars' in and around Newcastle.[293] Just 8% of commutes to central Newcastle were by train compared to 62% by bus and 23% by car in 1966.[294]

This demonstrates the balancing act BR and successive governments had to contend with as transport demand fragmented between the bus and car and the railways' losses grew. In hindsight, in 2023, we can see that the Monkseaton, Benton and Tynemouth areas were taken into the Tyne and Wear Metro network, which opened from 1980 with bus co-ordination.[295] However, car and bus demand was not always immediately transferable to the radial rail network, which would have needed the combination of road pricing, favourable fares, and road restrictions to aid the transfer to rail.[296] Newcastle had a low level of car ownership by the mid-1960s, with 130 cars per thousand people, yet its rail demand was also low.[297] Indeed, by 1971, the Tyne and Wear conurbation maintained the second highest level

---

[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.
[294] British Road Federation, *The Conurbations* (London, 1969), 80.
[295] J. Glover, *BR Diary, 1978-1985* (London, 1985), 45-46; Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive, *The Metro Report: The Impact of Metro and Public Transport Integration in Tyne and Wear* (Crowthorne, 1986), 7, TRL.
[296] British Railways North Eastern Region: Memorandum of Consultation Meeting held at York on 16 October 1963, 2-5, AN 168/33.
[297] J. Sleeman, 'A New Look at the Distribution of Private Cars in Britain', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1968), 311-314.

of bus use behind Greater London, and only 137 cars per thousand people.[298] By 1978, it was still amongst the lowest levels of car ownership at less than 250 cars per thousand people.[299] Thus, high local bus demand meant stopping the car and protecting the railways over the long term would need restrictions on the former and even greater financial subsidies for the latter.

More of Beeching's Potential 'Mistakes'

Two arguments on the potential mistakes made by Beeching come from Colin Divall and Charles Loft. They point to closures in the cities of Bournemouth, Exeter, Bristol, Nottingham, and Hull.[300] Closures in the areas of Hampshire and the South are assessed among others in chapter two, but the cities of Bristol, Hull, and Nottingham, can be divided here into two groups. Bristol and Exeter, as service-sector provincial centres, had dispersed hinterlands, relatively high incomes, and high car ownership rates. In 1966, Bristol had 50% more cars per person than Manchester, and Exeter in 1971, had 229 cars per thousand people, similar to some areas of the Home Counties.[301] By 1978, the South and South West were in the highest group of car ownership levels in the country, with at least 275 cars per thousand people.[302]

Bristol and Exeter were also central attracters of their counties, smaller than the major cities, with vast rural hinterlands drawing people from a wide area. These expanses saw bus

[298] S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 38-39, TRL.
[299] K. Button, 'The Geographical Distribution of Car Ownership in Great Britain', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 14 (1980), 26-28.
[300] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain* (London, 2006), 87; 112; C. Divall, in M. Emmanuel et al (eds), *A U-Turn to the Future: Sustainable Urban Mobility* (Oxford, 2020), 93; 104; 108; C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 290-291.
[301] J. Sleeman, 'A New Look at the Distribution of Private Cars in Britain', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1968), 311-314; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 35-39, TRL.
[302] K. Button, 'The Geographical Distribution of Car Ownership in Great Britain', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 14 (1980), 26-28.

routes established in the interwar period,[303] and made it hard for the railways to compete. Bristol is investigated below, but Nottingham and Hull will be investigated first. Rather than wide rural hinterlands, they had greater connections to nearby urban centres, and lower car levels of car ownership.[304] However, once again, the railways proved a difficult mode to adapt due to the variety in the structures of different cities and their levels of demand.

Nottingham

Nottingham's population in this period was around 300,000, a major part of it located just north of the river Trent. However, the city was also surrounded by an urban area with a further population of 248,000 and was among the ten most densely populated cities with one of the fastest growing populations since 1950.[305] By the early 1970s, around 180,000 people worked in the city, 124,000 of which also lived there, with the rest travelling in from outside. Around 55,000 of the total number working in the city worked in the cities' central area with a further 17,000 on its fringe, showing there was employment and residential decentralisation taking place but many still lived close to work.[306]

Nottingham took initiatives to try to control road traffic in 1970 after public opposition and HLG turned down applications for motorway sections due to their costs and practical issues of construction. In October 1972, Nottingham City Council abandoned its £100 million road programme altogether, and opted to improve its bus services, using traffic management that included pedestrianisation of some streets. The city also undertook a Land

[303] F. Green, 'Urban Hinterlands in England and Wales: An Analysis of Bus Services', *The Geographical Journal,* 116 (1950), 70-71; R. Lawton, 'The Daily Journey to Work in England and Wales', *The Town Planning Review*, 29 (1959), 245.
[304] J. Tanner, 'Car and Motorcycle Ownership', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 126 (1963), 278; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 23-26, TRL.
[305] OECD Conference "Better Towns with Less Traffic", Paris, 14-16 April 1975: Case Study on Nottingham, 1-3, TNA, AT 63/20; K. Button, 'The Geographical Distribution of Car Ownership in Great Britain', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 14 (1980), 28.
[306] OECD Conference "Better Towns with Less Traffic", Paris, 14-16 April 1975: Case Study on Nottingham, 1-3, TNA, AT 63/20.

Use and Transportation Study to establish the nature of peak hour traffic. But rather than wait for the Study to be concluded, both Labour and Tory-run councils established parking controls, and park and ride locations from 1971. However, by 1972, there were 11,000 cars in the city but over 14,000 parking spaces, though some had been made short-stay or increased in price.[307]

This attempt to get ahead of the complexities and timescales of transport provision resulted in the zone and collar scheme in the summer of 1975, one of the first in Europe, but again, this took nearly two years to organise. A circle of points 2.5 to 3 miles from the centre just inside the inner ring road was established in the western part of the city. During peak commuting hours, motorists had to stop at the collar of the city centre, either to use the park and ride, or queue at the traffic lights for entry into the centre. The point at which motorists reached the collar was controlled by the confinement of cars to certain road routes and access was then slowed by these traffic lights, pedestrianised streets, and bus lanes.[308] However, the scheme neither slowed the growth of car ownership, nor prompted a vast transfer to buses by motorists. The scheme only slowed motorists' commute by 10 to 12 minutes, not dissimilar to the added time to park a car and ride into the centre by bus.[309]

By October 1975, the scheme was also 'arousing such hostility among local people' that it seemed 'as likely to be scrapped as extended' when the year's trial was ended in the summer of 1976. People saw it as 'chaos', 'a waste of money', that it 'makes me late for work', and that 'they haven't solved a problem, they've made one'. Neither did the bus have enough demand to make the scheme sustainable, nor enough buses to prevent the new bus

---

[307] S. Trench, 'Nottingham's New Transport Policy', *Traffic Engineering and Control*, August/September 1973, 200-204, TNA, AT 63/20; OECD Conference "Better Towns with Less Traffic", Paris, 14-16 April 1975: Case Study on Nottingham, 1-3, TNA, AT 63/20; Starkie has touched on this: D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 85.
[308] S. Trench, 'Nottingham's New Transport Policy', *Traffic Engineering and Control*, August/September 1973, 200-204, TNA, AT 63/20; *The Times*, 29 October 1973.
[309] S. Trench, 'Nottingham's New Transport Policy', *Traffic Engineering and Control*, August/September 1973, 200-204, AT 63/20; B. Cooper and R. Layfield, *Nottingham Zone and Collar Study Results of the 'After' Surveys* (Crowthorne, 1978), 29-31, TRL.

lanes being 'mostly empty' during peak hours.[310] An interview survey then found 60% of people wanted it discontinued and only 22% of actual bus users said their journeys had improved.[311] The 4 park and ride locations saw about 50 cars a day occupying the 1,200 available spaces. A further issue was that the M1 and other bypasses had meant Nottingham's through traffic had 'already been siphoned off', prolonging the time it would take for car ownership to grow to a level where congestion would make the scheme attractive.[312] The scheme thus did not transform the bus's fortunes, nor reduce car purchases.[313]

Neither was investment in the local rail network an easy solution.[314] The proposal to close the Nottingham Midland to Worksop service in 1964 demonstrated the problems in providing an alternative to the car. Passenger traffic had fallen by 32% between 1958 and 1962 on this northerly 32 mile line passing through coal mining, engineering, hosiery districts, and quarrying and rural areas through Nottingham, Mansfield, the urban areas of Hucknall, Kirkby in Ashfield, Sutton, and Worksop. It also had substantial coal freight between Nottingham and Mansfield meaning the line itself would not close. This prompted, as in Leeds and Tyneside, arguments from BR's operational staff that the passenger service could be made less loss-making through efficiency savings.[315]

Indeed, BR staff argued that providing diesel trains between Nottingham and Mansfield over unmanned stations would save some of the service's £69,000 in receipts.[316] However, this approach was rejected by the management side because of the service's losses,

---

[310] *The Times*, 20 October 1975.
[311] B. Cooper and R. Layfield, *Nottingham Zone and Collar Study Results of the 'After' Surveys* (Crowthorne, 1978), 29-31, TRL.
[312] *The Times*, 20 October 1975; C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 53.
[313] Nottinghamshire County Council letter to the Association of County Councils, Park and Ride, 14 August 1975, CC/CL/1/JR/06 Vol.2, Nottinghamshire Archive [henceforth NA].
[314] Note from Nottingham County Council to J. Owen-Jones, 7 February 1972, Highways Transportation – Local Services, CC/CL/1/JR/06.01, NA.
[315] Letter to E. Cowell (LMR Line Manager) and General Manager of Eastern Region, 3 May 1963 and 15 May 1963; A. Davis memorandum, 13 March 1964, TNA, AN 155/226.
[316] Ibid.

the costs of streamlining it, and the 'intensive bus services which operate in the area'.[317] The TUCC hearing held on 11 March 1964 received only 52 objections, 38 oral objectors, and 218 written objections from a trades union council. It was found that between £89,000 and £118,000 would be saved from closure along with closing 13 intermediate stations.[318] However, this included the station at Mansfield, making it one of the largest towns in the country to lose rail passenger services.[319]

Although the Nottingham to Worksop service made a substantial loss, it carried around 8,000 passengers a week in 1964, the majority being commuters between Nottingham and Mansfield.[320] In September 1964, the service was consented to close as alternative bus services were deemed sufficient. Indeed, some of the replacement bus services provided after closure were quickly found not to carry more than a few passengers.[321] Nottingham had also seen a low level of car ownership since 1960, with only 103 cars per thousand people in the county of Nottinghamshire, 80% of whom lived in an urban area and only 15.3% of whom were in the higher socio-economic groups.[322] Indeed, Nottingham featured in the lower end of the middle ranks in car ownership by 1966, with around 145 cars per thousand people.[323] Commutes also went to decentralised industrial sites away from the city centre with good

---

[317] General Manager of Eastern Region: Proposed Limited Stop Diesel Service between Nottingham Midland and Mansfield, 4 July and 7 July 1963; Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Train Services Between Nottingham, Mansfield and Worksop, October 1963, 1-2, TNA, AN 155/226.
[318] Financial Information in Support of Proposals to Withdraw Services, Appendix A, June 1964; Report of the TUCC for the East Midland Area on British Railways' Proposal to Discontinue all Railway Passenger Services between Nottingham and Worksop, 18 June 1964, TNA, AN 155/226; *Guardian Journal*, 15 November 1963; *Nottingham Evening Post*, 14 November 1963.
[319] Report of the TUCC for the East Midland Area on British Railways' Proposal to Discontinue all Railway Passenger Services between Nottingham and Worksop, 18 June 1964; Reshaping of British Railways: Nottingham – Worksop Memorandum, 3 November 1965, 1-2; Nottinghamshire County Council letter to the MOT, 7 October 1966, TNA, AN 155/226.
[320] Ibid.
[321] J. Baxter, Consent to Closure Letter, 4 September 1964; Letter for E. Cowell, 19 October 1965; Nottingham Replacement Bus Service Nottingham – Mansfield – Worksop, 4 July 1967, TNA, AN 155/226.
[322] J. Tanner, 'Car and Motorcycle Ownership in the Counties of Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 126 (1963), 278.
[323] J. Sleeman, 'A New Look at the Distribution of Private Cars in Britain', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1968), 311-313.

road links, as did Bristol and Newcastle.[324] However, as freight continued over the Nottingham to Worksop line, the passenger service was re-opened as part of the Robin Hood service from 1995, with Mansfield station once again serving passengers.[325]

Bristol

Bristol is another city cited to have experienced regrettable Beeching closures. As an economically dynamic and expanding city, it had relatively high levels of car ownership. Indeed, in 1971, there were 218 cars per thousand people in Bristol, higher than all of the major conurbations. But Bristol also maintained a high level of bus travel, with 53.1 kms per person travelled by bus in 1971, which was only higher in London, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Merseyside, Brighton, and Sheffield, reflecting demand in its denser areas.[326] Indeed, if more of its buses were operated municipally (municipal bus services often ran on a break-even basis rather than for profit), Bristol may have maintained more bus use as car ownership rose, as was the case in Leicester, Leeds, and Coventry, although, as shown, this did not stop the rise of cars in those cities over the long term.[327]

Services from Bristol Temple Meads to stations at Pilning and Avonmouth Dock were proposed for closure in the Beeching Report,[328] and considered between 1963 and 1966. Again, these concluded with the amalgamation of services rather than blanket closures, and the streamlining of services through Bristol's northern suburbs of Henbury, Brentry, Westbury and Southmead. The TUCC hearing was held on 7 May 1964 for the 12 mile

[324] R. Lawton, 'The Daily Journey to Work in England and Wales', *The Town Planning Review*, 29 (1959), 245.
[325] Railway Correspondence and Travel Society, *A Traveller's Guide to the Robin Hood Line* (Bulwell, 1998), 3.
[326] S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 35-39, TRL; J. Sleeman, 'A New Look at the Distribution of Private Cars in Britain', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1968), 311-314.
[327] P. White, 'Use of Public Transport in Towns and Cities of Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 30-33; 37.
[328] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 106.

service from Bristol to Avonmouth Dock, and the 11 mile service to Pilning. Just 19 oral objections were heard, though one claimed to represent 486 residents of Redwick and Northwick. The savings estimated from closure were £31,890, and the TUCC concluded existing bus services 'provided a very adequate alternative to rail for the majority of individual travellers'. This included the station at North Filton, close to the 16,000 industrial employees working nearby. The 'vast majority' there already used 'means of transport other than the railway'.[329] Indeed, the TUCC concluded that there was 'ample evidence that the vast majority of workers involved were roadborne', and 'only a very small proportion used the rail facilities', with an average of around 600 daily passengers.[330]

This level of demand came on rail services with roughly the same fares as buses, but bus and car journeys were shorter and more numerous, not as well catered to by rail.[331] Indeed, the replacement bus service after the rail closure soon 'carried no passengers at all on most days'.[332] However, although parts of these services to Pilning and Avonmouth Dock, and some of their stations were closed in September 1964, the proposal was 'a very much modified version of those in the Beeching Report' and were streamlined rather than closed completely. Due to the 'future potential' BR saw in them, they were 'excluded from the closure proposal' and many areas continued to receive rail services.[333]

The Bristol Temple Meads to Portishead service covered 11.5 miles and was proposed for closure on 31 October 1963. The service was a commuter used by people going to Bristol from Portishead with around 400 daily users. The closure would save £9,200 a year, but the

---

[329] Report of the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for the South Western Area, 7 May 1964, 1-5, TNA, MT 124/750.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Working Party on Passenger Closure Proposals, 25 August 1964, 1-8, TNA, MT 124/750; E. Smith, 'An Economic Comparison of Urban Railways', *Journal of Economics and Policy*, 7 (1973), 30.
[332] Letter from J. Baxter to British Railways Board, February 1965, TNA, MT 124/750.
[333] Working Party on Passenger Closure Proposals, 25 August 1964, 1-7; J. Baxter Letter Consenting to Closure, 4 September 1964, TNA, MT 124/750; This went beyond what Beeching's report planned: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 96-97.

line was to be kept open for freight going to the port.[334] HLG also voiced concerns that Portishead was developing into a residential town as building in outer Bristol reached the Green Belt.[335] The TUCC hearing saw 41 written objections, but on behalf of 130 individuals 'who claimed to be daily users of the line'. Just 10 people gave oral objections.[336] The TUCC thus concluded that aside from around 25 people, 'no real hardship' would be caused from closure, as 'about ten times as many people prefer' to travel 'to and from Bristol by bus rather than train'. Due to its low demand, the service was closed in September 1964.[337]

Hull also maintained high bus demand into the 1970s, with 52.4 kms travelled by bus per person, similar to Bristol, but only had 128 cars per thousand people in 1971. Hull was also densely populated, with 40.2 people per hectare, compared to Bristol with 38.8, and Greater London at 45.5.[338] The York to Hull via Beverley rail service ran over 42 miles, and was proposed for closure in December 1963. It was one of two lines that ran between the cities, the other being via Selby. The Beverley route was more direct, although on average, it carried just 57 passengers on each train.[339] The service was used mainly by commuters and school children going to stations along the line, including Pocklington and Market Weighton rather than travelling to each end. Savings from closure and expansion of services via Selby were estimated to be around £100,000 a year and the TUCC, which saw 100 people attend, found that 'more than half' of users going via Beverley could travel via Selby after closure.[340]

It was also estimated that 293 of the 320 regular users would see their journeys

---

[334] Withdrawal of Passenger Trains; Report on the Proposal for the withdrawal of the passenger train service between Bristol Temple Meads and Portishead, 19 March 1964; Working Party on Passenger Closure Proposals: Bristol Temple Meads to Portishead, 25 June 1964, TNA, MT 124/749.
[335] P. Critchley to M. Davies letter, 30 December 1963, TNA, MT 124/749.
[336] Report on the Proposal for the withdrawal of the passenger train service between Bristol Temple Meads and Portishead, 19 March 1964; Withdrawal of Passenger Train Services, TNA, MT 124/749.
[337] Ibid; Closure Letter, 16 July 1964, TNA, MT 124/749; The line is to be reconstructed, nearly 50 years later, as of late 2022: Online source, accessed December 2022: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-63633295.
[338] S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 35-39, TRL.
[339] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 99.
[340] Report of the TUCC for the Yorkshire Area, 4 September 1964, 6; Meeting of the ED(T) Committee, 12 July 1965: York-Hull (via Beverley), TNA, MT 124/788.

increased by 21 minutes or less via Selby, which was considered 'tolerable' by civil servants. But this did not stop detailed consideration of some 29 passengers for whom closure would cause hardship as 6 intermediate stations were to close. These centred on 10 passengers who had poor access to roads with a bus route. But keeping the line open for them would have meant 'subsidising each of them by about £10,000 a year'.[341] Labour Minister Tom Fraser gave his consent to close the service in August 1965, after studying the case several times, nearly two years after it was proposed. Ultimately, BR officials and the Minister concluded that although they 'doubt whether one can just ignore' those 29 passengers, it was 'extremely difficult to provide effective alternative services'.[342] Although this showed how granular BR and the government's consideration of passenger hardship was, and the 'extreme complexity and difficulty' of providing transport for every single person, it is undoubted that such a direct line between the two cities would be useful today. There have been efforts to reopen it, but the task is much harder given the track itself was closed between Beverley and York.[343]

Overall, Leeds, Birmingham, Hull, Nottingham, Newcastle, and Bristol would have needed harsher controls on cars to control local transport demand, and the railways were far from the main alternative. Loft has argued many of Beeching's closures made sense because government spending is limited and arguments against them need to show how that finance would be spent.[344] This chapter has shown examples where decision-making was based on local contingencies and closures were far from automatic. But taking this further, beyond showing the low demand of rail services, it is important to ask: how could extra money to retain rail services be equitably spent?[345] As we will see, rail use was weighted towards

---

[341] Ibid.
[342] Letter from C. Scott-Malden to T. Fraser, 8 February 1965; T. Fraser Consent Letter, 3 August 1965, TNA, MT 124/788.
[343] C. Scott-Malden letter, 30 June 1965, TNA, MT 124/788; *York Press*, 5 January 2018.
[344] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation of Britain* (London, 2006), 154; C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 292; Marples stated that money spent on the railways could not be spent elsewhere: Speech at the Institute of Locomotive Engineers, London, 10 May 1961, TSSA Files, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/3, MRC.
[345] This was asked at the end of this period: *The Observer*, 14 September 1975.

higher earners, and without analysing class in transport, the notion that Beeching's closures were socially regressive go unchallenged. Without questioning the undoubted importance of rail lines in protecting the urban fabric from destructive roads, showing that the railways were used most by wealthier Britons underscores the importance of the roads across wider society. It also casts doubt on the notion that transport policy was ideologically driven to favour the individualism of the car at the expense of the collectivism of the railways.

Class and Public Transport Choice

By studying Family Expenditure Surveys between 1960 and 1974, the social and spatial fragmentation of rail and bus users emerges. This challenges notions that affluence favoured the car when many rail users were the most affluent in society. These surveys collected the average weekly amounts spent by households on public transport according to income. They show that even as incomes rise over the period, the amount spent on rail by the highest earners is far greater than lower earners, and this gap narrows less than with bus use. Richer households were larger and more mobile, spending more on public and private transport for leisure and amenities, and lived further from work, with many higher paid service jobs concentrated in city centres. This made the railways most useful to them.[346]

[346] SELNEC, *Transportation Study: A Board Transportation Plan for 1984, Report of the Technical Control Team to the Steering Committee*, March 1971, 21-27, Q711.73 So7/C, MA; A. Tulpule, *Characteristics of Households with and without Cars* (Crowthorne, 1974), 1-2; 5-7, TRL; R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Car Ownership on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1979), 4-10, TRL; R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Income on Bus Travel* (Crowthorne, 1981), 1-5, TRL; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 18, TRL; D. Kynaston, *Austerity Britain, 1945-51* (London, 2007), 403; A. Grigg and I. Huddart, *An Opinion Survey of the Yorkshire Dales Rail Service* (Crowthorne, 1979), 3-7, TRL; J. Tanner, *Saturation Levels of Car Ownership Models* (Crowthorne, 1980), 1-2, TRL.

Table 4. Average Weekly Household Expenditure on Rail According to Income, 1960 and 1965:

1960									
	Under £3	£3-£6	£6-£8	£8-£10	£10-£14	£14-£20	£20-£30	£30-£50	£50+
Rail fares	1.2d	3.4d	7.3d	9.4d	1s 6.4d	1s 11.7d	3s 6.2d	6s 0.3d	11s 9.8d
1965									
	Under £5	£5-£10	£10-£15	£15-£20	£20-£25	£25-£30	£30-£40	£40-£50	£50+
Rail fares	0.64s	0.65s	1.12s	1.35s	2.39s	2.72s	3.93s	5.59s	9.38s

Source: Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey Report* (London, 1962), 16-17; *1965 Report* (London, 1966), 36-37.

As table four shows, in 1960, the poorest households on average spent between 1.2 pence and 3.4 pence on rail fares a week, compared to between 6 and 11 shillings among the richest households.[347] As table five shows, by 1974, the poorest households spent between 4 and 5 pence on rail fares, compared to the richest households who spent between 39 pence and 1 pound 17 pence.[348] Indeed, throughout this period, it was only in the very highest income group that more was spent on rail fares than buses. When it comes to household expenditure on buses, there was a narrower gap between rich and poor. In 1960, the richest households spent between 5 and 11 shillings on bus fares compared to the poorest between 1 shilling 10.9 pence and 1 shilling 6.9 pence. The rich thus spent considerably more on bus fares than the poorest households, again suggesting the importance of walking for the poor and their shorter trips.[349] Indeed, by 1974, while households on the lowest weekly incomes spent 14 pence on bus fares, the richest still spent 59 pence.[350]

[347] Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1960 and 1961* (London, 1962), 16-17.
[348] (After decimalisation in 1971); Department of Employment, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1974* (London, 1975), 22-23.
[349] Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1960 and 1961* (London, 1962), 16-17.
[350] Department of Environment, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1974* (London, 1975), 22-23.

Table 5. Average Weekly Household Expenditure on Rail According to Income, 1970 and 1974:

1970											
	Under £10	£10-£15	£15-£20	£20-£25	£25-£30	£35-£40	£40-£45	£45-£50	£50-60	60-80	80+
Rail fares	0.025	0.061	0.067	0.115	0.110	0.155	0.199	0.330	0.354	0.527	0.760

1974										
	Under £12	12-15£	15-20	25-30	35-40	40-45	50-60	60-70	80-100	120+
Rail Fares	0.05	0.04	0.09	0.11	0.17	0.22	0.22	0.28	0.39	1.17

Source: Department of Employment, *Family Expenditure Survey Report* (London, 1971), 18- 19; Department of Employment, *Family Expenditure Survey Report* (London, 1975), 22-23.

These figures are consistent with the work of Julian Le Grand, who finds that rail subsidies are among 'the most [socially] unequal' of all subsidies provided by the state due to the need for suburban commuter services at peak times. The ratio of expenditure per person among the top 20% of earners compared to the bottom 20% is 9.8. Thus, nearly ten times as much is spent on rail subsidies on the top 20% of earners than the poorest. In comparison, the ratio of spending between rich and poor in the National Health Service still favoured the wealthy, but was much narrower, at 1.4.[351] This suggests successive governments were right to put a limit on rail subsidies and casts doubt on their image as a collectivist mode.

What these tables also show is that the wealthiest households spent multiples of the middle income households on rail. As explained in the next chapter, although the transport economists Pryke and Dodgson did not factor income distribution into their cost-benefit analyses of closed railways, these Family Expenditure Surveys suggest they were right to argue doing so would not have helped the railways' case. Indeed, Pryke and Dodgson declared that their calculations had 'tried to overstate' the benefits of rail retention and

[351] J. Le Grand, in R. Goodin and J. Le Grand (eds), *Not Only the Poor* (London, 1987), 92; 93; 101-104; J. Le Grand, *Motivation, Agency and Public Policy* (Oxford, 2003), 7-8; P. Rietveld and R. Stough, 'Institutions, Regulations and Sustainable Transport: A Cross-National Perspective', *Transport Review*, 24 (2004), 714.

weighting income distribution would have favoured closing more lines than successive governments allowed.[352]

Table 6. Average Weekly Household Expenditure on Rail Fares by Region, in shillings and pence, 1963:

	North	E+W Riding	East Anglia	L&SE	South	SW	Wales	Midland	NW	Scotland
Rail Fares	2s 1.2d	0s 11.6d	3s 11.1d	6s 6.5d	1s 10.6d	1s 4.1d	1s 1.0d	1s 4.7d	1s 8.5d	1s 7.5d
Bus Fares	7s 6.3d	7s 1.6d	4s 7.4d	6s 8.6d	5s 11.0d	4s 8.6d	6s 5.0d	7s 5.3d	8s 4.5d	11s 0.9d

Source: Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey Report* (London, 1965), 64-65.

Table 7. Average Weekly Household Expenditure on Rail Fares by Region, in Pounds, 1974:

	North	Yorkshire & Humber	North West	West Midlands	SW	Wales	East	SE	Scotland	N. Ireland
Rail Fares	0.08	0.10	0.13	0.08	0.08	0.10	0.13	0.60	0.21	0.03
Bus Fares	0.62	0.58	0.65	0.45	0.36	0.51	0.23	0.40	0.81	0.40

Source: Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey Report* (London, 1974), 114-115.

Household spending on trains in the most affluent regions was also dominant, and expenditure on bus fares was lower in London and the South East than the north of England and Scotland. In 1963, table six shows households in London and the South East on average spent 6 shillings 6.5 pence on rail fares per week, compared to 2 shillings 1.2 pence in the North, and 1 shilling 7 pence in Scotland. Households in London and the South East in 1963 on average spent 6 shillings 8 pence a week on buses, compared to 7 shillings 6 pence in northern England, and 11 shillings 1 pence in Scotland, demonstrating the importance of buses in lower income areas.[353] Table seven shows this pattern continuing into the 1970s.

[352] R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 187-189; 194-195; 210.
[353] Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey Report* (London, 1965), 64-65.

Conclusion

In November 1968, Labour's Minister of Transport, Richard Marsh, declared to the Public Transport Association that 'we are still a long way off being a car owning democracy'. The danger of plans like those imagined by Buchanan was that 'democracy can miss the bus'.[354] This chapter has shown such a statement was made in the context of the bus fulfilling an increasingly supplementary role to the car, and the vast differences in transport choice between different cities and classes. But the unrestricted advent of a technology as radical as the mass-produced combustion engine made any alternative system difficult to deliver.

Cars were used less in city centres due to the lower incomes, higher population densities and the availability of public transport there, which Buchanan missed in favour of a vision of near universal car ownership.[355] But the car's advantages fragmented transport choice beyond government control. Ernest Marples summed this up in 1963, describing people's non-ideological demand for transport. 'The cry goes up', he mused, 'for more motorways – as long as they go through the other fellow's back garden, not ours; for better rail services, provided our own uneconomic branch line survives; for less traffic congestion, so long as we don't have a parking meter to pay!'[356] Labour's Richard Marsh echoed this in 1968, stating that people 'hope they [roads] will be built quickly', but when a person's 'own back-garden is affected', he 'ceases to be a motorist and suddenly becomes a British citizen standing on his rights'. As for the railways, Marsh stated: 'they have always been there and heaven help the Minister who tries to close them'.[357]

This political and technical balancing act between urban, suburban, and rural space with the expansion of transport choices, proved intractable. William Plowden's work, which

---

[354] Press Notice, 'A Car Owning Democracy Can Miss the Bus', 14 November 1968, 1-3, TNA, MT 152/115.
[355] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 28; 36.
[356] Birmingham Post Motor Show Supplement, 1963, MPLS 1/3/4, CCA; Similar view: E. Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 741, 29 April 1963; Department of Environment, *Better Use of Town Roads: The Report of a Study of the Means of Restraint of Traffic on Urban Roads* (London, 1967), 6.
[357] Press Notice: UK Transport Problems, 5 September 1968, 2-3, TNA, MT 152/115.

has influenced much historiography subsequently, laments Britain's policy in allowing the car's dominance in cities, stating: 'it is better to make choices consciously and deliberately rather than by default'.[358] However, I argue that default, or the piecemeal acceptance of rising car ownership was the only practical policy without charging or restricting cars. As much as the historiography has framed local and central government as unwilling to provide an alternative to the car in cities, it is more accurate to say they were unable to amid the exhausting onslaught of new statistics, financial costs, and suburbanisation.[359]

By studying the three modes together, this chapter finds transport policy was not as ideological as it was too complex to cohere into a set of solutions. Ernest Marples wrote in his personal papers in 1963, that it was 'desirable to avoid the term 'solution'. The rise of the car and suburbanisation were social changes that needed 'to be dealt with by policies patiently applied over a period and revised'.[360] As the author of a Leicester transport study of 1967 stated: 'The problems of urban passenger transport could be met only by many partial solutions, not by a single panacea'.[361] In Birmingham, the Transport Executive concluded in 1974, after trying to formulate plans for developments around railway stations and provide a city-wide bus system, that any 'solution must be a compromise', and severe parking restrictions were 'unacceptable to the populace'.[362] In Leeds, its planning officer stated that, 'with the great diversity in size, structure, land use, topography and other characteristics' of

---

[358] W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 415; Studies he influenced: G. Vigar, *The Politics of Mobility* (London, 2002); S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998); C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 56; 61-62; D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982).
[359] T. Crook and G. O'Hara, in T. Crook and G. O'Hara (eds), *Statistics and the Public Sphere* (Oxford, 2011), 266.
[360] Long Term – In Towns – Buchanan, 2-3, 1963, MPLS 1/3/4, CCA.
[361] C. Sharp, *Problems of Urban Passenger Transport with Special Reference to Leicester* (Leicester, 1967), 110.
[362] West Midlands Transport Executive, *Development of Bus Services: Birmingham City Centre*, January 1974, 1-7, LP47.64, WCB; City of Birmingham Structure Plan: Report on Options, 1973, WCB; Midlands Transport Study, Appendix, 1-9, WCB; West Midlands County Councils, *Transport Policies and Programme: Submission*, 1975, 22; 24-27, WCB.

British cities, 'there can be no common solutions or policies applicable in all cases'.[363]

Thus, rather than taking the approach of many local authorities in this period of encouraging a transfer to public transport, restricting the car through punitive parking limits, road pricing, or even limits on purchases, were the only ways to prioritise public transport over this crucial period when Britain became a majority car owning country. It was no coincidence then, that punitive parking restrictions in major cities was supported repeatedly by Beeching after he grappled with rail closures in urban areas.[364] When discussing how to plan for the future, Beeching stated: 'laissez faire won't get us far', promoting harsh parking limits, and perhaps providing a challenge to his market-orientated image.[365]

Costs were also crucial to the lack of an alternative transport system. In 1972, rail services across the country's Passenger Transport Authorities cost £48.7 million compared to earnings of £21.8 million, much of which was paid by central government and was rising.[366] The overestimated predictions of economic and population growth[367] alongside car ownership in the early 1960s also helped prevent road pricing becoming a realistic option, which may have stopped urban motorways from tearing through Britain's cities.[368] These economic issues were complicated by the intricacy of transport choices in different locations. Attempts at public transport systems specifically for city centres, such as 'park and ride' or 'zone and collar' systems did not come close to transforming the bus's fortunes, or reducing car purchases exactly because car congestion was not yet at a detrimental level.[369] Indeed, it was

---

[363] Urban Traffic Policies: Paper Presented to the Regional Conference of the National Housing and Town Planning Council, 28 May 1964, TNA, HLG 136/222.
[364] *The Observer*, 10 January 1965; *The Observer*, 17 January 1965; *The Observer*, 24 January 1965.
[365] *The Observer*, 24 October 1965.
[366] Railway Policy Review: The Administration of Unremunerative Railway Passenger Service Grants and Closures, 16 May 1973, 5-28, TNA, MT 188/1.
[367] G. O'Hara, *From Dreams to Disillusionment: Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), 206.
[368] The RRL's underestimates of future car ownership in the 1950s led to overestimates in the 1960s: K. Button, A. Fowkes and A. Pearman, 'Disaggregate and Aggregate Car Ownership Forecasting in Great Britain', *Transportation Research*, 14 (1980), 265; S. Glaister, *Fundamentals of Transport Economics* (Oxford, 1981), 112-116.
[369] Nottinghamshire County Council letter to the Association of County Councils, 14 August 1975, CC/CL/1/JR/06 Vol.2, NA.

not until 2003 that the London congestion charge succeeded in reducing car-use in the centre of Britain's most affluent city more than predicted. However, it failed to raise the estimated revenue from the charge to fund public transport, and other conurbations, with lower incomes and car ownership, were slow to follow.[370]

This gives rise to the question: what was government supposed to do instead? It must be recalled that unofficial rail subsidies already came from the Exchequer through periodic debt write-offs, rail demand was not rising, and deficits soaring. Government knew that if rail subsidies were announced in 1963, not only would every region in the country demand them for their railways, but so would every other nationalised industry.[371] As BR officials stated in 1974, the Treasury 'don't like the prospect of another industry clambering out of the straight financial appraisal basket'.[372] But was this unfair? The railways' annual loss as subsidies became official in 1968 was still rising, at £147 million. At that time, rather than sixty years later, in 2023, it was difficult to make the case for greater rail investment over roads, a further suppression of fares, or blanket subsidies considering the levels of demand some rail services studied here had in the early 1960s.[373]

This challenges arguments that an alternative policy in 1963 could have easily rejuvenated rail demand at a time car ownership and congestion was not detrimental enough to implement harsh restrictions, aided by traffic management, and as dispersal schemes got underway. Such ideas are much easier to promote today, teleologically.[374] Loft calls Beeching's report a 'snapshot' of the railways' prospects in light of its finances and that in

---

[370] J. Leape, 'The London Congestion Charge', *Journal of Economic Perspective*, 20 (2006), 165-170; C. Nash, 'Road Pricing in Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 41 (2007), 137; 145; G. Santos and J. Bhakar, 'The Impact of the London Congestion Charging Scheme', *Transport Policy*, 13 (2006), 24-26; 32.
[371] T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-74* (Cambridge, 1983), 260; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 82-83.
[372] Social Cost/Benefit Study, Handwritten notes, 20 August 1974, TNA, AN 156/479.
[373] D. Munby and A. Watson, *Inland Transport Statistics, Vol. I* (Oxford, 1978), 20-21.
[374] Much attention on Beeching today comes from journalists writing in newspapers. Divall has described journalistic contributions to other transport debates thusly: they 'generally consider only the recent past, and often are not very well-informed even about that': C. Divall, in M. Grieco and J. Urry (eds), *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society* (Farnham, 2011), 306.

the rush to address them urban closures were hurried.[375] However, I argue that by looking at the three modes together a wider view of urban movement emerges, and the consideration given in individual closure cases was diligent given the higher demand for buses and their better financial position. Marples linked the implications of Buchanan's ideas with rail in urban areas, but in many cases rail demand was relatively low. Marples, Beeching and Buchanan were in any case trying to catch up with the shift to the car and belatedly predicted future transport demand at the same time the railways debts were growing.[376] As flimsy as the predictions for future car ownership were, they were actually not so inaccurate in terms of per head of population as to give a false picture of longer term trends.[377] Therefore, a special policy for inner cities was too complex to cohere in just a few years and the railways did not provide an easy fix.

[375] Beeching, however, did make it clear in his report that his plans were part of a wider shift in transport demand and not all loss-making services would be closed: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 55-56; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways* (London, 2006), 86; 153.
[376] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 10-11.
[377] C. Buchanan, 'Traffic in Towns: An Assessment after Twenty Years', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 95.

Chapter 2: Local and International Rail Closures

'There seems to be the greatest reluctance among politicians and the public to cut out any passenger service, however high the subsidy per passenger journey'[1] – Christopher Foster, transport economist, 1974.

Transport economist, Christopher Foster, favoured rail retention more than some of his contemporaries but even he felt there could have been greater political resolve to close more services.[2] In this context, this chapter argues closures were not carried out dogmatically, challenging claims in the historiography that they went too far.[3] By 1974 efforts at closures by successive governments, however, ended with the Railways Act, ensuring the Treasury paid 70% grants for many loss-making services.[4] The historiography can emphasise the role of local popular protest in stopping them.[5] However, I argue that, in the closures studied here, the main form of local protest came from co-ordinated middle class institutions such as local

---

[1] C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 5.
[2] C. Foster, 'Michael Beesley and Cost Benefit Analysis', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 35 (2001), 18-27; Social Cost/Benefit Study, C. Foster and LMR, 12 August 1974, TNA, AN 156/479; R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 202-205.
[3] In agreement with: C. Loft, 'The Beeching Myth', *History Today,* 53 (2003), 40; Critics of Beeching: I. Marchant, *Parallel Lines* (London, 2003), 135; 301-302; D. Henshaw, *The Great Railway Conspiracy* (Hawes, 1991), 233-4.
[4] R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 27; *Daily Telegraph*, 31 May 1973.
[5] R. Lamb, *The Macmillan Years, 1957-1963* (London, 1995), 439-440; C. Loft, *Last Trains: Dr Beeching and the Death of Rural England* (London, 2013), 19; M. Engel, *Eleven Minutes Late* (Oxford, 2009), 218; J. Thomas, *Forgotten Railways: Scotland* (Newton Abbot, 1976), 56.

authorities, voluntary organisations, all-party groups of MPs, and the press.[6] Another crucial factor was logistical, through the failure to provide replacement bus services over cross-country distances, as well as bus staff shortages.

This chapter shows governments were 'not playing the role of rubber stamp' to Beeching, and they investigated closures cautiously.[7] Indeed, their attempts at deciding which lines to save on social grounds grew more sophisticated with cost-benefit analyses by specialists like Foster.[8] But these investigations never legitimised the halting of closures, and rail rationalisation was common across Continental Europe. Indeed, I will argue other countries' methods of balancing the railways' social value with its financial losses failed to offer an easy alternative for Britain. In 1945, Britain's network was one of the densest in Europe, at 19,863 route miles, similar to its peak at 20,248 miles in 1932. By 1970, the network was cut substantially to 11,799 miles, but its list of subsidies was still growing, and this was not anomalous to the Continental experience.[9]

To contextualise Beeching's cuts, closures in Britain can be put into three phases, showing they started before Beeching's arrival in 1961. Firstly, between 1948 and 1962, closures were initially slow but accelerated from 1958 as the railways' losses grew. In this phase, 3,687 route miles across over 300 services and 2,350 stations were closed.[10] By 1962, the rail deficit exceeded 20% of its gross revenue, and the rise of road haulage and cars meant it was accelerating.[11] The closure rate increased in the second phase, between 1962 and 1967

---

[6] A. Grigg to S. Greene letter, 1 December 1963: All-Party Steering Committee, MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/278A, MRC; Press examples: *The Guardian*, 31 May 1963; *Financial Times*, 22 April 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 13 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 21 July 1966; *Bedfordshire Times*, 13 September 1968.
[7] *Financial Times*, 20 April 1964.
[8] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 120-123.
[9] D. Munby and A. Watson, *Inland Transport Statistics* (Oxford, 1978), 117-118; The dominance of roads was common across Europe by 1960: G. Sjöblom, 'The Shift from Railways to Roads', *Economic History Yearbook*, 48 (2007), 56-57; 60-64.
[10] Background to the Railway Board's Proposals, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 3-4; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-74* (Cambridge, 1986), 206.
[11] P. Smethurst to Mr. Barnett at Statistics Division, 17 May 1963, TNA, MT 65/422.

under Beeching's plan.[12] Larger, more complex services were listed for closure compared to the duplicates and branch lines of the 1950s, and Beeching drew public controversy as the 337 services and 2,363 station closures over 35 pages of his report, got underway.[13]

However, Beeching resigned before the end of this second phase, in 1965, not just due to closures but his ideas to implement charges on road haulage that interested Harold Wilson. Pro-road elements in the unions and Cabinet, feeling threatened, forced Beeching out.[14] Barbara Castle, who had replaced her colleague Tom Fraser in December 1965, and her new chairman of the BRB, Stanley Raymond, then decided on a 'Network for Development' of around 11,000 miles in 1967, to at least signal a break from Beeching.[15] With it, loss-making services were officially subsidised under the 1968 Transport Act, a process that started with the Conservatives' investigations into subsidy in 1959.[16] By 1968, 84% of the services Beeching proposed had been closed, and 72% of stations. To reach an 11,000 mile network, however, more closures were needed.[17] Labour's rushed subsidy regime reflected this, providing grants to individual services in one to three-year tranches, allowing subsidies to be withdrawn if there was no improvement in their financial performance.[18]

The third phase, between 1968 and 1974, saw the rail deficit still rising with inflation and the economic slowdown, leading successive governments to seek to close the more complex cases left in Beeching's report and others that subsequently became loss-making.[19]

---

[12] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 97.
[13] Ibid., 97; 102-136; P. Smethurst to Mr. Barnett at Statistics Division, 17 May 1963, TNA, MT 65/422.
[14] P. Bagwell, *The Railwayman, Volume 2* (London, 1982), 151-152; G. Allen, *British Rail After Beeching* (London, 1966), 86-87.
[15] S. Harris, *The Railway Dilemma* (Addlestone, 2016), 144; M. Bonavia, *The Organisation of British Railways* (London, 1971), 119; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways* (Oxford, 2006), 123; B. Castle, *Fighting All the Way* (London, 1993), 389-391; J. Glover, *BR Diary, 1958-1967* (London, 1987), 118; *Financial Times*, 22 April 1965.
[16] T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 212; Press Notice by the MOT, 6 November 1967, 1-2, TNA, EW 19/39.
[17] P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Volume 2* (London, 1982), 24; P. Waller, *Rail Atlas: The Beeching Era* (Hersham, 2013), 30; *Daily Mail*, 3 January 1967; *Guardian*, 16 March 1967.
[18] T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 365; 452-454; 529; C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 5.
[19] 1968's loss was £147 million: D. Munby, *Inland Transport Statistics* (Oxford, 1978), 20-21; G. Peden, *The Treasury and British Public Policy* (Oxford, 2000), 487-488; G. Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy* (London, 1985), 173; 184-185; R. Middleton, *The British Economy since 1945* (Basingstoke, 2000), 51.

However, these efforts were largely unsuccessful as local opposition persisted, and due to the logistical complexities involved in closing more contentious cases. There were 1,058 route miles closed in 1964, 769 in 1965, nearly 800 in 1966, before a drop to 259 miles in 1967, and 234 miles closed in 1969. In 1970, there were 271 miles closed, but only 23 miles in 1971. A further 14 services were closed in 1972, 3 in 1973, and none in 1974.[20] From 1975, the block grants under the Railways Act halted closures and the network had at last neared 11,000 route miles. By privatisation in 1993, it still stood at 10,275 miles.[21]

Closures were therefore executed under successive governments before and after Beeching's tenure. The Conservative Transport Minister Ernest Marples closed 1,436 route miles between 1962 and 1964, consisting of many unused and duplicated services. Labour's Tom Fraser then closed 819 miles between 1964 and 1965, and Barbara Castle 606 miles between 1966 and 1968.[22] This reveals that the significance of Beeching, and the Conservatives' policy in recruiting him was less in the quantity but in the directness of his approach.[23] Less than a third of the total reduction of the network between 1950 and 1974 came under Beeching's chairmanship, demonstrating a wider drive for closures of Britain's oversized network.[24]

A meagre £5 million had been saved from the first phase of closures before Beeching became chairman of the BRB, between 1950 and 1962.[25] This £5 million saw a vast 19% of the network cut, showing closures could not be the only solution, but also how oversized the network was. The civil service in 1963 saw that, on its trend of losses in 1963, rails' annual

---

[20] H. White, *Forgotten Railways* (Warley, 1986), 90-91; R. Compton letter to H. Woodhouse, 16 May 1974; 1973 Study of All Grant-Aided Trains, TNA, MT 188/22.
[21] Between 1975 and 1990, only 70 miles of passenger route miles were closed: T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 3-5; 197-199.
[22] G. Dudley and J. Richardson, *Why Does Policy Change?* (London, 2000), 63; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 642.
[23] S. Glaister et al, *Transport Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, 1998), 19; *The Guardian*, 7 May 1965.
[24] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 2-4; H. White, *Forgotten Railways* (Warsley, 1986), 55; 70.
[25] P. Smethurst to Mr. Barnett at Statistics Division, 17 May 1963, TNA, MT 65/422.

deficit could reach £300 million by 1970 without more cuts.[26] Therefore, in 1963, officials already believed there was 'no prospect' of wiping out the deficit by 1970 under Beeching's plan, but few opposed it. The civil service argued that if the deficit was reduced to £90 million by 1970, Beeching's plan would have been worthwhile. Cuts to the labour force and business-orientated management practices were also key, but these did not go far enough as wages rises wiped out his savings. By 1970, the deficit was still considered too high.[27]

As we will see, the reason rail deficits were so stubbornly high was the combination of low demand and rising costs. This led to debates over the balance between closures and subsidies because closures alone were not effective enough at reducing losses.[28] However, as successive governments pushed for closures, their attempts were also frustrated by regional politics. In Scotland and Wales, many of the major closure disputes came after closure proposals had been deferred in the early 1960s, to 'avoid anxieties' in nationalist politics.[29] Scotland had seen fewer closures before 1962, despite its railway mileage making up 15% of Britain's total. As a result, nearly 20% of the closure proposals in Beeching's report were in Scotland. They reached across the Highlands, North-East, and the Southern Borders, were 'lightly used', making heavy losses, but nevertheless linked entire regions.[30]

Wales had loss-making lines too, and the Beeching report proposed to close services on 15 major routes and modify others.[31] After 1962, 295 passenger miles and 175 stations

---

[26] Ibid; P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Volume 2* (London, 1982), 132.
[27] T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 180; 465; 580; P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Volume 2* (London, 1982), 163-173; P. Smethurst to Mr. Barnett at Statistics Division, 17 May 1963, TNA, MT 65/422; G. Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy* (London, 1985), 185; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways* (London, 2006), 128-130; Savings and productivity rises from closures were smaller than predicted: R. Pryke, *Public Enterprise in Practice* (London, 1971), 62-63.
[28] Rising inflation also increased the costs of railway operation beyond what could be charged to passengers: B. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), 549.
[29] Extract from the Meeting with Prime Minister, 12 February 1963, TNA, Prime Minister's Office Papers [henceforth PREM] 11/4548; This is explored in: C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 2; 13; 102-107; 126-127; 159.
[30] Background to the Railway Board's Proposals, Closures in Scotland, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928; Beeching acknowledged the lack of buses in some areas of northern Scotland and central Wales: British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 19.
[31] Ibid., 102; 127-128; 134; Background to the Railway Board's Proposals, Closures in Wales, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928.

were closed in Wales. But more were closed before Beeching's plan, including 535 route miles and 340 stations between 1951 and 1962.[32] Two such lines in Brecon subsidised passengers by £400 a year each – enough to buy them all a second hand car.[33] Therefore, at the start of Beeching's programme in 1963, there were many services deemed appropriate for scrutiny, but local opposition and the logistical complexities in executing them proved an obstruction.

Local Railways and the Closure Process

In chapter one, I showed there was a pattern to transport choice in urban, suburban, and rural space based on income and population density. This chapter adds to this complexity by showing rail closures did not always reflect this pattern due to local factors. Despite their low demand, the railways were perceived by objectors as a social service, superior to the bus. This was not due inherently to their public ownership but their fixed local stations, uses to the individual, and greater comfort.[34] Edward Gibbins, an ex-chief operations officer, recorded how local branch lines closed in the 1950s, before Beeching, were opposed by locals through coordinated letter-writing, legal objections, petitions, and town hall meetings. Locals, Gibbins stated, 'all wanted it to be there – losing money, subsidised by others', simply 'as a standby' option. Most were not regular users and few understood the railways' dire financial situation. 'There were hints' from objectors, Gibbins explains, 'that if charges were reduced' demand would increase, without realising 'the lines were losing money at existing prices'.[35]

[32] Background to the Railway Board's Proposals, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Especially over longer distances: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 13.
[35] E. Gibbins, *The Railway Closure Controversy* (Stoke, 2000), 2-3; 29-55; Same opinion in 1959: G. Gallup, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975, Vol. I* (New York, 1976), 516; These opinions were called 'common-sense considerations' by Beeching, which had little financial validity: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 18.

It was unsurprising then, Gibbins observed, that 'no local authority bought a line to demonstrate the expertise they professed to have' in rail finance.[36] This pattern was repeated in the next decade. When local authorities gained wider powers to fund local railways from the late 1960s, few spent more than was obligated, which saw the closure of services such as the Alton to Winchester in 1971.[37] But objectors cared little for financial issues, or the ideologies of the public or private. Instead, they focused on the use of the mode to them as individuals, using notions of public services to support their own needs.[38] As a Ministry of Transport briefing in 1963 found, the 'correspondence columns of the newspapers show unmistakably that large numbers of people are highly critical of the proposals'. Indeed, it found 'most of the complaints are concerned with the effects of the proposals on the individuals concerned'.[39] Although public opinion was not sufficiently opposed to closures to stop them nationwide, the individuals affected sought to defend their choices of transport.

The middle class dominance of the railways, shown in chapter one, should weaken the notion that people's choices between public and private transport were definable by class or ideology. As the British Transport Commission stated in its twilight in 1960, an integrated transport system between public and private modes was 'never…acceptable to public opinion', exactly because it would have required the individual to give up their range of choices in favour of one for the collective.[40] As this chapter studies the institutional handling of local closures and non-ideological resistance to them, how this process was undertaken by government in a liberal democracy is important to outline.

The closure process of the 1962 Transport Act kept the final decision with the

---

[36] E. Gibbins, *The Railway Closure Controversy* (Stoke, 2000), 2-3.
[37] Meeting with Local Authorities, 13 December 1971, TNA, AN 177/62.
[38] A dynamic described by popular individualism: E. Robinson et al, 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism', *Twentieth Century History*, 28 (2017), 274; 289-290; And sentimentality felt over railway closures: T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-74* (Cambridge, 1986), 207.
[39] Notes for Railways Debates Brief, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928.
[40] Discussion on the BTC, 5 December 1960, 3, TNA, CAB 134/1434.

Minister, whereas the local TUCCs had been more influential previously, and more inclined towards retention.[41] The BRB published closure proposals in 2 local newspapers, and at its stations, giving 6 weeks' notice, in which time local people and organisations could lodge objections to the local TUCC. There were 11 regional TUCCs, the panels of which were made up of local officials, party politicians, and rail representatives. If no objections were given, closures proceeded automatically. If just a single objection was lodged, the TUCC procedure would begin, with the practical hardship caused to passengers as the grounds local people could argue upon for retention.[42]

The proposal was also passed to the Minister who considered issues far beyond the hardship of passengers. This was despite section 56, subsection 11 of the 1962 Transport Act not obligating them to do so.[43] The Minister consulted with British Rail, the Treasury, Board of Trade, HLG, Agriculture, the Ministry of Labour, Defence, local industry and government, and the Welsh and Scottish offices.[44] Issues discussed ranged from local business concerns, regional development, population dispersal, national strategic matters, and financial viability. Crucially, a closure could only go through after the Minister consented, and 'unless and until' equivalent replacement bus services could be provided and maintained by BR finance. Even after replacement bus services were arranged and the Traffic Commissioners granted

---

[41] The TUCCs were a development from the interwar period of voluntary talks between the railways, local government, and industrial groups: H. Shin, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 86-89; W. Ashworth, *The State in Business, 1945* (Basingstoke, 1991), 166-167.
[42] Hardship was 'implicitly defined' as the inability of regular passengers to get to work or school, with some exceptions for less regular travellers depending on their circumstances: Colin Divall, ''Do you Really Call that Progress, Mr Marples?' The Politics of Railway Closures in East Dorset', Unpublished Manuscript of a Paper First delivered at the Priest's House Museum, Dorset, 2 May 2014, 15-16; Central Transport Consultative Committee, *Handbook on Transport Users Consultative Committees* (London, 1963), 5; 17; P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Volume 2* (London, 1982), 153-154; Closure Process Context, 1963, TNA, PREM 11/4548; Criteria used in Proposing Passenger Closures, 1963, TNA, MT 124/928; *The Observer*, 7 November 1971.
[43] The hardship caused to passengers was another heavily underlined part of Marples's annotated copy of: *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 23, MPLS, 1/3/2, CCA. Draft Instructions to Counsel, February 1967, TNA, MT 124/1250; *The Guardian*, 11 April 1963; Interdepartmental Consultation Plan, March 1963, TNA, MT 124/830; The MOT was the 'communicating centre' with TUCCs: Closure Process, June 1963, TNA, MT 106/227.
[44] Government Departments Consulted on Rail Closures, 1962, TNA, MT 124/665; Interdepartmental Working Party Memoranda on the Beeching Report, 1963, TNA, MT 124/831.

licences, these could be appealed by local authorities.[45] Bus provision would prove a central logistical problem for closures because car ownership was hurting local bus companies' financial solvency and they suffered from chronic staff shortages.

Once the TUCC had held its local hearings and made its conclusions, its recommendations were passed to the Minister who made the final decision. In many cases, as we will see, the closure process took years, such were the logistical complexities and local opposition involved, and this made reducing the deficit difficult. It was stated in 1963 that, if the Minister decided 'against a closure proposal, the services had to be kept on, even at a loss'.[46] This loss was then 'met out of the general subsidy made by the Government to meet the Board's annual deficit on revenue account'. Indeed, by the 1968 Transport Act, BR had lost a minimum of £1.8 billion over its revenue.[47] Thus, BR received subsidy long before they were made legally official, and, as we will see, the Beeching report was not executed indiscriminately.

Suburban and Commuter Services

Assessing closures, in hindsight in 2023, is problematic. If not done historically, it leads to an amnesia about the actual demand services had in the 1960s. Calling a Beeching closure a mistake because demand for it increased forty years later is teleological, not historical.[48] Some historiographical criticisms of Beeching argue the right lines should have been closed rather than sweepingly increasing their quantity.[49] However, such arguments

[45] Letter from C. Scott Malden to British Railways Board, 5 July 1965, TNA, AN 155/44; M. Howe, 'The Transport Act, 1962', *Public Administration*, 42 (1964), 53.
[46] Unremunerative Services: Subsidies, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928; Closures were of services rather than the line itself, under Section 56 (7) of the 1962 Transport Act: M. Howe, 'The Transport Act, 1962', *Public Administration*, 42 (1964), 48.
[47] M. Bonavia, *The Organisation of British Railways* (London, 1971), 128; W. Ashworth, *The State in Business, 1945* (Basingstoke, 1991), 119; Subsidies to the Railways Board, April 1963, 1-2, TNA, MT 124/836.
[48] H. White, 'Beeching – Benefactor or Bogeyman? A Review' *Journal of the Railway and Canal Historical Society*, 30 (1990), 4-5; C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 291.
[49] C. Austin and R. Faulkner, *Disconnected!* (Addlestone, 2015), 87; 101; 124.

have to show the potential demand specific services could attract from the bus or car, their financial prospects, social equity, and the method of selecting them, showing they were a genuine proposition in the intervening decades.

It was easier to see the future potential of an urban line at the time compared to cross-country services. As chapter one showed, railways are most useful for radial movements into urban areas, which are prone to congestion and suit the speed of mass-transit. Non-linear patterns of movement in less dense areas are more difficult to cater to, more competitive by bus or car, and more common outside dense city centres.[50] The next three sections will show how this tension shaped a series of closure cases. Many of them could not be defined solely as urban or rural as they passed through both spaces, making decisions over their closure problematic.[51] Successive governments were 'conscious of the difficulty and complexity of the urban problem' and considered cross-country rail closures that entered urban areas accordingly.[52] But to have a better chance of being retained, these concerns often had to be bolstered by the resistance of local authorities and middle class organisations protesting directly to politicians with technical arguments as demand for those services was often low.

Of the suburban closure proposals, the Gateacre service was considered underused. It linked central Liverpool with the affluent Gateacre suburb over 9 route miles to its south-west and services were proposed for closure in March 1964. Despite the numerous housing developments expanding the area since the 1920s, rail receipts on the service declined after 1945. Thus, it lost £24,000 a year by 1964, not including its track and signalling costs, and had around 8,000 passengers a week, though they were concentrated on peak-hour trains and

---

[50] J. Wabe, 'Dispersal of Employment and the Journey to Work', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1 (1967), 357; 360; M. Mogridge, 'Changing Spatial Patterns in the Journey to Work', *Urban Studies*, 16 (1979), 186-187; P. Martin, *Bus Services in Small Towns* (Crowthorne 1978), 1-5; 9; 15, TRL; P. Daniels, 'Employment Decentralisation and the Journey to Work', *Area*, 2 (1970), 49-50.
[51] The allocation of traffic to specific groups is 'somewhat arbitrary': British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 7; 12.
[52] Services into Urban Areas, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928.

only 73 passengers joined at Gateacre station to Liverpool.[53]

The TUCC, which concluded its findings in October 1964, found that of the 3,608 questionnaires handed out to the local public by a local user association concerning the closure, only 174 had been returned. Of the completed questionnaires, 35% used the service for shopping and socialising, 66% for work but only 74% of these journeys were made daily.[54] As was often the case, the local press framed closure as a blow to commuters and accused BR of underestimating the numbers using the service.[55] Despite this, only 68 individuals made objections at the TUCC alongside local MPs and the QC employed by the local authorities argued local bus services were inadequate.[56] Closure of the Gateacre service was consented by Barbara Castle in April 1966, but appeals against replacement bus services and the failure to provide the staff meant the line stayed open.[57]

Between 1966 and 1971, the Merseyside conurbation PTA, created by the 1968 Act, was given the opportunity to fund the service, but refused due to its total losses of £134,000.[58] The line was thus proposed for closure again in 1971 and another TUCC held that summer. Again, a QC, Mr C. Clothier, argued for the local Rail Users' Association that hardship 'was not to be measured merely in money' but as a 'loss of amenity and loss of happiness of living'. Although the population around Gateacre station grew from 86,000 in 1966 to 125,000 in 1971, the TUCC hearing saw 105 objectors with a further 158 objection

---

[53] Report of the TUCC for the North Western Area, 8 October 1964, 1-5; Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Train Services Between Gateacre and Liverpool Central, September 1963, 1-7, TNA, AN 155/76; H. White, *Forgotten Railways* (Warsley, 1986), 113-114.
[54] Report of the TUCC for the North Western Area, 8 October 1964, 2-6, TNA, AN 155/76.
[55] *Liverpool Daily Post*, 27 July 1966; *Liverpool Echo*, 26 July 1966; Gerard Fiennes, *I Tried to Run a Railway* (London, 2016), 163; Accusations of running down services elsewhere: *Ipswich Evening Star*, 11 January 1965.
[56] Transport Users' Consultative Committee for the North Western Area: List of Objectors; Report of the TUCC for the North Western Area, 8 October 1964, 8 October 1964, TNA, AN 155/76.
[57] Report of the TUCC for the North Western Area, 8 October 1964, 5, TNA, AN 155/76; Public Notice: Withdrawal of Railway Passenger Service, October 1970; Report of the TUCC for the North Western Area, 5 July 1971, TNA, AN 176/29.
[58] Grant Application for Loss Making Passenger Service, 1971, TNA, AN 176/29.

letters. The service (and its station) was one of those closed in 1972.[59] Thus, many arguments for retention from local authorities, organisations, and newspapers, framed the railway as a social service. But wider public opinion was not always so sure. Indeed, many users took the news of closure 'with more sorrow than anger'.[60] Polling also found that 44% of people were against subsidising public transport compared to 39% in favour, underlining that resistance to closures came from local institutions and individuals seeking to preserve their local choices.[61]

Another suburban proposal stopped by replacement bus services was the two mile Watford Junction to Croxley Green line. It was included in the Beeching report[62] and was used at the time mainly by school children. The decline of local buses due to rising car ownership had hurt company profits and drivers' pay and conditions, making providing replacements for the line problematic. In April 1965, the London Transport bus division informed the MOT that there was 'serious difficulty recruiting a sufficient number of operating staff', making the local garage short by 51 drivers.[63] The service was saved in April 1966 due to this and the relatively small potential for savings. It also fell within the Greater London Council's transport area and was subsidised in 1968 to allow the Greater London Council to formulate its plan. This reprieve came despite the line's annual cost of £61,000, and earnings of less than £5,000.[64] It was a branch Labour and Conservative governments sought to close after 1970 but failed, and it received block grants before closing in 1998.[65]

---

[59] Only 38 people used the service from Gateacre to Liverpool based on a 1970 census: Report of the TUCC for the North Western Area on the Proposal to Withdraw All Passenger Train Services between Liverpool Central and Gateacre: Objectors' Representations, 5 July 1971, 6-10, TNA, AN 176/29; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 445; H. White, *Forgotten Railways* (Warsley, 1986), 114; The closing of stations in this period has arguably been more impactful over the long term than those of services: C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 2.
[60] *Liverpool Echo*, 26 July 1966.
[61] *Sunday Telegraph*, 15 December 1963.
[62] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 105.
[63] Letter from London Transport Bus Division to A. Billard, 7 April 1965, TNA, MT 124/710.
[64] The TUCC had accepted it could be closed: Grants for Unremunerative Rail Passenger Services, 20 March 1967; Subsidy Application for Loss Making Passenger Service, 28 February 1968; Notes on a reply to Mr Roebuck, 20 March 1968, TNA, MT 124/710.
[65] 'Mayor Unveils 10bn Plan', *Railways Gazette International*, 160 (2004), 732.

There were loss-making suburban services proposed for closure with higher demand, but they were often closely considered by Marples and Fraser. It has been shown repeatedly that successive governments knew that 'normal commercial criteria may give the wrong answer' when judging closures 'in urban areas'.[66] The Liverpool Exchange-Ormskirk-Preston was a loss-making commuter service saved, this time due to government concerns as well as local resistance. In May 1965, the Board of Trade was uneasy that the 'objections to the proposal' were 'now so great as to make publication clearly undesirable' and due to local overspill development. This Merseyside commuter carried 3,000 daily passengers from Ormskirk into Liverpool at peak hours alone, many more than at Gateacre and Croxley Green.[67] The line was thus retained through the early sift procedure in 1966, which enabled the reprieve of lines without them going through the entire closure process.[68]

As we have seen, the Ministry of Transport had it firmly in mind that 'the closure of a particular service in a conurbation might cause greater costs to be incurred…than the [financial] loss the service is making'.[69] The consideration of other commuter services in the North West conurbation by Marples and their retention under Labour demonstrated this.[70] The York to Harrogate line, which was listed in the Beeching Report,[71] would have saved around £100,000 a year. It carried 600 daily passengers each way, 380 of whom were regular travellers and its TUCC in March 1965 received 340 written objections, including the MP for Harrogate. Wider arguments centred on the area's attraction for holidays and work

---

[66] Services into Urban Areas: Types and Purpose of Surveys – Social Benefit, March 1963, TNA, MT 124/928.
[67] P. Fry to A. Gordan letter at Dept. of Economic Affairs, 21 May 1965, 2; Railway Passenger Closure Proposals: Liverpool Exchange – Ormskirk - Preston TNA, EW 11/18.
[68] List of Closure Proposal Refusals, 1963-7, TNA, MT 106/418; Reprieved by Castle alongside the Croxley Green service: *The Times*, 23 April 1966; Railway Passenger Closure Proposals, 21 May 1965; Note for the Guidance of Regional Economic Planning Councils and Boards; North West Regional Study Group: Proposed Withdrawals of Railway Passenger Services, Appendix, 14 September 1964, TNA, EW 11/18.
[69] Services into Urban Areas; Special Cases, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928.
[70] Letter from R. McIntosh to E. Marples, 14 September 1964, TNA, EW 11/18; G. Lambert, Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Train Service Manchester to Glossop, 13 May 1963, TNA, AN 155/62; Rail Closure Considerations, Refusals and List of Closure Proposals, 1963-1967, TNA MT 106/418.
[71] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 103.

conferences. Despite these claims being 'exaggerated', it was concluded 139 regular passengers would suffer hardship with replacement buses and it was saved in September 1966 and subsidised.[72] As much as closures were characterised in the press as 'narrowly commercial' compared to Buchanan's progressive ambitions, successive governments' approach to commuter lines was cautious.[73]

The Manchester Piccadilly to Buxton service was a proposal rejected by Marples.[74] The 19 mile service was proposed to close in early 1964 and labelled 'the most controversial closure proposal in the country' at the time as the route had over 4,000 passengers a day during the working week but the service lost over £100,000 a year. The TUCC hearing received a petition with 11,672 signatures and 789 written objections. Many objectors were concerned about the effect on house prices if closure went ahead in Buxton, showing the middle-class dimension to opposition and the social value of house prices stressed by the transport economists.[75] It was also found that roads at 'Manchester end' of the service 'suffers from congestion', with buses 'frequently suffering several minutes delay at peaks'. HLG also 'strongly opposed' closure for the area's overspill potential.[76] Marples thus decided to refuse it in July 1964.[77]

---

[72] Minutes of 112th Meeting of the Working Party on Passenger Closures, 18 January 1966; Transport Users' Consultative Committee Yorkshire Area: Withdrawal of Passenger Services Between York and Harrogate: List of Objectors; Letter from J. Baxter, 9 September 1966; MOT Letter of refusal, 15 September 1966, TNA, MT 124/784.
[73] *The Guardian*, 18 December 1963.
[74] Press Notice: Reprieve for Manchester Piccadilly – Buxton Line, 23 July 1964, TNA, MT 100/122; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 104.
[75] Manchester Piccadilly-Buxton line, 23 July 1964, 1-5; J. Baxter letter, 6 July 1964; TNA, MT 100/122; P. Fry to A. Gordan letter at Dept. of Economic Affairs, 21 May 1965, 2, TNA, EW 11/18; Memorandum: Train Services between Manchester and Buxton, 5 May 1964, 7, MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/258, MRC; *The Times*, 6 June 1963.
[76] Manchester (Piccadilly) – Buxton Proposed Closure, June 1964, 2, TNA, MT 100/122; Letter from P. Critchley to M. Davies, 30 December 1963, TNA, MT 124/749; W. Cox to Mr Pugh letter, 26 March 1964, 7, TNA, HLG 131/184.
[77] Press Release: Reprieve for Manchester Piccadilly – Buxton Line, 23 July 1964, TNA, M 100/122.

Cross-Country Lines

As well as the failure to provide replacement bus services, a vast array of logistical difficulties came with cross-country closures. The Woodhead line and Hope Valley line both connected Manchester with Sheffield across the Pennines over 40 miles. Passenger services on the Hope Valley line had been included in Beeching's report,[78] and the Woodhead planned to be retained as it had been a major freight route in the 1950s. However, before the Hope Valley service was decided upon, as the Woodhead line's passenger service lost £67,000 and the Hope Valley line passenger services were not loss-making, the Woodhead line passenger services were proposed to close on 30 March 1967. Around 500 people attended the Penistone Town Hall TUCC hearing in October and 325 individual objections were submitted, and Mr James Booth QC employed by the local authorities opposed closure, and defence of the service was framed in terms of the 'Yorkshire community'.[79] This number of objectors was insufficient for a profitable service but was the most for any single day at a Yorkshire area TUCC hearing by 1967.[80]

However, although local opposition was vocal, practical contingencies had more influence on the outcome of the case. The TUCC recommended the Woodhead service be retained due to the inadequacy of its replacement bus services and deprivation to the Penistone area.[81] The MOT agreed, finding that although replacement buses along the route would cost £8,000 a year compared to a rail service of £40,000, it 'would be an inadequate alternative' over the length of the line.[82] As a compromise, some Woodhead services were then consented to close by Labour Transport Secretary Fred Mulley in January 1970 as a

---

[78] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British* (London, 1963), 105; *Guardian*, 23 January 1965; 250 objections at the TUCC: *Guardian*, 22 April 1965; *Guardian*, 29 April 1965.
[79] Report of the TUCC for the Yorkshire Area, 20 November 1967, 3-4; TUCC Yorkshire Area Memorandum with Financial Statement, 4 September 1967, TNA, MT 124/1167; *Financial Times*, 18 October 1967; *Yorkshire Post*, 18 October 1967; *Sheffield Telegraph*, 25 November 1967.
[80] Report of the TUCC for the Yorkshire Area, 20 November 1967, TNA, MT 124/1167; Only 71 individuals objected at the North Eastern TUCC on 15 June 1967: *Yorkshire Post*, 14 June 1967.
[81] Ibid.,; Record of a Meeting Held in Room 7/178 at the MOT on 30 August 1968, TNA, MT 124/1167.
[82] Ibid.

comprehensive grant for the line totalled £480,000, and the Hope Valley services were retained as a more cost-effective measure.[83]

As well as local contingencies, services could be proposed for closure due to their low demand, despite relatively small financial losses. Passenger services between Alton and Winchester were proposed in the Beeching report,[84] having been added late in December 1962, three months before publication because electrifying its 16 miles was considered too expensive as its central use was as a link to main lines going to London and Southampton. In 1962 total use of the line for local travel amounted to less than 1,000 passengers a week, and even with greater use of the service to connect to Southampton, it was losing £13,300 a year. There were doubts within BR that these services should close due to the marginal savings, but a well co-ordinated opposition by local institutions protracted the closure.[85]

The Alton to Winchester services were not proposed for closure until 1967 due to the need to retain the line while others nearby were electrified, but opposition emerged quickly. Local BR managers in May 1963 were warned about their private showing of a film of Beeching explaining his proposals after the local press claimed it was for public viewing and there were fears it 'could disintegrate into an indignation meeting or at best become a dress rehearsal' for the TUCC.[86] The services were then proposed for closure on 8 December 1967, but this came as Castle decided to maintain the network at 11,000 miles and stressed the need for future economic planning to be considered in closures. Alton to Winchester services were

---

[83] Working Party on Passenger Closure Proposals, 24 July 1968; Record of a Meeting Held in Room 7/178 at the MOT on 30 August 1968; J. Dewdney to D. Fagan letter, 8 November 1968, TNA, MT 124/1167; Large sections of the Woodhead line were then totally closed in 1981: R. Haywood, 'Britain's National Railway Network', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 15 (2007), 203.

[84] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 107; The service linked the London to Southampton and London to Alton lines: *The Guardian*, 28 November 1967.

[85] Appraisal of the Economics of the Lines a Present and Under Electrification, 5 December 1962, 1-6; Memorandum to D. Ellison, 17 December 1962; Further Memorandum, 20 March 1963; Southern Region Line Manager's Office, Branch Line Investigation: Alton – Winchester, 16 September 1964; Alton to Winchester lines, 5 December 1962, TNA, AN 177/61; British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 17-18.

[86] Miss J. Quennell, MP: Showing of Dr Beeching's Plan Memorandum, 27 May 1963; Letter from J. Quennell to P. White, 30 May 1963, TNA, AN 177/61.

not included in Castle's network and the TUCC was held in July 1968, by which time the service had around 5,000 passengers a week but was losing £20,000 over its operation costs alone.[87]

The local authorities coordinated with their MPs, stressing the area would see expansions of population and economic growth, and the case was made in the press that the line 'undoubtedly renders a social service'.[88] Local newspapers also evoked bucolic visions of the line connecting 'the royal city of Winchester…through a quiet and prosperous perfection of fields…old villages and back gardens and past little Italianate stations'.[89] The South East Economic Planning Council and Minister decided that as subsidies were 'extremely limited and could not be expected to be available in every case where local hardship arose', they accepted the proposal of closure.[90] However, pressure also came from local authority accountants and leaks from inside BR who forced the TUCC to be reconvened after the local authorities found an overestimation of costs provided for the previous hearing, which the press framed as part of BR's 'outrageous cynicism'.[91]

A second TUCC was then held in July 1970 and recommended closure because passengers remained at around 5,000 a week, but stated replacement bus services would fail to cope if projected rises in the overspill population came to fruition in the area. Hampshire County Council had repeatedly made the point that the line passed through the 'Corridor

---

[87] Letter from Hampshire County Council Chairman, 16 February 1968; Notes of Proposed Railway Closures, February 1968, 1-3; Railway Closure Proposal: Alton – Winchester Memorandum, February 1968, TNA, EW 10/98; J. Morris, *HC Debs*, vol. 759, cc. 121, 21 February 1968.
[88] Extract from South East Economic Planning Board Meeting, 6 and 13 March 1968, TNA, EW 10/98; *The Guardian*, 28 November 1967; Report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to Miss Joan Quenell MP, 24 May 1973, 1-10; Alton-Winchester Railway Notes, TNA, MT 188/51.
[89] *The Observer*, 28 January 1973.
[90] South East Economic Planning Council Conclusions, 8 March 1968, 2, TNA, EW 10/98; Similar for the Varsity line: G. Southwood to J. MacPhail letter, 29 February 1968, TNA, Board of Trade Records [henceforth, BT], 213/480; Deputation from Bedfordshire County Council, 19 June 1964, 1-3, TNA, Board of Trade Papers [henceforth BT] 213/260.
[91] Draft Letter from Sir I. Pugh to the Parliamentary Commissioner, April 1973, 1-5; Closure of the Line, Alton to Winchester, 1967; Report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, 1973, 1-11, TNA MT 188/51; Letter from the BRB to Hampshire Local Authorities, 11 October 1971, TNA, AN 177/62; *The Guardian*, 28 November 1967.

Area' described by Buchanan as ripe for overspill of between 300,000 and 800,000 people.[92] Closure was approved a year later, however, in August 1971, and the local authorities decided against subsidising it. By this time the line was used by 6,000 passengers a week, but its losses were £104,000 a year and projected to rise with upgrades needed by 1976 worth £245,000.[93] The Alton to Winchester service was then closed in 1973 after the retention of nearby services and the late delivery of replacement buses.[94]

This reveals the complexity, costs, and timescales involved in just one closure, taking six years to conclude. As with others, including the Peterborough to Spalding and Oxford to Cambridge, local authorities were willing to argue for retention. But when the chance to fund the service through the 1968 Transport Act and 1972 Local Government Act arose, their financial offers were insufficient. In December 1971, BR met with Hampshire County Council to discuss subsidising the Alton to Winchester service but found they were not prepared to pay the £100,000 annual subsidy required even with central government contributions.[95] The local authorities also offered to pay to keep the track in place, before a private consortium, the Alton and Winchester Railway Company, suggested they could buy the line. The local authorities supported this while central government paid its grant, seeking to postpone closure. After closure in February 1973, the line was eventually turned into a heritage railway, unburdened by the costs of providing a proper standard of operation.[96]

---

[92] The Government's Proposals for a New Basic Network of the Railways: Report of South East Economic Planning Council, 15 September 1966; 7-8; Letter from Hampshire County Council to B. Castle, 16 February 1968; Note to the Chairman of the County Council on the South Hampshire Study, 1968, 1-3, TNA, EW 10/98.
[93] Letter from the BRB to Hampshire local authorities, 11 October 1971; Report of the TUCC for the Southern Region, July 1970, TNA, AN 177/62; Report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, 1973, 1-11, TNA MT 188/51; M. Hillman and A. Whalley, *The Social Consequences of Rail Closures* (London, 1980), 7-8.
[94] J. Holland, *Dr Beeching's Axe* (Newton Abbot, 2013), 63.
[95] G. Edmunds Memorandum, November 1971, 1-3; G. Edmunds Memorandum, 13 December 1971; Alton – Winchester: Meeting with Local Authorities and BR held on 7 December 1971 and 13 December 1971; Letter from H. Harrison to BR Finance Director, 15 July 1972; Passenger Service Grants,: Alton-Winchester, 15 July 1972; Executive Director, Finance, Memorandum, 18 July 1972; D. Bowick Letter, 16 June 1972; Letter from Hampshire County Council, 6 December 1972, TNA, AN 177/62.
[96] G. Edmunds letter, 1 February 1973 and Note to: G.C.E; Letter from Mid-Hants Railway Ltd Proposition, TNA, MT 188/50; Memorandum of a Meeting Held in the Divisional Manager's Office, 16 January 1973, 1, TNA, AN 177/62; *Country Life*, 7 April 1977.

The Alton to Winchester is used as an example of a line that might be useful today.[97] However, by looking at the situation at the time, we see retention was complex, costly, and locally contingent. Local authorities were willing central government to subsidise a line that they knew their own ratepayers would not accept. Indeed, Hampshire feared they were being seen by ratepayers as 'playing trains' by continuing to try to keep the service open.[98] The arguments of Gerard Fiennes, a BR manager, that lines could be saved by minimising costs and better use of assets, were also influential with MPs and local authorities.[99] His approach required BR to ignore the accounting procedure used to evaluate a rail line, which was becoming more sophisticated at allocating costs to individual services.[100]

Thus, BR told Hampshire's local authorities that the 'advice given to you by Mr Fiennes is not strictly correct'.[101] BR had a valid point, as we will see with the East Suffolk line. To make savings by reducing costs needed large investments in fledgling technology in the 1960s that BR could not afford with their wage bill. The local authorities along the Alton to Winchester line, who would be responsible for funding the service by 1972, argued BR had run services down and distorted its financial figures to make the case for closure.[102] But the financial information available to the MOT by the time local authorities could have subsidised it was broadly fair.[103] It is also unfair to argue BR ran services down given they

---

[97] C. Austin and R. Faulkner, *Disconnected!* (Addlestone, 2015), 132; Some of these services are surveyed from a pro-rail perspective: H. White, *Forgotten Railways* (Warsley, 1986), 106.
[98] Letter from G. Edmunds to Hampshire County Council, 8 December 1972, TNA, AN 177/62; *Hants Chronicle*, 11 June 1975; The service needed a grant of £120,000 in 1973: Letter from R. Compton to Mr Stephens, 5 October 1973, TNA, MT 188/51.
[99] Letter from Winchester Rural District Council, 5 October 1971, TNA, AN 177/62; *The Observer*, 1 October 1967; *The Observer*, 7 November 1971; And when Fiennes managed the East Suffolk Line: *Eastern Daily Press,* 27 January 1966; J. Prior, *HC Debs*, vol. 778, cc. 37, 17 February 1969.
[100] Railway Policy Review: The Administration of Unremunerative Railway Passenger Service Grants and Closures, 16 May 1973, 22-26, TNA, MT 188/1.
[101] British Rail letter to Winchester Local Authorities, 11 October 1971; Department of Environment letter to Winchester Rural District Council, 7 October 1971, TNA, AN 177/62.
[102] I. Pugh to Allan Marre letter, 11 May 1973; Letter from R. Compton to Alton District Council, 9 January 1974, TNA, MT 188/51; *The Guardian*, 28 November 1967.
[103] Report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to Miss Joan Quenell MP, 24 May 1973, 6, TNA, MT 188/51; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways* (London, 2006), 6; 8; Examples of objections to financial information and BR operation: *The Guardian*, 28 November 1967; *Western Mail*, 8 April 1965.

had to obey 'very stringent' legal track standards for passenger services and if investment were to take place during a closure proposal BR would then become vulnerable to the accusation that they were inflating the costs of the service.[104] Whether a closure was refused or granted, local opposition valued railways as a social service above financial costs.

Local developments subsequent to a closure proposal could also protract the case. The proposal to close services between Ashford and Hastings started in 1963 and ended with its retention in 1974 due in part to the failure to provide replacement buses, but also emerging changes in the area. The 26 mile route to the south coast had been included in the Beeching Report and carried around 3,000 users a week.[105] BR first tried to reduce costs rather than close the line, showing this was an avenue tried despite detractors' arguments. Indeed, they planned to reduce the line to a single track in 1965 in a 'final bid to cut costs'.[106] This proved unsuccessful and the line was proposed for closure on 21 April 1967 and consented to close in August 1969, as ever, reliant on replacement bus services. However, bus companies were unable to provide them due to local road works and the local authorities successfully 'requested an adjournment' of their licences in 1973 as they explored 'the possibilities' of subsidising the service themselves. Instead, the local authorities then used this time to lobby central government to reverse their original closure decision, getting them to re-appraise it at the same time the service carried well below the 10,000 passengers a week needed. Thus, by 1973 the line was subsidised by £237,000 a year from central government with no local authority contributions. This compared to the projected bus service's costs of £60,000.[107]

Under the 1972 Local Government Act, which commenced on 1 April 1974, the local

---

[104] I. Pugh letter to Allan Marre, 11 May 1973; Report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to Miss Joan Quenell MP, 24 May 1973, 6, TNA, MT 188/51; G. Fiennes, *I Tried to Run a Railway* (London, 2015), 166.
[105] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 106; Railway Passenger Closure Proposal: Ashford – Hastings Summary; An Examination by the Winchelsea and District Travel Association, 14 March 1967, Annex 3, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[106] *The Times*, 30 April 1965.
[107] Ashford-Hastings: Estimated Savings from Closure and Draft Minute, October 1973; Case Background Notes, Annex A, TNA MT 188/56; Background Note, December 1974; Usage 1969-1974, TNA, MT 188/57.

authorities over the Ashford to Hastings line were then asked to pay £100,000 a year towards it but were only willing to offer £40,000. At this point the economic crisis made providing central government grants much harder.[108] However, due to the ongoing inability to provide replacement buses, the line had to stay open and was subsidised by £269,000 in 1974. Britain's accession to the European Economic Area in 1973, local population increases of 15,000, and the use of the area for testing for the Channel Tunnel, aided the local authorities' arguments for retention, protracting the case.[109] Despite the line's losses, it was reprieved in 1974, not due to better planning, but the persistence of these local and economic contingencies and the advent of the new grant system.[110] At the same time, the Cambrian Coast line, the Bedford to Bletchley section of the Oxford to Cambridge line, the Kyle of Lochalsh to Inverness and others were saved for differing political and logistical reasons and all were losing well over six figures annually.[111]

But local closure proposals could experience popular opposition, not just local authority machinations.[112] The 17 mile service from Shoreham (near Brighton) to Christ's Hospital near Horsham is an example.[113] It was proposed for closure in the summer of 1963 and was expected to save £78,000 a year, with £211,000 for future maintenance. The line carried around 6,000 users a week, with 77 season ticket holders connecting to London. Most passengers alighted locally, with 200 season tickets for local stations, including to local

---

[108] The government's ability to provide the Transport Supplementary Grant was hampered by the economic turmoil of 1973: Ashford-Hastings: Line Consented for Closure; Draft Minute: Ashford-Hastings, February 1974; Ashford-Hastings Railway Services, 17 January 1974; TNA, MT 188/56; *Brighton Argus*, 20 October 1973; Ashford-Hastings Rail Services, J. Smith letter to Mr Compton, 31 January 1974, TNA, MT 188/56.
[109] The Government's Proposals for a New Basic Network of the Railways: Report of South East Economic Planning Council, 15 September 1966, 7, TNA, EW 10/98; Ashford-Hastings: Estimated Savings from Closure, October 1973, 2-4; Background Note, 1, TNA, MT 188/56; *The Times*, 26 April 1968; *Railway World*, February 1976; M. Hackett to B. Castle Letter, November 1966; Hastings and District Trades Council Letter to B. Castle, 18 February 1967; Ashford Designation Study, 11 May 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[110] Transport economists Pryke and Dodgson concluded its social value was not worth saving: R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 205-206.
[111] Grant-Aided Services, 31 July 1974, TNA, MT 188/57; F. Mulley, *HC Debs*, vol. 878, cc. 293, 31 July 1974; *The Guardian*, 1 August 1974.
[112] Examples of incendiary station-based protests: M. Engel, *Eleven Minutes Late* (Oxford, 2009), 218; C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 2; 10; 201; J. Thomas, *Forgotten Railways: Scotland* (Newton Abbot, 1976), 56.
[113] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 107.

hospitals for work, which produced concentrated opposition.[114] Indeed, the proposal was described as causing 'more hysteria than any other in the Beeching report' in 1965.[115]

This 'hysterical atmosphere' had 'been whipped up locally by posters' opposing closure in towns along the line, resulting in a crowd assembling at the TUCC in February 1964, which saw 260 individuals object and a petition presented that was signed by 3,046 people.[116] A crowd sought admission to the overflowing town hall in Steyning, and the hearing 'deteriorated as a result of a long drawn out and somewhat provocative opening statement' by the BR representative, who was uncompromising about the line's prospects.[117] This was made worse when the chairman of the meeting refused to hear objections into the next day. Civil servants at the MOT believed 'it would have been better for him to have been bored for another day in order to allow the maximum emission of steam', instead of ending proceedings.[118] This pressure in view of the election then led Marples to defer the case to investigate its bus services.[119] However, the line was consented to close by Labour Minister Tom Fraser in September 1965, showing governments did push against popular resistance that lacked the technical strategies of some local authorities.[120]

The proposal of the Somerset and Dorset line consisting of services between Bristol and Bournemouth in June 1963 also saw opposition at its local TUCCs and in the press.[121] This line ran over 100 miles, carrying 8,500 passengers a week, many to local stations. The line's direct costs amounted to £398,000 compared to its annual revenue of £108,000, and needed improvement works in the next five years of £360,000, underlining the costs of large

---

[114] Shoreham-Christ's Hospital Rail Closure, 29 July 1965, TNA, MT 124/1197.
[115] Shoreham – Christ's Hospital Closure Memorandum, 29 July 1965; Working party on Passenger Closure Proposals, 2 June 1965, 7-9, TNA, MT 124/1197.
[116] Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Train Services Between Christ's Hospital and Shoreham, Annex B, TNA, AN 177/133; Report of the TUCC for the South Eastern Area, 15 June 1965, TNA, MT 124/1197.
[117] Working party on Passenger Closure Proposals: Shoreham – Horsham, 2 June 1964, 7-9, TNA, MT 124/1197.
[118] Ibid; Similar issue at Varsity line TUCC: *North Beds Courier*, 18 August 1964.
[119] And as the General Election approached: *Evening Argus*, 29 September 1964.
[120] J. MacDougall Letter, 9 September 1965; Memorandum, 29 July 1965, 11, TNA, MT 124/1197.
[121] P. Davies letter to Mr Baxter, 8 January 1964, TNA, MT 124/1195.

cross-country lines.[122] The two TUCCs saw only 208 objectors in the autumn of 1963, and concluded its services could close in 1965, when it was losing over £400,000 a year.[123] As with the Shoreham to Christ's Hospital case, the crowd at the South Eastern TUCC 'degenerated' when the BR spokesman doggedly 'referred to the savings which they hoped to achieve' by closing the line, which the chairman compounded when he 'refused to allow' points to be raised in response.[124]

However, the details TUCCs and government were willing to go into over the hardship suffered showed their sensitivity to closures. They found that there would 'be hardship for 12 people' in the Somerset village of Shoscombe, where a steep climb to the replacement bus stop would be hard to reach. They also found 50 school children around Radstock would need alternative buses.[125] The effect on those travelling between intermediate stations was also considered, including 'the needs of 11 to 14 users' between Broadstone and Bath. What five passengers between Shepton Mallet and Templecombe on the Somerset and Dorset line would do after closure was also deliberated as the replacement bus would be less convenient.[126]

Therefore, popular opposition could be important in individual closures, and successive governments were receptive to the potential of hardship. But the strength behind many reprieved cases came from middle class organisations and local authorities, their objections often being 'the product of expert, and in some cases, intimate knowledge of the working' of a service, its finances, and the legal procedures, sometimes the product of NUR

---

[122] Ibid.
[123] Report of the TUCC, South Western Area, June 1964, 9, TNA, MT 124/1195; Scott-Malden letter to T. Fraser, March 1965, TNA, MT 124/1196; *Western Morning News, Plymouth*, 13 January 1964.
[124] Mr Baxter Note; P. Davies letter to Mr Baxter, 8 January 1964, TNA, MT 124/1195; Somerset and Dorset Line: Section 2 TUCC Consideration and Report, Mach 1965, 8-22, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[125] Mr Baxter Note; P. Davies letter to Mr Baxter, 8 January 1964, TNA, MT 124/1195.
[126] Somerset and Dorset Line Memorandum, July 1965, TNA, MT 124/1196; TUCC South Western and South Eastern Areas Reports, 24 December 1963, TNA, MT 124/1195.

help.[127] Two more examples are explored now.

The Varsity Line and East Suffolk Lines

When the Varsity line, from Oxford to Cambridge, was proposed for closure on 6 December 1963, the reason given was its poor revenue, despite having higher demand than many proposals. The Varsity line's passenger study found it carried approximately 10,500 weekly passengers, which was more than Beeching's estimate that services would need 10,000 to break-even in future with freight but less than the 17,000 needed without it.[128] The East Suffolk line, between Ipswich and Lowestoft, had around 8,000 passengers a week.[129] Yet, the government made more effort to close the Varsity line than the East Suffolk. This was for two reasons. Firstly, the Varsity line's vast size produced a high cost to revenue deficit.[130] Second, it was surrounded by a lattice of road and rail networks compared to the East Suffolk line, which was one of the area's major cross-country links.[131] But the size of both lines made the logistics of closure and replacement bus services hard to deliver, which was exploited vigorously by local authorities.

As economic geographer John Patmore stated in 1962 when analysing Beeching's plan, Britain's railways were generally only profitable in the axial belt corridor running north-south, from southeast England to Lancashire and West Riding.[132] A study of East Anglia's economy in 1963 described how its industry and transport links were 'away from

---

[127] Report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to Miss Joan Quenell MP, 24 May 1973, 10-12, TNA, MT 188/51; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-74* (Cambridge, 1986), 210-211.
[128] Freight was not a major asset on the line: 'Highways Management Authority Division 2 Memorandum', 2 April 1964, TNA, MT 124/714; Ministerial Committee on Economic Development on Rail and Road, May 1965, 1-2, TNA, HLG 131/186; British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 17-18.
[129] Letter from P. Conrad at Wainford Rural District Council to MOT, 11 April 1963, 2, TNA MT 124/717; East Anglia Economic Planning Council Communications Committee, 20 October 1969, TNA, EW 13/442.
[130] South Midlands Passenger Association Statement from P. Smith: Statement on Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Service', 31 July 1964, TNA, MT 124/714; J. Baxter letter to C. Scott Malden, 26 April 1965, TNA, MT 124/1136.
[131] J. Baxter letter to J. Dewdney, 29 June 1966, 2-3; J. Vigors letter to C. Spinks, 12 September 1967; East Suffolk County TUCC Memorandum, 1965, 1-11, TNA, EW 13/33.
[132] J. Patmore, 'The Changing Network', *Geography*, 47 (1962), 404.

the main industrial belt from London to Liverpool', and that it was 'fighting a losing battle' to the car.[133] The 46 mile East Suffolk line was thus losing around £90,000 annually and had the A12 dual carriageway running parallel to it.[134] But as a major link in the region, connecting towns and villages with Ipswich, its closure was considered hard to replace with bus services by the local press and at the TUCC in September 1965.[135]

The Varsity line was the first east-west link north of London, intersecting three British Railways regions, and thus faced a different challenge. The London Midland Region managed this vast 77 mile line, running perpendicular to the axial belt through Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and linking to seven north-south main lines from London.[136] Major roads in the area were the A5 and the M1, and 11 miles to Bletchley's north-east from 1967, the New Town of Milton Keynes was established.[137] Despite this, in August 1963, the LMR decided to propose the Varsity line for closure, and published notice in December, because it lost £97,900 a year. This was nearly 100% of its revenue, suggesting that despite relatively high demand its size made it a poor financial prospect with rising car ownership.[138] Indeed, Beeching's endorsement for the LMR's report to expand its closure list in July 1963 came because of increased competition

---

[133] British Railways Traffic Surveys – Economic and Social Characteristics of East Anglia, 1963, 31-43, TNA, AN 82/20.
[134] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 30 May 1963; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 10 February 1964; *Ipswich Evening Star*, 1 January 1965; *The Economist*, 4 May 1963; H. Purser, Branch Line Invigoration Society letter, Memorandum: 'East Suffolk Line', 1-5, 18 February 1963; Letter from A. Godfrey to the MOT, 5 March 1965, TNA, MT 124/717; Complaints about the A12: C. Norwood, *HC Debs*, vol. 721, cc. 1597, 1 December 1965.
[135] *East Anglia Daily Times*, 24 December 1964; Letter from H. Townsend, Southwold Borough Council to MOT, 24 April 1963, 1-4, TNA, MT 124/717; *Eastern Daily Times*, 29 September 1965.
[136] BRB Public Notice: Withdrawal of Passenger Train Services, April 1964 and November 1964; G. Brewis, Special Committee Booklet, 30 July 1964, 4, TNA, MT 124/714; Draft Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development, April 1965, 1-4, TNA, MT 124/1136.
[137] *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 July 1966; Rail Services in North Buckinghamshire, 28 May 1968, TNA, AN 155/45; Minutes of the 83rd Meeting of the Working Party on Passenger Closure Proposals, 3 February 1965, TNA, MT 124/136; County of Buckingham Development Review, 1963, 1-6, TNA, 124/714; The Development of Bletchley: Memorandum of the South East Study, June 1964, TNA, HLG 156/1278.
[138] Week 34 Closure Proposals, 24 August 1963, TNA, MT 106/227; East Anglia TUCC, Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Trains, 7 May 1964, TNA, MT 124/714.

from 'the private car and new motorways' in east-west and rural areas.[139]

However, the logistical complexity and local opposition surrounding the Varsity line meant its closure was totally disorganised. After the BRB's proposal in December 1963, it was not actually consented to close by the Minister until two years later on 8 July 1965, by Labour's Tom Fraser. Moreover, it was not until 1 January 1968 that any part of the line was shut. This was when each end of the line was closed, from Cambridge to Bedford and Oxford to Bletchley, as the government closed the parts of the line that had provided the requisite bus services.[140] This left the line's mid-section between Bedford and Bletchley which never closed despite government attempts between 1968 and 1974. In June 1969, under the 1968 Transport Act, four years after consent to close, the mid-section was subsidised.[141] It was then permanently reprieved in 1974 after constant failures to provide replacement buses, local authority pressure, and the Milton Keynes Development Corporation's desire for its retention as the New Town was built.[142]

Due to election promises to halt Beeching's axe, Labour came under pressure over the Varsity line between 1964 and 1970, but still pushed for closure. Barbara Castle, having replaced Tom Fraser as Minister of Transport in December 1965 was faced with the issue that

---

[139] Commercial Report to the BB, 25 July 1963, 1-4; BRB Minutes: Meeting of the British Railways Board, 25 July 1963, 3-5, TNA, AN 167/11; S. Williams, 'Commercial Report – Ended 7 September 1963, 26 September 1963, TNA, AN 167/1; Letter from BRB to E. Marples, 24 October 1963, TNA, MT 124/714.

[140] Letter from J. Baxter to the BRB, 5 July 1965, TNA, MT 124/1137; 'Oxford-Cambridge Line', 15 January 1968, TNA, Department of Economic Affairs, [henceforth, EW], 13/37; Letter from Director of Passenger Studies to MOT, 21 December 1967, TNA, MT 124/1139; Proposal to Withdraw Railway Passenger Services between Bletchley and Bedford: History of the Proposal, July 1971, 1-4, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Buckingham [henceforth DC], 3/4/7; *The Guardian*, 23 April 1965.

[141] Summary of Appeals and Background, 12 August 1966, TNA, MT 124/1138; P. Ormond letter to L. de Livera, 4 September 1968, TNA, MT 97/787; J. Peeler to M. Moore, 15 February 1971, TNA, MT 97/787; Proposal to Withdraw Railway Passenger Services between Bletchley and Bedford: History of the Proposal, July 1971, 1-6, DC, 3/4/7; Bletchley-Bedford Rail Passenger Service: Report of the Solicitor to the Joint Committee, March 1974; Announcement by the Minister of Transport, 31 July 1974, Bedfordshire Archives, [henceforth, CS], 1807/6/f8; Memorandum: Milton Keynes – Meeting with Lord Campbell, 7 November 1968; Memorandum: Bedford-Bletchley Passenger Service, 8 January 1969, TNA, AN 155/56.

[142] Proposal to Withdraw Railway Passenger Services between Bletchley and Bedford, July 1971, TNA, AN 167/27; Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Committee of Local Authorities, Bletchley, 14 December 1972; L. Roche to S. Stirling letter, 8 May 1973, CS, 1807/6/f8; Letter from K. Peter to M. Swallow, 19 August 1974, TNA, AN 176/27.

the two ends of the line had sufficient bus provision, but the mid-section did not. To avoid political controversy, she appointed an independent inspector to report on the practicability of replacement buses in a second public hearing in July 1966, two years after the TUCCs.[143] This second hearing had been forced on Castle due to the legal pressure applied by local authorities contesting the bus companies' ability to provide replacement services at the hearings of the Traffic Commissioners. The Commissioners decided replacement buses could be used, but only after the appeals phase against this decision had lapsed because the bus companies had suffered from long term recruitment problems.[144] The inspector, hearing the local authority arguments again, concluded in August 1966 that the two ends of the line could run buses, but not the mid-section between Bedford and Bletchley.[145]

Castle then followed the advice of the inspector amid fears of being 'shot at' in the press.[146] However, demonstrating the sensitivity of the case, Castle did not publicly consent to close the two ends of the line until late March 1967, seven months later.[147] This was a successful strategy as the press treated the decision not to close the middle of the line as a 'reprieve'.[148] But Castle also waited until March 1967 to see if the entire line could close to avoid the embarrassment, but replacement buses were not forthcoming and the two ends of the line were closed.[149] This proved Marples right when he said in 1963 that 'once the main

---

[143] Letter from B. Castle to Eastern and East Midland Traffic Areas, 22 March 1967, MT 124/1139; 'Proposal to Withdraw', July 1971, TNA, AN 155/45; E. Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 699, cc. 479, 31 July 1964; H. Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 919, 30 April 1963.
[144] *Wolverton Express*, 6 August 1965; *Bedford Record and Circular*, 10 August 1965; Decision of the Traffic Commissioners, 31 March 1966; J. Fells APS letter to the Minister, 17 August 1965, TNA, MT 114/1137; Letter from Albion Chambers, to LMR, 7 April 1966, TNA, AN 155/44; Summary of Appeals and Background, August 1966, 3-5, TNA, MT 124/1138.
[145] Independent Inspector's Comments: Appeals to the Minister, 12 August 1966, 1-6; Letter from Fagan to Bickerton letter, 20 March 1967; Summary: Nature of the Appeals, TNA, MT 124/1138.
[146] D. Fagan to C. Scott Malden letter, 5 January 1967; Miss de Livera letter to Mr Locke, 16 February 1967; D. Fagan to C. Scott-Malden letter, 15 March 1967, TNA, MT 124/1138.
[147] Independent Inspector's Comments, 12 August 1966; Letter from Fagen to Bickerton, 20 March 1967, TNA, MT 124/1138; Ministry of Transport Press Notice, 23 March 1967, TNA, AN 155/45; Letter from Bowick to J. Dewdney, 25 August 1966, TNA, AN 155/44.
[148] *The Times*, 25 March 1967; *Daily Telegraph*, 25 March 1967; *The Guardian*, 25 March 1967.
[149] D. Fagan letter to C. Scott Malden, 5 January 1967; Letter from C. Scott Malden to the BRB, 24 February 1967; D. Fagan letter to C. Scott-Malden, 15 March 1967, TNA, MT 124/1138; Liverpool Street GM letter to

fuss is over at the beginning', the 'trouble' with closures 'will be local and sporadic as each individual closure comes to be dealt with'.[150] Between 1968 and 1974, the introduction of subsidies, inadequate bus services, and the construction of Milton Keynes altered travel patterns in the area so that the closure of the mid-section was put on hold as the original replacement bus services had been organised years earlier. These factors led to a failed effort to close it in 1971, and by 1973, the service's deficit was subsidised £177,000 annually.[151] The size and costs of the line, in an area deemed ripe for the car pushed government towards closure, but they were hindered by its local authorities' exploitation of logistical issues.

Local institutions put up a vociferous opposition to the Varsity line closure. The four County Councils and their local authorities coordinated to form a Special Committee led by Bedfordshire, which made a substantial case at the TUCC hearing held on 30 July 1964, again, led by a QC.[152] The Special Committee argued they were given 'no hint' before the closure was announced that Milton Keynes would be left to rely on north-south links, deepening regional inequality.[153] BR and the government in turn showed local roads had capacity to allow rising car ownership and population growth.[154] The local authorities' alternative image of the railways to counter this was of a community shuttle stripped of inefficiencies to serve society.[155] The local and national press agreed, expressing the desire to 'fight' for this 'public service'.[156] Local NUR pamphlets did the same, asking whether locals

---

Euston, 16 January 1967; D. Fagan letter to J. Dewdney, 24 February 1967, TNA, AN 155/45; *Railway Review*, 31 March 1967; Connecting buses to the mid-section were an embarrassment: *Daily Express*, 9 September 1968.
[150] Marples letter to the Prime Minister, May 1963, TNA, PREM 11/4548.
[151] Annex E: Withdrawal List of 1971, Rail Policy Review, 16 May 1973, TNA, MT 188/1; Rising year on year: R. Eyre, *HC Debs*, vol. 846, cc. 1740, 23 November 1972; Memorandum: Bedford – Bletchley Passenger Service, 8 January 1969, TNA, AN 155/46.
[152] G. Brewis, Special Committee Booklet, 30 July 1964, 6, TNA, MT 124/714.
[153] H. Hudson letter to E. Marples, 29 November 1963; Summary of Representations: Special Committee Booklet, 30 July 1964; Proposal to Withdraw Railway Passenger Services', 30 July 1964, 4, TNA, MT 124/714; Report of the TUCC for the East Midlands Area, March 1965, 5, TNA, MT 124/1136.
[154] Proposal to Withdraw Railway Passenger Services, 30 July 1964, 10a; 4; Report of the TUCC for the East Midlands Area, March 1965, 6, TNA, MT 124/1136; Report of the TUCC for the East Midlands Area, 27 October 1964, 2-3, TNA, AN 155/44.
[155] G. Brewis, Special Committee booklet, 30 July 1964, 6-12, TNA, MT 124/714.
[156] *Bedfordshire Times,* 7 February 1964; *Cambridge Daily News*, 17 December 1963 and 27 March 1964; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 7 July 1966; *The Times,* 2 January 1964; *Evening Standard*, 6 January 1964.

were 'content to lose a public service'.[157] Robert Maxwell, Frank Markham MP and a local Liberal candidate also formed an all-party steering group coordinating 'to fight' against closure with local authorities and the NUR.[158]

Such were the efforts by local authorities and institutions that Whitehall noted Bedfordshire County Council was 'alive to…exploiting sensitive areas of government policy' in order to oppose closure.[159] The County Council quoted letters from the local bus company to the Minister and Traffic Commissioners that stated it was 'increasingly difficult to recruit staff' for replacements, and local newspapers repeatedly stressed the problem. They also repeatedly suggested a subsidy could be provided for the line, adding to the time government spent assessing the service.[160] The Bedfordshire Passenger Association also conducted spot checks of trains and found 'discrepancies' with BR's passenger surveys which they argued were intentionally counted low.[161] Local NUR pressure in 1965 also pushed Labour's Tom Fraser to ask the BRB if 8 through-trains on the Varsity line at 'commuter peak times' was possible as a shuttle service, which BR rejected.[162]

The East Suffolk line proposal also triggered local opposition, including a petition of over 10,000 signatures delivered to Parliament in June 1965.[163] However, the local opposition at the TUCC in September 1965 was attended by far fewer. Personal objections came from 260 people filling the Saxmundham Market Hall, and 1,910 written objections were lodged,

---

[157] A. Grigg letter to S. Greene, 17 November 1963, MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/278A, MRC; *Railway Review*, 25 October 1963 and 13 December 1963.
[158] A. Grigg letter to S. Greene, 1 December 1963: All-Party Steering Committee, MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/278A, MRC; F. Markham, *HC Debs*, vol. 686, cc. 1593, 19 December 1963.
[159] J. Baxter letter to A. Vincent, 4 March 1965, TNA, MT 124/1136; *The Sun*, 5 August 1965.
[160] *Bedford Record and Circular*, 12 January 1964; *Oxford Times*, 6 August 1965; *Wolverton Express*, 6 August 1965; *Evening News*, 2 September 1965; *Bedfordshire Times*, 22 January 1965; *Bedfordshire Times*, 28 July 1965; *Bedford Record and Circular*, 2 August 1966; Letter from UCOC to R. Betteley, 6 April 1965; Letter from Eastern Traffic Area to R. Betteley, 9 April 1965; Letter from G. Brewis to the MOT, 12 February 1965; Letter from W. Sharp to G. Cauthery, 10 May 1965, TNA, MT 124/1136; Council Appeals Against Traffic Commissioners' Decision, 25 July 1966, DC, 3/4/6; *Daily Herald*, 20 July 1964.
[161] Beds and Herts Passenger Association Memorandum, April 1964, 2, CS, 1807/6B.
[162] J. Baxter letter to J. Dewdney, February 1965, TNA, MT 124/1136; A. Grigg, 'The University Line Closed', December 1963, 2, 14/10/116, DC; A. Crosland letter to A. Albu, 1 March 1965, TNA, EW 7/43.
[163] C. H. Harrison, *HC Debs*, vol. 715, cc. 593, 30 June 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 14 September 1965; List No. 65 of Closure Proposals, 12 February 1965, TNA, MT 106/229.

which was described in the press as an 'explosion of democratic protest'.[164] The local authorities and politicians also took members of the TUCC on bus rides along the line to show their longer and less comfortable journey, which was a major reason for the rejection of closure by the TUCC.[165] The line's low demand, however, was central to BR's argument that replacement buses would be an ample alternative.[166] This was underlined by the service's growing annual loss. By the early 1970s the deficit had risen from £286,000 in 1967 to £371,000.[167]

After being proposed for closure in March 1965, the East Suffolk line was reprieved much faster than the Varsity line, on 29 June 1966.[168] Resistance from local authorities and MPs had started long before the service was even proposed for closure, and it was assessed by government before publication too.[169] Government departments, however, did not strongly resist closure. The Board of Trade and the Department of Economic Affairs stated they had little urgent need for it.[170] By 1966, tourism via rail was deemed less important as its demand declined even as holidaying increased. The East Anglian Regional Economic Planning Council found 'less than 20%' of holidaymakers arrived by train, due to the car.[171] The

---

[164] *The Observer,* 26 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 28 September 1965; *Daily Worker*, 29 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 29 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 17 September 1965.
[165] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 12 July 1966; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 13 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 15 August 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 25 September 1965; *The Observer,* 26 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 29 September 1965; Letter from East Suffolk CC G. Lightfoot to MOT, East Suffolk Railway', 12 October 1965; East Suffolk CC Memorandum on BRB Proposals, October 1965, 5-6, 9-12; Letter from J. Baxter to the BRB, 29 June 1966, TNA, EW 13/33; C. Norwood, *HC Debs*, vol. 721, cc. 1595, 1 December 1965; Campaigns for better buses on the Varsity Line: *Bedfordshire Times,* 13 September 1968.
[166] East Suffolk Line: Summary, February 1966, 2, TNA, EW 13/208.
[167] Annex E: The 1973 Withdrawal List of 1971, May 1973, TNA, MT 188/1; URPS Grants, 1972, 1972, TNA, MT 188/24; East Anglia Economic Planning Council Communications Committee, 20 October 1969, TNA, EW 13/442.
[168] Letter from A. Godfrey at the NU to the MOT, 5 March 1965, TNA, MT 124/717; List No. 65 of Closure Proposals, 12 February 1965, MT 106/229; Letter from J. Baxter to the BRB, 29 June 1966, TNA, EW 13/33; Progress of Closures, July 1966, TNA, MT 106/418.
[169] Letter from Beccles Borough Council to the MOT, 7 March 1963, TNA, MT 124/717; J. Morris, *HC Debs*, vol. 725, cc. 202, 28 February 1966.
[170] J. Baxter letter to J. Hargreaves, 24 February 1965, TNA, MT 124/717.
[171] But the Council did value the line for future population and economic expansion: East Suffolk Line: Summary, February 1966, 1-2, TNA, EW 13/208; Beeching's report also stressed holidaying via rail had halved over the previous 10 years despite the growth of affluence and leisure time due to 'family motoring': BRB, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 14; 58; Special Report by the Interdepartmental Working Party on BR Passenger Services to Holiday Resorts, 2 January 1964, 1-2, TNA, MT 124/2005.

TUCC then concluded that as it was a major regional link, users would suffer hardship with the 'inherent difficulties' of replacement bus services.[172] The General Manager of the East Suffolk line, Gerard Fiennes, felt this, alongside strong local opposition, were the main reasons.[173] Castle also refused it due to rising congestion and the impact on Ipswich for the development of the region after consulting the Regional Planning Council.[174]

Therefore, the inadequacy of replacement bus services, local logistical issues, and pressure from local authorities were effective at frustrating provincial closures in these cases. Indeed, despite Buckingham MP, Robert Maxwell's defence of the Varsity line in the local press into the late 1960s, stating that Milton Keynes would make it 'the heart' of the region, the wider public did not necessarily feel the same. When a local newspaper asked random members of the public, rather than publishing the thoughts of angry individuals, different views emerged. The main feeling expressed was: 'I think it should be kept open but I won't miss it', and 'I won't miss it but all the same one doesn't like to see it close'. Another said: 'those who visit people in hospital in Oxford will be hard done by, but I won't miss it'.[175] Letters sent to newspapers and the Minister also admitted: 'I seldom have to travel' on the line, or 'I seldom have need to use any rail' service, but objected to closure nevertheless.[176] Indeed, the Varsity line by 1962 was known more as a 'slow, badly timed and unattractive' service, taking longer to travel from Oxford to Cambridge than going via London.[177]

The national press also played an important role, but as a middle class institution. The East Suffolk line was described as essential for men commuting to London, who were the

---

[172] Letter from J. Baxter to the BRB letter, 29 June 1966, TNA, EW 13/33.
[173] G. Fiennes, *I Tried to Run a Railway* (London, 2015), 163.
[174] J. Baxter to J. Dewdney letter, 29 June 1966, 2-3; J. Vigors to C. Spinks letter, 12 September 1967, TNA, EW 13/33; East Suffolk Line: Summary, February 1966, 2, TNA, EW 13/208; *Eastern Daily Times*, 5 July 1966; *East Anglia Daily Times*, 12 July 1966; Minister Notice, 29 July 1966, MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/327, MRC.
[175] *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 14 November 1967; Views shared in other surveys: M. Hillman and A. Whalley, *The Social Consequences of Rail Closures* (London, 1980), 85; 99.
[176] Letter from J. Carrington, 13 May 1966; Letter from G. Rainer, Bedford, 28 July 1965, with *Bedfordshire Times* cutting, TNA, MT 124/1137.
[177] G. Skelsey, 'People Travelling Business Seem Seldom to Travel by Train', *BackTrack*, 31 (2017), 332; C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 82.

'most articulate, the most wealthy and the most influential' people in the country, 'and its railways' champions'.[178] Local parliamentary candidates also roused public opposition in their effort to win a seat. Liberal candidate and journalist Donald Newby was crucial to the resistance. He printed 30,000 leaflets and gained the support of local figures such as Benjamin Britten and Sir Ian Jacob to 'protest'.[179] Indeed, the petition signed by over 10,000 people presented to Parliament was Newby's, and local incumbent Jim Prior argued his constituents had been treated with 'utter contempt' by the Labour government after his own party had initiated closures and was then able to publicly 'welcome' its reprieve in 1966.[180]

Policy Complexity and Public Opinion

Closures such as these were also effectively opposed by local authorities because Labour and Conservative governments struggled to understand the complexity of local issues. The BRB itself stated in July 1963, the same month they decided to propose the Varsity line closure, that 'far too little' was 'known about the passenger business' due to the limited data on local lines.[181] By August 1963, the BRB had approved the LMR's proposal to close Oxford-Cambridge services due to their annual deficits and the effectiveness of the car in provincial areas.[182] It was then the civil service who told Tom Fraser in May 1965, weeks before he consented to the closure, that, 'if only for political reasons', he should investigate

[178] *The Economist*, 4 May 1963.
[179] *The Observer*, 26 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 13 September 1965; *Eastern Daily Press*, 18 May 1966; *Eastern Daily Times*, 7 July 1966.
[180] *The Ipswich Evening* Star, 1 January 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 28 September 1965; The *Guardian*, 29 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 27 January 1966; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 12 July 1966; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 13 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 14 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 17 September 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 9 July 1966; *The Times*, 12 July 1966; Other MPs too: H. Harrison, *HC Debs*, vol. 721, cc. 1602, 1 December 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 24 December 1964.
[181] Commercial Report – Period Ended 6th July 1963, 25 July 1963, 1-4, TNA, AN 167/11.
[182] Week 34 Closure Proposals, 24 August 1963, TNA, MT 106/227; Letter from BRB to E. Marples, 24 October 1963, TNA, MT 124/714; Commercial Report – Period Ended 6th July 1963, 25 July 1963, 1-4, TNA, AN 167/11.

the local bus companies' ability to provide replacement services.[183]

Bus company delegates in the Public Transport Association had told government as the Beeching Report was published that they would only be able to provide services 'on terms of indemnity' as growing car use reduced their profits.[184] Indeed, it was stated in April 1963 that rail closures 'would set the bus industry an impossible task' due to the difficulty of providing comprehensive bus services at the same time they suffered staff shortages and demand was in decline.[185] After the government consented to close the Varsity line in 1965, local bus companies showed themselves unable to provide services for the next three years.[186] However, subsidies for local bus companies to provide these services would cost £9,000 a year instead of the railways' loss at over ten times that amount.[187]

Thus, although bus services proved difficult to supply, a need for savings was clear. The government had held rail fares down nationally before the late 1950s to try to maintain demand but it had declined regardless. It then raised fares by £7 million between 1959 and 1960 in order to reduce the deficit, which led to a further 3% fall in passenger rail miles, showing the intractable situation.[188] Neither did subsidising the railways prevent further losses or improve efficiency. By 1973, an MOT study expressed frustration that central government had 'virtually full responsibility' for subsidies as well as 'full ultimate responsibility for closures'. This disincentivised local authority funding and more efficient

---

[183] Mr. Custance letter to C. Scott-Malden, 4 May 1965, TNA, MT 124/1136.
[184] *Financial Times*, 16 May 1963.
[185] Minister of Transport Meets Bus Operators, 9 April 1963, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/3, MRC; *Modern Transport*, 18 May 1962.
[186] *Bedford Record and Circular*, 10 August 1965; *Sunday Times*, 11 July 1971; G. Williams to Bowick letter, 5 April 1966; Bowick to L. Leppington letter, 5 January 1966, TNA, AN 155/44; Bedford-Bletchley Residual Service, 22 May 1968, TNA, AN 155/45; Memorandum: Milton Keynes – Meeting with Lord Campbell, 7 November 1968,2, TNA, AN 155/56.
[187] Dewdney to J. Beeton letter, 11 March 1965, TNA, MT 124/1136; 'Note of Discussion on Rail Closures', 14 November 1962, 1, TNA MT 124/665.
[188] Railways Traffic and Receipts Memorandum, November 1962, TNA, MT 65/360.

management techniques within BR.[189] Although local popular anger often died down after closure,[190] it also disincentivised local authorities from needing to provide fuller financial contributions at the same time they argued the service was essential.

This was shown in the Hull to Scarborough line closure case. Like the Gateacre and Varsity cases, it was originally proposed for modification, which meant an attempt at stripping back costs.[191] The 53 mile double tracked line had 16 stations, with 6 providing substantial commuter traffic from Bridlington into Hull, but the remaining 10 stations had very low demand that only 'just reaches double figures'.[192] As the service was losing £124,000 a year in total, the minister approved of the closure proposal being published on 25 January 1967, which was met with a 'good deal' of opposition from local authorities. Barbara Castle had already been forced to meet fourteen local MPs in December 1966, telling them the proposal would be 'carefully considered'.[193] Indeed, BR did not proceed with the TUCCs and instead sought to negotiate with the local authorities over subsidies. This the local authorities called 'a form of blackmail' in the local press without receiving all the financial figures.[194] On 14 March 1967, thirteen of the local authorities met in Beverley but agreed to pay 'only a reasonable contribution', which was less than needed for subsidy. This position was fuelled by a 'memorandum prepared by Mr G. Fiennes', showing how savings could first be made by BR.[195] Even so, Fiennes' plans needed the local authorities to provide £200,000 to provide efficiency savings, and it would take years to achieve.[196]

---

[189] Railway Policy Review, J. Gunn, 16 May 1973, 5-6; 7; 9, TNA, MT 188/1; T. Gourvish, 'British Rail's "Business-Led" Organisation, 1977-1990', *Business History Review*, 64 (1990), 113; C. Foster, 'Michael Beesley and Cost-Benefit', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 35 (2001), 20.
[190] C. Divall, in M. Emmanuel et al (eds), *A U-Turn to the Future* (Oxford, 2020), 108.
[191] British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 97; 107.
[192] D. Fagan letter to B. Castle, 6 January 1967, TNA, MT 124/1211.
[193] Hull – Bridlington – Scarborough Railway Line, 8 February 1968, TNA, MT 124/1211; *Hull Daily Mail*, 17 August 1967.
[194] *Hull Daily Mail*, 7 April 1967.
[195] *Yorkshire Post*, 15 March 1967; *Yorkshire Post*, 6 March 1967; *Yorkshire Post*, 27 February 1967.
[196] *Hull Daily Mail*, 16 March 1967; *Hull Daily Mail*, 9 March 1967; *Hull Daily Mail*, 7 March 1967; Hull-Bridlington-Scarborough Background, 20 November 1967, TNA, MT 124/1211.

This was an example of the controversy surrounding closures by the late 1960s and the strategies of the institutions opposing them. As 'negotiations had broken down' over how to fund the reduced service and the line's financial figures were passed to the rail unions in 1967 under an arrangement seeking to promote better relations with government, those figures were leaked to the press and questioned by the local authorities.[197] This impasse continued until April 1968, when the government was preparing official subsidies for loss-making services. They were sceptical of BR's feeling that 'a social grant would be the easy way out' of the situation as the line lost six figure sums annually and they had not informed the local authorities of their required contribution.[198] This only cemented the impasse because it made local authorities able to question the vast subsidies required. The government also knew that any decision would either let off the local authorities or cause political controversy by pushing through another closure. The line was thus retained and subsidised in 1968. By 1971, it was losing over £300,000 a year.[199]

By 1972, the resistance from local government and the press, as well as the logistical difficulties of executing closures, checked the major parties. The view in the MOT was that 'public opinion favours the railways', despite knowledge of the public's 'tendency both to overestimate the contribution that rail passenger services make – or could possibly make – to passenger transport', and the 'little conception of the cost of providing these services individually or collectively'. Local authorities had 'exploited' any issue to maintain services 'at the taxpayers' cost', and local people, whether they used them or not, were 'responsive to organised campaigns' pressing for social service provision that asked little more than signing

[197] D. Fagan letter to B. Castle, 6 January 1967; Brief to Morris, Meeting with R. Wood, 8 February 1968, TNA, MT 124/1211; *Hull Daily Mail*, 17 August 1967.
[198] Brief to Morris, Meeting with R. Wood, 8 February 1968, TNA, MT 124/1211; Railway Policy Review, 16 May 1973, 7-9, TNA, MT 188/1.
[199] Brief to Morris, Meeting with R. Wood, 8 February 1968, TNA, MT 124/1211; Grant Aided Services, 1971-75, TNA, AN 177/62.

a petition in favour of greater transport choice.[200]

Arguments from individuals were also articulated for them in the local press.[201] Miss Wendy Phyllis from St Leonards-on-Sea wrote to Castle in January 1967 in objection to the Ashford to Hastings closure, stating: the 'railway situation here seems to be getting desperate. Hardly one week goes by without the local paper referring to a station being closed'.[202] Mr Johnson from Sandy wrote to the Minister supporting the Varsity line by enclosing a cutting from the *Biggleswade Chronicle* that attacked the replacement bus services.[203] Local newspapers on the East Suffolk line had repeatedly promoted Gerard Fiennes' optimistic claims that the line 'could make a big profit', which Labour were ignoring by considering the closure.[204] Indeed, Fiennes described closures as a 'red hot electoral potato'.[205]

However, Labour still gained in many areas in the 1966 general election and the nationalised industries overall were unpopular, pushing Labour to avoid them in debates.[206] Flores and Whiteley study of the 1963 British Election Study find that 91% of respondents had heard of Beeching's plan, but of those, 52% supported it, 39% opposed, and 9% had undecided views. But among those living in constituencies affected by closures, 39% responded positively, while 43% of those unaffected reacted positively. The study shows that an equal share of 46% of both Labour and Tory voters lived in affected constituencies and that discontent was driven by individuals personally affected by closure.[207] As Labour's

---

[200] Railway Policy Review, J. Gunn, 16 May 1973, 5-28, TNA, MT 188/1; Example from the Hull to Scarborough line: *Hull Daily Mail,* 30 March 1967.
[201] G. Brewis, Special Committee Booklet, 30 July 1964, 5; 11-12, TNA, MT 124/714; *Cambridge Daily News*, 27 March 1964; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 23 December 1964.
[202] Letter from Miss W. Phyllis, 31 January 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[203] Letter from Mr. E. Johnson, 6 May 1966, TNA, MT 124/1137; *Biggleswade Chronicle*, 6 May 1966; Another example: Letter from H. Hayter, 18 July 1964 enclosed *The Bedfordshire Times*, TNA, MT 124/714.
[204] *Eastern Daily Press*, 27 January 1966; *Lowestoft Journal*, 18 February 1966; *Eastern Daily Press*, 8 December 1967; J. Prior, *HC Debs*, vol. 778, cc. 37, 17 February 1969.
[205] G. Fiennes, *I Tried to Run a Railway* (London, 2015), 162.
[206] D. Butler and A. King, *The British General Elections, 1945-92: The British General Election of 1966* (Basingstoke, 1999), 92; 320; D. Butler and A. King, *The British General Elections, 1945-92: The British General Election of 1964* (Basingstoke, 1999), 60; I. Crewe et al (eds), *The British Electorate, 1963-1987* (Cambridge, 1991), 311.
[207] This was a study of the available data in England and Wales: A. Flores and P. Whiteley, 'The "Beeching Axe"', *European Review*, 22 (2018), 376; 362; 363-367.

Richard Crossman stated in 1963, people liked 'Beechingism' because it appeared to be a modernizing 'surgical operation', but 'no one likes it when the surgery affects him personally'.[208] Again, people's views of transport provision centred on their individual situation and desire for transport choice, regardless of their private or public provision.

From 1968, specific rail services could be subsidised, but Labour found many still suitable for closure. The MOT informed an MP in 1967 inquiring about the future of the Croxley Green line that 'no railway…can be regarded as immune from periodic review'.[209] Given the time it would take to carry out an assessment of the appropriateness of subsidy for each service, on the inception of subsidies in 1968, her successor accepted that they had 'not been able to consider the applications [for subsidy] in sufficient detail to take long-term decisions'.[210] Labour's Fred Mulley, who became Minister of Transport in October 1969, then identified a series of lines that he concluded 'do not justify' further subsidy, including Croxley Green. The desire for greater savings had been exacerbated by the 'special considerations' for the London commuter network, which by 1970 was losing money and needed an extra £15 million in subsidies aside from swathes of the network outside that were already loss-making.[211] Thus, as rushed as closures were due to a lack of data, so were subsidies, highlighting the timescales and complexities involved in transport policy.

After the Conservatives regained office in 1970, they also sought closures in the provincial network. Eldon Griffiths, a minister in the Department of Environment after it absorbed Transport in 1970, underlined this by stating in October 1971 that in rural areas 'three journeys out of four are now by car'. On top of that, over 340 of the 400 rail passenger

---

[208] Papers of Richard Crossman, International Transcripts of Broadcasts on Radio and Television, 1 May 1963, 4, MSS. 154/4/BR/10/1-229, MRC.
[209] Letter to Mr R. Roebuck MP, July 1967, TNA, MT 124/710.
[210] Press Notice: £62M Annual Grant Aid, 15 November 1968, 1-2, TNA, MT 152/115.
[211] How this shortfall was to be met Mulley did not know as the Prices and Incomes Board was part of the process in trying to raise fares, which would need to be substantial: handwritten notes, 1969: Consideration of Subsidised Lines, 1969, TNA, MT 152/115.

services in rural areas, 'including the entire Southern Region Commuter Network', were now loss-making.[212] He pointed to a rural service carrying a mere 500 passengers a day as an example – a number greater than some of the services saved and subsidised above. Each journey on such a 'mechanical white elephant' cost the taxpayer around £2 per journey, which amounted to an annual subsidy of over £1,000 for a solitary daily return passenger. 'It would', Griffiths stated, 'be cheaper to buy that passenger a new car every year'.[213]

Indeed, the financial strengths of cars were stark compared to the railways. The government's cost-benefit analysis unit in 1972 found that compared to a rural rail passenger subsidised by £1,000 a year, a second-hand car cost on average £250 to buy.[214] The government also estimated in 1971 that if all freight except for heavy industrial goods were to transfer to the roads it would increase road vehicle traffic by 1.5%, the equivalent of 30% of just one year's average growth. They estimated that if all rail passengers 'except those using the main inter-city routes and the London and South East commuter network were transferred to cars, the increase in total road traffic by 1975 would be 1%, 'equivalent to about 4 months normal growth'. The cost of a train was also considerably more than a bus, at one pound a mile compared to between 10 and 25 pence. Indeed, rural rail subsidies of £30 million a year would cost just £1 million by replacement bus.[215]

The financial position of the roads compared to rail was thus clear. User expenditure on cars in 1964 was £2.1 billion, compared to £205 million on rail. By 1974, user expenditure on cars was £6.2 billion compared to £412 million on rail.[216] In 1974, road taxes accrued over £2.5 billion and £1.1 billion was spent on roads. In the same year, the railways were losing

---

[212] Mr Griffiths Calls for Cooperation on Rural Transport, 19 October 1971, 1, TNA, MT 152/115; Rural bus companies were also making cuts due to low demand: *The Times*, 4 January 1971.
[213] Mr Griffiths Calls for Cooperation, 19 October 1971, 1, TNA, MT 152/115; A similar sentiment expressed by Barbara Castle: B. Castle, *Fighting All the Way* (London, 1993), 387-389.
[214] I. Scooter and J. Hollingworth Thesis Outline on CBA Procedure, March 1972, 1, TNA, MT 188/62.
[215] Mr Griffiths Calls for Cooperation on Rural Transport, 19 October 1971, 2, TNA, MT 152/115; British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 17.
[216] Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain, 1964-74* (London, 1976), 2.

£136 million on passenger running costs alone.[217] However, with the establishment of block grants under the 1974 Railways Act, lines that had been consented to close but had not yet been implemented were reprieved.[218] Although the government's understanding of transport demand by 1974 had improved, it meant they could see that subsidised cross-country lines in the Midlands, East Anglia, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, 'suffered from trying to compete against the bus and car across the board', and were 'fulfilling too hybrid a market role'.[219] But to avoid more political trouble, intractable logistical issues, and as the railways' losses were clearly permanent, Transport Minister John Peyton announced in January 1974 there would be no significant closures before 1975 at the earliest.[220] As shown, the advent of subsidy in 1968 and block grants in 1974 enabled local authorities' 'sophisticated delaying techniques' to retain local lines at central government expense rather than their own.[221]

A Comparison with European Transport

This section assesses the ascendancy of the roads and its effect on public transport in western Europe. It argues that the particular geographical, economic, and historical factors, as well as the attractiveness of road technology, drove this shift in each county more than differing levels of transport investment or regulations. For example, some Continental governments had greater powers over rail management and spending long before Britain's nationalised railway was set up in 1947.[222] But British state control of rail finances grew after

[217] Ibid., 2; 3-4; 29; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 393.
[218] Lines Listed for Closure, January 1974; John Peyton Announcement of Rail Closures and Grant Aid, 28 January 1974, TNA, MT 65/425.
[219] Letters between R. Compton and H. Woodhouse and Current Closure Cases, May 1974, TNA, MT 188/22.
[220] John Peyton Notice, 28 January 1974, TNA, MT 65/425; *The Times*, 29 January 1974; *Guardian*, 25 June 1974; J. Peyton, *HC Debs*, vol. 865, cc. 397-399, 28 November 1973; J. Peyton, *HC Debs*, vol. 868, cc. 38-39, 28 January 1974.
[221] Letters between R. Compton and H. Woodhouse and Closure Policy Draft, May 1974, TNA, MT 188/22.
[222] European Transport Policies, 1963, 2-3, TNA, MT 124/928; This is an approach taken by: R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 181-186; 289; 292-296.

poor investments by BR and its growing losses pushed governments to limit its borrowing and formalize subsidies as BR's administration stayed independent as a public enterprise.[223] As shown at the start of this chapter, Britain's network was also oversized by 1945, and larger than many on the Continent, making closures as relevant as investment.[224] However, all rail networks across Europe became financially burdensome by the 1960s and faced market competition from the roads.[225] Car ownership soared and public transport's passenger share fell to as low as 10% by the 1990s.[226]

Table 8. Length of Railways/Surface in Kilometres per 100 Square Kilometres of Land:

	1920	1950	1970	1990
Britain	14.3	14.0	8.8	7.4
France	7.2	6.3	5.6	5.1
Italy	5.2	5.7	6.0	5.6
West Germany	-	9.4	10.7	7.8
Holland	9.5	8.8	7.2	7.3
Belgium	13.8	14.3	11.3	9.4

Source: Jordi Marti-Henneberg, 'European Integration and National Models for Railway Networks (1840-2010)', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 26 (2013), 134.

[223] T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 574-575; T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 84; A. Smale and M. Schiefelbusch, in M. Schiefelbusch and H. Dienel (eds), *Public Transport and Its Users* (Farnham, 2009), 249.
[224] R. Pryke, *Public Enterprise in Practice* (London, 1971), 180; 184; 250-251; G. Allen, *British Rail After Beeching* (London, 1966), 4; H. White, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *Geography*, 48 (1963), 335; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 197; 202.
[225] M. Finger and P. Messulam, in M. Finger and P. Messulam (eds), *Rail Economics, Policy and Regulation in Europe* (Cheltenham, 2015), ix; M. Di Giulio, 'Reshaping State Structure and Strategy: The Reform of Railway Policy in Germany and Italy', *International Journal of Public Administration*, 39 (2016), 227; 233; Many railways were loss-making by the 1930s: R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise* (Cambridge, 2005), 146; 265-267; 271; *The Times*, 11 March 1960; *The Times*, 7 February 1968.
[226] X. Desjardins et al, 'Linking Rail and Urban Development', *Town Planning Review*, 85 (2014), 145; F. Webster and P. Bly, 'The Demand for Public Transport: Part I', *Transport Reviews*, 1 (1981), 335-342; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 264; R. Buehler and J. Pucher, 'Demand for Public Transport in Germany and the USA', *Transport Reviews*, 32, (2012), 543; T. Petersen, 'Watching the Swiss: A Network Approach', *Transport Policy*, 52 (2016), 175; 177; R. Buehler et al, 'Reducing Car Dependence in the Heart of Europe', *Transport Reviews*, 37 (2017), 5-6; 9.

Comparative approaches can be reductive if they do not go beyond comparisons between nation states.[227] Thus, a central issue across all European countries after 1950 was the falling share of public transport demand due to the car,[228] although their road and rail networks were built for very different political and economic reasons and at different times.[229] Table 8 shows the diverse levels of European rail track density in 1920, and many nations had smaller networks than Britain by 1950 before greater convergence in 1970. France affected a vast rationalisation by 1970 and had 5.6km of railway per 100 square kilometres of land. Britain's network was denser, at 8.8km per 100 square kilometres, and only West Germany and Belgium were denser still.[230] Thus, Britain's rail density was no outlier at the end of Beeching's tenure. Indeed, in terms of rail use, it was second only to West Germany in passenger distances travelled by 1973.[231]

This period saw Britain's high public transport use decline and the Continent's catch up. Britain had comfortably the highest overall public transport use of any Western European country in this period, and rail fares were not raised as much as those for buses to retain customers. Coaches, buses and trolleybuses in Britain covered 67 billion passenger kilometres in 1965 compared to 39.4 billion in West Germany, 25.3 billion in France, and

---

[227] P. Levine, 'Is Comparative History Possible?', *History and Theory*, 53 (2014), 333; 347; In relation to the railways: A. Schram, *Railways and the Formation* (Cambridge, 1997), 13; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 266.

[228] J. Marti-Henneberg, 'European Integration and National Models for Railway Networks (1840-2010)', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 26 (2013), 135; 137.

[229] For example, Germany's and Italy's railways were publicly owned and co-ordinated by 1918 and 1905 respectively, earlier than Britain, in a long process tied to Unification and other factors such as the power of Prussia under Bismark in Germany: O. Nock, *Railways of the World: 4 Railways of Western Europe* (London, 1977), 89; A. Schram, *Railways and the Formation of the Italian State* (Cambridge, 1997), 12-18; 68; M. Schiefelbusch, in M. Schiefelbusch and H. Dienel (eds), *Public Transport and Its Users* (Farnham, 2009), 238-239; R. Millward, *Private and Public* (Cambridge, 2005), 154-155; 290; 297; *The Times*, 7 February 1968; *The Times*, 11 March 1960.

[230] X. Franch-Auladell et al, 'The Railway Network and the Process', *Current History Journal*, 32 (2014), 354; Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics* (London, 1976), 178; *The Times*, 6 April 1966; *The Times*, 25 October 1972; *The Times*, 9 August 1973.

[231] Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics* (London, 1976), 175-178; J. Marti-Henneberg, 'European Integration', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 26 (2013), 134-135; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway* (Aldershot, 1985), 250.

28.6 in Italy, and Britain was still the highest in 1975, though the gap had narrowed.[232] Britain's strong railway traditions also saw it run more frequent services over its large network and had older, smaller rolling stock than France, Germany, and Italy, who rebuilt theirs after the war, aiding productivity. With this already high public transport demand as well as provision, Britain's services received relatively fewer subsidies. Receipts, as well as in Sweden, were forced to cover 70% of costs in the 1970s compared to Germany and France whose fares and charges covered 50 to 60%.[233] Thus, European countries of varying political and economic circumstance subjected their transport systems to commercial forces as their modal shares began to equalize.[234]

It is important to state that Britain had more decentralised, agglomerated conurbations than Continental countries such as Germany.[235] This complicated the financial and logistical provision of public transport across British cities and towns that were spreading from the nineteenth century, forming complex travel patterns as the land use transportation studies in chapter one showed.[236] Greater public transport use and provision was stimulated earlier with higher incomes and urbanisation, but this produced harsher financial losses with their decline

---

[232] P. White, 'Use of Public Transport in Towns and Cities of Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 29; European Conference of Ministers of Transport, *Statistical Trends in Transport: 1965-1994* (Paris, 1998), 107; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1, TRL.

[233] In 1970, France and Germany's subsidies were more generous but Italy's were similar to Britain's level, and the Netherlands much less generous: *The Times*, 25 October 1972; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 233; 261-262; R. Pryke, *Public Enterprise in Practice* (London, 1971), 173-177; 148-155; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 250; C. Jones, 'The Performance of British Railways', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 4 (1970), 170; C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 95; R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Car Ownership on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-2, TRL; *The Times*, 23 May 1963.

[234] P. Rietveld and R. Stough, 'Institutions, Regulations and Sustainable Transport: A Cross-National Perspective', *Transport Review*, 24 (2004), 715-719; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise* (Cambridge, 2005), 175-185; 201; 264-270; M. Chick, 'Listing Potential Candidates for Nationalisation', *Enterprise and History*, 37 (2004), 168.

[235] Two reasons for this were the greater, faster shift from agriculture to industry, and the agglomeration of populations into clusters of urban settlements during Britain's early industrialisation: N. Crafts and N. Wolf, 'The Location of the UK Cotton Textiles Industry', *Journal of Economic History*, 74 (2014), 1125; 1113-1114; 1134-1135; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 4-5; P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 12-13.

[236] K. Liepmann, *The Journey to Work* (London, 1944), 191-193; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 1; 20, TRL.

as road transport and suburbanisation spread. Britain's small size also prompted shorter journeys, giving road vehicles more advantages.[237] The explanations for differences in urban structure are too diverse to extrapolate here, but three factors shaping the convergence of European modal choice despite many differences between nations are analysed: the declining finances of rail networks by the 1960s; the impact of investment after war damage; and the effect of varying levels of economic growth on incomes and car ownership.

Rail rationalisation occurred across Europe, and war damage by 1945 on the Continent meant investment was more impactful. Indeed, far from Beeching's rationalisation being an outlier, in some cases he was catching up with other European countries. The Dutch railway, the Netherlandsche Spoorwegen, was a limited company whose £30 million of shares were owned by the government. The network was not run as a social service and had many partnerships with the private sector. It faced a growing but small financial loss of £3 million in 1962, after average profits of £5 million in the 1950s. This position had come from incremental closures since the 1930s, reducing passenger routes by 33%, stations by 68% and staff by 25% by the early 1960s. Holland's network also covered a smaller area and denser population than Britain, helping its chances of breaking even, being 51% electrified by 1959. Holland's rail companies had also operated their own buses and haulage enterprises since the interwar years (unlike Britain), which provided higher revenues and coordination between

[237] P. White, 'Use of Public Transport in Towns and Cities of Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 29; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 2-4, TRL; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1, TRL; P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 12-13; 40-41 135-136; R. Buehler and J. Pucher, 'Demand for Public Transport in Germany and the USA', *Transport Reviews*, 32, (2012), 542; F. Webster and P. Bly, 'The Demand for Public Transport: Part I', *Transport Reviews*, 1 (1981), 338; M. Hillman and A. Whalley, *The Social Consequences of Rail Closures* (London, 1980), 89; Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 5; 175; 176; 178-179; R. Pryke, *Public Enterprise in Practice* (London, 1971), 16; 115; 148-152; H. Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 944, 30 April 1963; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 242; 253; 257; J. Hibbs, *Regulation: An International Study of Bus and Coach Licensing* (Cardiff, 1985), 185; D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 174; 191.

modes.[238]

This longer-term rationalisation in Holland increased productivity earlier and helped labour relations so that a three pence increase in fares during the summer of 1963 wiped out its deficit. But as in Britain, Holland's passenger fares were also suppressed by government in a 'purely political' move for public support. The same happened in Germany, Sweden, and France, but after the Dutch rationalisation, suppressed fares were a larger cause of its deficit before they were raised. Although the Dutch Transport Minister had the power to open or close lines, their intervention over the Managing Director was rare and the railways were run more commercially than in Britain.[239] Britain's rising deficit also came from several historical, administrative, and economic factors: the long term effects of suppressed fares, an over-sized network, declining freight, little coordination, backward management, road transport, and growing wage demands.[240]

Indeed, Britain's railways were slow to cut services and its finances worsened with the haste and wastefulness of its large-scale investment, the 1955 Modernisation Plan. The continuation of old management practices also exacerbated poor price allocation, increasing costs.[241] The labour force was cut from 476,000 in 1962 to 229,000 in 1973, and output per worker rose 32% between 1963 and 1968. But pay increases wiped out these savings. Growing government power over rail finance as its losses mounted then made a clear policy

---

[238] European Transport Policies, 1963, 2-3, TNA, MT 124/928; O. Nock, *Railways of the World: 4 Railways of Western Europe* (London, 1977), 29-32; *Financial Times,* 30 November 1962; *The Times*, 28 May 1959; *The Times*, 13 August 1960; *The Times*, 25 June 1962; *Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1963; *The Economist*, 19 January 1963; *The Times*, 9 July 1965; *The Times*, 4 April 1974; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 250; 254.

[239] *Financial Times,* 30 November 1962; *Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1963; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 172; European Transport Policies, 1963, 2-3, TNA, MT 124/928; G. O'Hara, 'What the Electorate Can Be Expected to Swallow', *Business History*, 51 (2009), 519.

[240] S. Glaister et al, *Transport Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, 1998), 12-15; C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 75; 162; P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Vol. 2* (London, 1982), 162-165; R. Hardy, *Beeching: Champion of the Railway?* (London, 1989), 26-34; *The Times*, 30 October 1975.

[241] M. Freeman and D. Aldcroft, *The Atlas of British Railway History* (London, 1985), 115; C. Barnett, *The Verdict of Peace* (London, 2001), 294-295; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-74* (Cambridge, 1986), 191; 257; C. Foster, 'Michael Beesley and Cost', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 35 (2001), 20.

and investment plan difficult as its independent management planned future operations but central government provided its funding.[242] In contrast, the destruction of World War Two enabled the earlier use of new technological equipment and better practices in Holland, France, Italy, and West Germany.[243] Cuts to the rail network and labour force were also substantial on the Continent, but more was needed in Britain.[244]

These countries' economies were less mature than Britain's and developed rapidly with reconstruction after 1945, leading to higher rates of economic growth and their catching up with Britain rather than Britain's 'decline'.[245] Britain's growth rate was adequate but lower than theirs, leading to a falling behind before equalisation from the mid-1970s, seen in table 9 below. But expansive defence and welfare policies in Britain also hogged funds for investment, preventing more productivity gains through spending on rail technology. A falling share of global exports also damaged Britain's balance of payments and ability to borrow, weakening the pound with its vast international exposure.[246] Reductions in spending across the nationalised industries were sought in 1961's White Paper, *The Financial and Economic Obligations of the Nationalised Industries*, which tried to link investment to productivity, inspired by Italy and France's more stringent rules, but this failed.[247] Britain's

---

[242] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 50; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-74* (Cambridge, 1986), 183-187; 463; 529-536; 579-580; S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away*, 142-147; W. Ashworth, *The State in Business, 1945* (Basingstoke, 1991), 124; *Guardian*, 19 May 1965.
[243] N. Despicht, A Visit to Germany in January 1963, 9 April 1963, 4-6, TNA, MT 124/836; O. Nock, *Railways of the World: 4 Railways of Western Europe* (London, 1977), 28.
[244] R. Roth, 'German State Action and Railway Policy', *Current History Journal*, 5 (2007), 23; R. Millward, in R. Floud and P. Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2004), 244-245; R. Roth, in R. Roth and H. Jacolin (eds), *Eastern European Railways in Transition* (Farnham, 2013), 289; R. Pryke, *The Nationalised Industries: Policies and Performance since 1968* (Oxford, 1981), 74.
[245] D. Edgerton, 'The Decline of Declinism', *The Business History Review*, 72 (1997), 200-203; J. Tomlinson, *The Politics of Decline* (Harlow, 2000), 4-6; 21; G. Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline* (London, 2004), 671.
[246] J. Tomlinson, in R. Floud and P. Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2004), 207; 209; N. Despicht, A Visit to Germany in January 1963, 9 April 1963, 1-6, TNA, MT 124/836; G. O'Hara, 'Temporal Governance', *Journal of Modern European History*, 13 (2015), 348; N. Tiratsoo and J. Tomlinson, *The Conservatives and Industrial Efficiency, 1951-64* (London, 1998), 119; 144; 149; 161-163; R. Middleton, *The British Economy since 1945* (Basingstoke, 2000), 65.
[247] Treasury, *The Financial and Economic Obligations of the Nationalised Industries* (London, 1961), 6-10; 11; G. O'Hara, 'What the Electorate Can Be Expected to Swallow', *Business History*, 51 (2009), 503-504; 509; 512-514; K. Middlemas, *Power, Competition and the State, Vol. II* (Basingstoke, 1990), 36; 23-56; 101-102; 378; M. Chick, *Industrial Policy in Britain, 1945-1951* (Cambridge, 1998), 105; 108; 135-136.

manufacturing and rail labour productivity fell behind France, Germany, and Holland by 1973.[248]

Table 9. GDP per Person as a % of the US Level, at Nominal Exchange Rates, 1958-1975:

	France	W. Germany	UK	US	Sweden	Japan	Italy
1958	43	39	48	100	58	13	24
1960	48	47	48	100	67	16	25
1965	57	56	51	100	74	24	31
1970	58	64	46	100	86	41	36
1975	90	95	58	100	118	63	48
1980	105	116	80	100	130	78	59

Source: J. Tanner, *International Comparisons of Cars* (Crowthorne, 1983), 66, TRL.

The productivity advantages coming from investment after war damage were demonstrated by France's SNCF.[249] Around 75% of France's rolling stock had been destroyed in the war. Louis Armand, branded the French Beeching in 1963, started rebuilding in 1946. In France, 'heavy investment and modernisation went hand in hand' with large cuts to staff and costs, and more electrification. As a result, France's railways were famously more efficient and comfortable than Britain's.[250] By the mid-1950s, British businessmen such as Lord Chandos were vaunted in the press to take over BR in order to 'infuse a spirit of business enterprise into the railways', even 'if it were necessary to pay him £40,000 a year'. This pre-empted Beeching and his infamously high salary, and showed British debates over the railways focused on how to instil greater efficiency into its already large network rather

[248] J. Foreman-Peck and G. Federico, in J. Foreman-Peck and G. Federico (eds), *European Industrial Policy* (Oxford, 1999), 436-438; R. Pryke, *Public Enterprise in Practice* (London, 1971), 147; 276-280; T. Prosser, 'The Privatisation of British Railways', *Current Legal Problems*, 57 (2004), 216; C. Jones, 'The Performance of British Railways', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 4 (1970), 169-170; *The Times*, 30 October 1975.
[249] A. Harvey, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 944, 30 April 1963.
[250] France closed more miles of rail lines than Britain in 1959 and in 1960 51% of its traffic travelled on electrified lines. By 1970 France had nearly three times as many electrified kilometres of rail: *The Times*, 11 March 1960; *The Times*, 25 October 1972; European Conference of Ministers of Transport, *Sixth Annual Report* (Paris, 1960), 34; Political and Economic Planning, *Locomotives: A Report on the Organisation and Structure of the Industry* (London, 1951), 49; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 193; *The Times*, 23 May 1963; *Daily Telegraph,* 30 April 1963; *The Times*, 7 February 1968; Britain's services were known as dirty and inefficient: Transcribed Episode of Any Questions with Richard Crossman, 26 April 1963, MSS. 154/4/BR/4/1-165, MRC.

than starting it again in contrast with some European nations.[251]

Italy cut its rail network at the same time as Beeching, but again faced a different situation. The Minister of Transport, Signor Mattarella, who was also chairman of the railways board, addressed its problems with the directness of Beeching. He proposed the closure of 2,500 miles, but Italy had a smaller network that was entirely electrified by 1962, highlighting its technological divergence from Britain, which did not eliminate steam until 1968.[252] Italy's passenger fares were also raised by 15% in 1963 and closed stations with little public notice, which was politically impossible in Britain. Italy also had a similarly dominant road haulage sector to Britain and was 'resigned to accepting' a deficit of £23 to 29 million by 1963, an accommodation that would take five more years in Britain with a much larger deficit.[253]

The West German Bundesbahn also had a large deficit of £117 million in 1963, which had risen from £66 million in 1960, due to labour costs, pensions, and road competition, as in Britain. The MOT investigated the Bundesbahn in January 1963, before Beeching's plan was published, finding Germany was also no longer able to cross-subsidise profitable lines with loss-making ones to break-even.[254] The war had made the car a symbol of freedom as ownership soared albeit from a lower base than Britain and France, and road haulage competition grew. Compared to the vast investment in the Bundesbahn after war damage, East Germany's Reichsbahn only started rebuilding in the 1980s as its rail stock was taken by

---

[251] *Sunday Express*, 2 January 1956; *The Times*, 10 December 1963; *Daily Telegraph*, 7 November 1963; Newspaper Cutting, 1964, ASLEF Papers of Percy Collick, MSS. 379/PC/4/5/1, MRC.
[252] P. Kalla-Bishop, *Railway Histories of the World: Italian Railways* (Newton Abbott, 1971), 104; 120-121; 165; *The Times*, 11 March 1960; *The Times*, 23 May 1963; *Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1963; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 257; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-74* (Cambridge, 1986), 460-462.
[253] European Transport Policies, 1963, 2-3, TNA, MT 124/928; *The Times*, 15 May 1961; *The Times*, 29 March 1963; *Daily Telegraph,* 30 April 1963; Ministry of Transport, *Rural Transport Surveys: Report of Preliminary Results* (London, 1963), 6; W. Ashworth, *The State in Business* (Basingstoke, 1991), 123; G. F. Allen, *British Rail After* (London, 1966), 3; 216.
[254] N. Despicht, A Visit to Germany in January 1963, 9 April 1963, 1-4, TNA, MT 124/836; *Daily Telegraph,* 30 April 1963.

Russian reparations. It also had less market freedom, so road hauliers were banned from journeys over 50km in favour of the railways.[255]

The West German rail deficit was also exacerbated by Partition and the Länder Governments' resistance to closures. A basic railway law in 1961 then sought to protect the railways against haulage by allowing greater deficits in the name of 'Gemeinwirtschaftliche Aufgabe' (the economic interests of the community).[256] Despite this, many unprofitable lines were closed and German road haulage surged, making the railways a 'bottomless barrel for subsidies'.[257] West Germany thus expanded its existing facilities for rail subsidies in the 1960s but still saw growing competition with the roads due to greater competition on north-south journeys compared to east-west traffics that existed before Partition.[258] But the Länder's opposition prevented a full Beeching-style closure programme, and so the Bundesbahn deficit rose above Britain's by 1971, although its operational efficiency was superior.[259] The dominance of roads in Germany had begun in the interwar years with the nationalist expansion of motorway, but greater freight demand was retained in geographically larger nations due to rail's advantages over long distances, as seen in table 10.[260]

---

[255] O. Scholler-Schwedes, 'The Failure of Integrated Transport Policy in Germany', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 18 (2010), 88-89; 91-92; R. Roth, in R. Roth and H. Jacolin (eds), *Eastern European Railways in Transition* (Farnham, 2013), 290; 293; *The Times*, 28 September 1961; Car ownership was low in Eastern bloc until the 1980s: W. Suchorzewski, in D. Donaghy et al (eds), *Social Dimensions of Sustainable Transport: Transatlantic Perspectives* (Oxford, 2016), 14-16.
[256] Control of fares had been part of German rail policy since the nineteenth century: N. Despicht, A Visit to Germany, 9 April 1963, 1-2, TNA, TNA, MT 124/836; *The Times*, 7 February 1968.
[257] R. Roth, in R. Roth and H. Jacolin (eds), *Eastern European Railways in Transition* (Farnham, 2013), 290.
[258] O. Scholler-Schwedes, 'The Failure of Integrated Transport Policy in German', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 18 (2010), 93; *The Times*, 28 May 1959; N. Despicht, A Visit to Germany in January 1963, 9 April 1963, 4, TNA, MT 124/836; J. Musekamp, in R. Roth and H. Jacolin (eds), *Eastern European Railways in Transition* (Farnham, 2013), 124-125.
[259] *The Times*, 16 May 1963; *The Times*, 7 February 1968; *The Times*, 14 April 1972; *The Times*, 15 May 1972; *The Times*, 25 October 1972; *The Times*, 13 December 1975; M. Schiefelbusch, in M. Schiefelbusch and H. Dienel (eds), *Public Transport and Its Users* (Farnham, 2009), 260-262.
[260] G. Sjöblom, 'The Shift from Railways to Roads', *Economic History Yearbook*, 48 (2007), 56-57; 61-63; G. de Jong, 'The Impact of Regional Population Redistribution Policies on Internal Migration', *Social Science Quarterly*, 62 (1981), 316-320; M. Coombes et al, 'Counterurbanisation in Britain and Italy', *Progress in Planning*, 32 (1989), 33-36; 58; P. Scott, in R. Floud and P. Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2008), 341; 359; D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 163.

Table 10. Total Goods Freight in Europe, in Millions of Ton-Kilometres, 1960:

	France	Germany	Britain	Belgium	Holland	Italy
Rail	56,886	56,437	30,496	6,359	3,410	15,765
Road	30,586	22,400	43,000	8,184	4,170	37,234
Rivers/Canal	10,773	40,271	276	5,226	20,020	536

Source: Distribution of Freight Between Types of Transport, TNA, MT 124/928.

Across western European cities too, the bus provided more services overall than the tram or urban rail, and all saw large subsidies in the 1960s.[261] This was regardless of the regulatory model. Bus administration was a pure franchise with departmental control in France, but a mix of franchise and local authority control in Britain and West Germany.[262] But as with Holland, France and West Germany's railways ran their own buses or had close ties to bus providers, which coordinated with railways. However, they also closed local railways with buses, which were then outcompeted by the car.[263] Indeed, public transport co-ordination, rather than providing a comprehensive system often in practice meant keeping the lowest cost mode and closing the others.[264] However, although British planners saw the tram as too capital intensive, less safe and versatile, they were developed in Gothenburg, Bremen, Hanover, and Cologne and became incorporated into suburban rail networks in Germany.[265] But the vast majority of the tram systems of France, Italy, and Spain were terminated in the 1960s and 1970s alongside Britain due to the lower cost of buses. Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt, and Stuttgart also built new underground rail lines or upgraded their commuters,

[261] P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 16-17; 20; 28-29, TRL; R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Car Ownership on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-2; 16-17, TRL; However, the railways had more groups and organisations supporting them than the buses: A. Smale and M. Schiefelbusch, in M. Schiefelbusch and H. Dienel (eds), *Public Transport and Its Users* (Farnham, 2009), 253.
[262] J. Hibbs, *Regulation: An International Study* (Cardiff, 1985), 1; 12; 31-32; 114; 132; 141; 168.
[263] R. Roth, in R. Roth and H. Jacolin (eds), *Eastern European Railways in Transition* (Farnham, 2013), 289; *The Times*, 23 May 1963.
[264] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 15; R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 161.
[265] B. Schmucki, 'If I Walked on My Own at Night', *Research in Transport Economics*, 34 (2012), 82; SELNEC PTA and PTE, *A Summary of a Report on the Future of Public Transport in Greater Manchester*, 73-75, 1972, F711.73So(063), MA; P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 165.

which Britain did not on the same scale due to its mounting losses.[266]

Many Continental countries also had more developed motorway systems than Britain by 1960, and German, American and Italian examples influenced British plans.[267] Britain had 202km of motorway by 1960 compared to 2,671km in Germany, and 1,065km in Italy.[268] The Netherland's motorways spanned 400 miles by 1963.[269] By 1973, Britain had 1,754km of motorway, compared to West Germany's 5,258km, Italy's 5,090km, France's 2,041km, and the Netherlands' 1,242km.[270] The historiography suggests the road lobby was a major factor shaping British transport policy, and yet motorway building in Britain was behind.[271] Road lobby groups such as the Roads Campaign Council highlighted the Continent's larger motorways, taking all-party groups on observational tours.[272] By 1971, the British Road Federation was still arguing this, as its film *Transport* compared the roads between Manchester and the London Docks to the newer, larger highways between the Ruhr Valley and the port at Rotterdam.[273] As table 11 shows, Britain's minor road network was well developed before 1945, but it had low motorway mileage.[274]

---

[266] SELNEC PTA and PTE, *A Summary of a Report on the Future of Public Transport in Greater Manchester*, 74, 1972, F711.73So(063), MA; Improvements were made to Glasgow's underground: G. Mitchell et al, *The Glasgow Rail Impact Study: Summary Report* (Warwick, 1983), 1-13; P. Capuzzo, in C. Divall and W. Bond (eds), *Suburbanizing the Masses* (Oxford, 2017), 47.
[267] P. Merriman, 'Britain and 'the Motorway Club'', *Transfers*, 2 (2012), 108; 123; 125-126; But with British hybrids: P. Merriman, 'A New Look at the English Landscape', *Cultural Geographies*, 13 (2006), 84; *Daily Telegraph*, 29 April 1963; *The Times*, 12 December 1961; BRF, Where are the Motorways? Pamphlet, 30 April 1961, MSS. 234/S/3/2, MRC.
[268] R. Ruppman, in R. Roth and C. Divall (eds), *From Rail to Road and Back Again?* (Farnham, 2015), 301.
[269] *Highway Times*, August 1963.
[270] Km of road per head of population and per square km of land were not outliers in Britain either: Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics* (London, 1976), 176.
[271] M. Hamer, *Wheels Within Wheels* (London, 1987), 3-5; 18-22.
[272] British Road Federation, Summary of Activities, 1962, 1-7, MSS. 21/2114/1-9, MRC; *Highway Times*, August 1963.
[273] BRF, *Transport*, film, Annual Report of the BRF, 1971, 3-9, MSS. 21/2114/1-9, MRC; *Guardian*, 18 July 1961.
[274] Motorways: Policy, 1941-1950, 12, TNA, MT 39/556; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 82-87; 163; B. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), 555-556.

Table 11. Car Ownership and Road Networks in Different Countries, 1936:

	Cars per 1000 people	Cars per mile of road	Miles of roads per square mile
Britain	60.5	15.3	2.04
France	66.5	6.8	1.92
Germany	43	12.6	1.01
US	219	8.8	0.86

Source: Postwar Planning and Motorways, 1941-1950, 11, TNA, MT 39/556.

But Britain also had lower levels of car ownership compared to other Western countries by 1975, shown in table 12 due to its lower incomes and growth.[275] There was a faster increase in car ownership on the Continent after 1953, often from a lower base than Britain's, which correlated with that growth.[276] Car access to cities and comprehensive urban planning was also sought across Europe, with West Germany being central to the development of the car-friendly city.[277] Indeed, West Germany, Belgium, Italy, France, Sweden, and Switzerland all had more cars per head than the UK by 1973 and France had more roads per square kilometre of land.[278]

[275] Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics* (London, 1976), 175; P. Scott, *The Market Makers: Creating Mass Markets for Consumer Durables in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2017), 329-330.
[276] G. F. Allen, *British Rail After* (London, 1966), 2.
[277] J. Diefendorf, in J. Diefendorf (ed.), *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities* (Basingstoke, 1990), 5-8; B. Schmucki, 'If I Walked on My Own at Night', *Research in Transport Economics*, 34 (2012), 82; H. Engler, 'Social Movement and the Failure of Car-Friendly City Projects', *Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 353; C. Assmann, 'The Emergence of the Car-Oriented City', *Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 328; O. Saumarez Smith, *Boom Cities: Architect Planners and the Politics of Radical Urban Renewal* (Oxford, 2019), 24; *The Times*, 9 April 1963; G. Sjöblom, 'The Shift from Railways to Roads', *Economic History Yearbook*, 48 (2007), 60-66.
[278] Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics* (London, 1976), 177.

Table 12. Cars per 1,000 Persons, Selected Western Countries, 1958-1975:

	France	W. Germany	UK	US	Sweden	Japan	Italy
1958	101	57	90	325	131	3	28
1960	121	81	108	341	160	5	40
1965	197	157	168	387	232	22	105
1970	254	230	213	436	285	85	190
1975	290	289	252	500	337	154	270
1980	350	377	294	557	347	203	309

J. Tanner, *International Comparisons of Cars and Car Usage* (Crowthorne, 1983), 59, TRL.

Millward argues a country's geography; the speed of its structural shifts away from agriculture to industrialisation; many domestic and international political conflicts; and technological advances were more crucial in shaping transport results than the structure of public or private ownership.[279] He emphasises regulation as more important for transport outcomes. This, again, makes road pricing key to balancing road and rail demand. But Millward does not analyse post-1945 transport extensively, and despite referring to Britain's 'huge' and 'Victorian' network, he describes Beeching's cuts as savage and the low public transport subsidy in Britain as further explanation for its shrinkage.[280] But this and the previous chapter have shown no realistic set of regulations, without cuts, could have addressed Britain's rail situation, and the main mode was the bus, not rail.[281] No realistic fare or subsidy structure existed that could have covered the railways' (or buses' by the 1970s) losses or rejuvenated demand without punitive restrictions on cars and haulage.

Therefore, highlighting regulations or levels of subsidy on the Continent as a way to define Britain's very different transport situation can be simplistic.[282] It should be remembered that Britain's dispersal schemes in the 1960s exacerbated its decentralised and agglomerated conurbations' transport issues by producing even more polycentric structures,

[279] R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 287-298; J. McKay, *Tramways and Trolleys: The Rise of Urban Mass Transport in Europe* (Princeton, 1976), 163.
[280] R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 11; 189; 202; 233; 288-298.
[281] European Transport Policies, 1963, 1-3, TNA, MT 124/928.
[282] P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 20; 28-29, TRL.

taking residential areas away from radial rail lines compared to the more self-contained structure of many Continental cities with denser cores and mixed-use buildings.[283] Greater integration of transport and urban planning in some European countries may then have been easier as they were more traditionally structured, making investment in urban rail, cycling, and trams more effective compared to Britain's over-reliance on the more flexible bus.[284] Indeed, since 1974, many new metros and railways have been built on the Continent compared to Britain,[285] whose experience centred on trying to reshape its already extensive, exhausted, and loss-making network as car ownership spread.

However, comparisons with Europe came from different groups with varying political inclinations, influenced by the question of joining the Common Market in the 1960s and its ability to combat decline.[286] Pro-rail organisations pressed government for investment to increase 'freedom of consumer choice', citing European examples and the demand Common Market membership would bring.[287] Jim Prior, an MP along the East Suffolk line, asked the Labour government in 1964 not to close it 'at this stage' as Common Market membership could increase activity at ports, following the Tory notion that membership would make Britain more commercially competitive.[288] In a more cultural shift, BR uniforms were even

---

[283] Dispersal settlements were also poorly located in relation to transport, and New Towns were mostly linked to roads in Britain: P. Scott, 'Dispersion Versus Decentralisation: British Location of Industry Policies', *Economy and Society*, 26 (1997), 592; 595; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 20; 28-29, TRL; P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 12-13; 40-41; 47; 165; R. Buehler et al, 'Reducing Car Dependence in the Heart of Europe', *Transport Reviews*, 37 (2017), 9-12; 22-25.
[284] High densities may have promoted cycling in Holland: M. Hillman, in J. Whitelegg and G. Haq (eds), *The Earthscan Reader on World Transport* (London, 2003), 142; D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 183; Dispersal occurred on the Continent too: D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 163.
[285] Exceptions in Britain were the Liverpool underground Loop and Link and the Tyne and Wear Metro: Russell Haywood, 'Britain's National Railway Network: Fit for Purpose in the 21st Century?', *Elsevier*, 15 (2007), 203-206; P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 157; P. Bly et al, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1980), 3, TRL.
[286] H. Hughes, *HC Debs*, vol. 701, cc. 173-174, 3 November 1964; J. Tomlinson, *The Politics of Decline* (Harlow, 2000), 51-55.
[287] Lord Stonham to E. Marples letter, 25 February 1963, 7-10, MSS. 55/3BR/1/20, MRC; H. Purser, Branch Line Invigoration Society Memorandum, 18 February 1963, 1-3, TNA, MT 124/717; National Standing Joint Council on Road and Rail Traffic Problems Memorandum, 1962, 5-15, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/17, MRC; S. Weighell, *On the Rails* (Bath, 1983), 24-25.
[288] J. Prior to T. Fraser letter, 24 December 1964, 1-3, TNA, MT 124/717.

given a modern Continental redesign in 1963 described as a 'touching memento to Common Market aspirations'.[289] However, de Gaulle's rejection of Britain's application in January 1963 meant it was not obliged to follow Continental regulatory plans until 1974.[290]

But despite growing European integration from 1951, there was little rail policy harmonisation to counteract the disruption of road transport and this did not lead to domestic policies to stop it.[291] Harold Wilson's promises to invest in technological advancement as an antidote to 'decline' then framed Europe's railways as an inspiration.[292] Wilson drew attention to 'practically every state railway' in the West in 1963 that used a 'form of subsidisation', overlooking Britain's de facto grants from the Exchequer.[293] This came in part to manage conflicts with his MPs and the unions, who continued to frame his and Conservative transport policy as market-driven.[294] Wilson's antidote to decline, and to manage this conflict was to cast Britain as a young nation with 'a new spirit of hope', stressing technological investment.[295] As Tomlinson argues, 'declinism' was used as an effective domestic political strategy rather than an accurate comparator between countries.[296]

---

[289] *Guardian*, 27 February 1963; BRB: New Design, 23 May 1963, 1-2, TNA, AN 167/11; Corporate Identity Programme for BR, 28 My 1964, TNA, AN 167/12; L. Bedale and C. Goode, *Station Master: My Lifetime's Railway Service in Yorkshire* (Sheffield, 1976), 76-77.
[290] D. Butler and A. King, *The British General Election of 1964* (Basingstoke, 1999), 79.
[291] European Transport Policies, 1963, 2-3, TNA, MT 124/928; J. Marti-Henneberg, 'From State-Building to European Integration', *Social Science History*, 45 (2021), 222; 228; J. Marti-Henneberg, 'European Integration and National Models for Railway Networks', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 26 (2013), 126; 134; 137; *The Times*, 4 April 1974.
[292] H. Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 918, 30 April 1963.
[293] *International Transport Workers' Journal*, 22 (9 September 1963), 194.
[294] Local NUR representatives and the unions were shocked at Labour's continuation of closures after insinuating that they would halt them before the 1964 election: A. Grigg to S. Greene letter, 19 July 1965; E. Popplewell to S. Greene letter, 6 August 1965; S. Greene to W. Slack, 14 October, 1963 letter, MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/278A, MRC; Note of Meeting Held at Unity House Attended by Representatives of NUR, ASLEF, TSSA and CSEU, 8 April 1963, 2-3, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/1, MRC; Transport 2000: How the EEC can Benefit British Rail, 1972, 2-3, TNA, AN 156/1026; Letter from R. Goodwin, NUR Correspondence, 15 May 1963, MSS. 292B/653.7/3, MRC; J. Martin, East Anglian District NUR to S. Greene letter, 28 April 1965, MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/327A, MRC; General opposition from unions: *Guardian*, 5 June 1963; *The Times*, 5 June 1963.
[295] Newspaper Cutting, 1964, ASLEF Papers of Percy Collick, MSS. 379/PC/4/5/1, MRC; D. Starkie, 'Investment and Growth: The Impact of Britain's Post-War Roads', *Economic Affairs*, 35 (2015), 60-63.
[296] J. Tomlinson, *The Politics of Decline* (Harlow, 2000), 4-6; 113; Loft looks at decline and modernisation as central domestic discourses: C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006).

Wilson's calls in parliament to follow the French example, stating 'their [financial] loss is minimal compared to ours', were not accurate.[297] France's accounts formally separated commercial revenue from state subsidy, unlike in Britain's public enterprise model before 1968. France's actual overall rail deficit in 1963 was similar to Britain's, at £125 million.[298] European conferences held between the Ministers of Transport in this period demonstrated Britain's divergence from Continental railway accounting. The 'normalisation of accounts' (state compensation for investment and socially needed lines, taken out of the railways' bottom line) was used in France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, Spain, and the Benelux countries before Britain as the Treasury sought to control its high public spending.[299] However, the 1968 Transport Act brought Britain closer in the sense that it formally accepted subsidies, albeit with the desire to close more lines.[300]

The European Economic Community, and the Coal and Steel Community before it, had also wanted to regulate transport policy to enable competition between the modes, which the British Left and rail advocates opposed. Countries in the Community could run deficits but would have to publish and fix freight rates within a set range to stop operators artificially lowering them. Although this was a more statist policy than one driven by the market, it was framed by British opponents, especially on the Labour left, as 'doctrinaire dirigisme' that would hurt the railways.[301] The British left's opposition to competition was underlined by the fact that Beeching's plan did not violate the common transport policy planned in the 1957 Treaty of Rome. They thus favoured restrictions on road haulage journeys over British market

---

[297] H. Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 944, 30 April 1963; *The Times*, 7 February 1968.
[298] R. Pryke, *Public Enterprise in Practice* (London, 1971), 199; *Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1963.
[299] International Union of Railways, March 1961, 1; 14; 35, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/13, MRC; Social Cost/Benefit Study, Handwritten notes, 20 August 1974, TNA, AN 156/479.
[300] P. Smethurst to M. Barnett letter, Statistics Division, Prospects for Future Viability of the Railway System, 17 May 1963, TNA MT 65/422; S. Bradley, *The Railways: Nation, Network* (London, 2015), 424; W. Ashworth, *The State in Business* (Basingstoke, 1991), 118.
[301] *The Economist*, 30 June 1962; *The Times*, 24 October 1972.

'myopia' allowing short distance haulage to transfer to the roads.[302]

Therefore, alignment with the Common Market was opposed by the left because it based its subsidies and regulation on market performance. They wanted a 'complementary rather than competitive' system.[303] NUR leader Sidney Greene repeatedly stressed that Belgium, France, and Germany had invested in their railways and engineered rail demand as an 'instrument of general policy' to direct activity in the economy as an argument for Britain to do the same.[304] But this ignored other countries' reconstruction, their stringency on other areas of spending, their closures, as well as Britain's poor-performing, older, oversized network. Thus, the Labour leadership took a moderate path, continuing with closures and introduced the 1974 Railways Act in agreement with the Tories, to bring Britain in line with Common Market regulation after accession in 1973. The 1974 Act was 'welcomed' by rail advocates on the left for its grants, but they still saw the Common Market's pricing rules as market-driven.[305]

Measuring Beeching's Performance

A central aim of Beeching's report was to reduce Britain's rail infrastructure, which had over-catered to local passenger and freight use, further highlighting Britain's problems in this European context. Through closures, Beeching sought to reduce tracks, signalling and administrative costs that individual services do not assume but are shared across the

[302] Transport 2000: How the EEC can Benefit British Rail, 1972, 2-3, TNA, AN 156/1026; *The Economist*, 19 January 1963; Difference with Other Nations: Background to the Railway Board's Proposals, April 1963, TNA, MT 124/928; Road and Rail Crisis Memorandum to Prime Minister, March 1961, 5, 14, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/17, MRC; Continental Railways, 19 January 1963, TSSA File, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/3, MRC.
[303] Transport 2000: How the EEC can Benefit British Rail, 1972, 2-3, TNA, AN 156/1026; European Transport Policies, 1963, 2-3, TNA, MT 124/928; Wider opposition to the EEC on the Left: R. Jobson, 'A New Hope for an Old Britain?' *The Journal of Policy History*, 27 (2015), 670-672.
[304] S. Greene, Handwritten Notes, 19 January 1963, MSS. 55/3/BE/1/3, MRC; *The Economist*, 19 January 1963.
[305] Meeting with the Minister of Transport and Transport 2000, 31 July 1974; Transport 2000 Getting the Best from British Rail, June 1973, 5, ERL, SR CPRE C/1/199/5.

network.[306] These indirect costs are relatively insensitive to how many trains are run but could account for as much as 60% of total costs. Indeed, if capacity was doubled on a network its indirect costs may rise by only 30%. Therefore, closure of some of this infrastructure would be hard to avoid. As overall passenger and freight demand on the railways had been declining for decades, maximising revenue by running more trains was not an option.[307]

The cost of rail infrastructure was a major part of total costs, and was stubbornly high. The total track and signalling costs in 1963 were £92.9 million and the operating deficit was £87.1 million.[308] In 1971, track and signalling reached over £100 million a year.[309] This demonstrated how potential savings had to come in part from better management practices, technology, and staff reductions, which Britain struggled with as BR was slow to allocate prices effectively.[310] The methodological criticisms of Beeching centred on the futility of trying to make the railways break-even by so substantially reducing its infrastructure. This took a more pessimistic view of the railways' prospects, agreeing with many of Beeching's closures, but seeing less point in closing down completely so much of the track when the railways were never going to break-even.[311] One half of the network carried just 4% of passengers and produced only £20 million in total revenue in 1962. The cost of providing the track alone for these provincial services was £40 million in 1963.[312]

Therefore, there was no question about any of Beeching's passenger closure proposals being loss-making.[313] The criticisms, that came from two railway economists, Denys Munby

---

[306] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 4; 9; 15; 54-55.
[307] Beeching thus emphasised the financial improvements to come from containerised freight, dieselisation, and reductions to the rolling stock: Ibid; SELNEC PTA and PTE, *A Summary of a Report on the Future of Public Transport in Greater Manchester*, 1972, 57, F711.73So(063); C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 95.
[308] British Railways Board, *Annual Report and Accounts*, 1964, 20, TNA, AN 19/1.
[309] Unremunerative Services Summary, 1973, TNA, MT 149/218.
[310] R. Pryke, *Public Enterprise in Practice* (London, 1971), 148; 168.
[311] D. Munby, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 11 (1963), 173; 181.
[312] C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 10.
[313] J. Dodgson, 'Railway Costs and Closures', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 18 (1984), 234.

and Stewart Joy, accepted many of Beeching's points: the need for closures, that rail productivity was poor, and labour and administrative costs were high. They could also see that while rail fares were too low, increasing them to eradicate the deficit was impossible.[314] Joy argued BR had set the permanent way capacity too high since the 1930s. The track capacity could be lowered and set locally with fewer double-tracks and less signalling, countering Beeching's claim that these costs were as fixed as he did.[315]

Joy compared Britain with West Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland. Britain had the third most mileage, just behind West Germany and France, with nearly twice as many route miles as Italy in fourth. Britain also ran the third most frequent services behind Holland and Belgium, which had much smaller networks,[316] giving it lower traffic density than France and Germany. With a large network and lots of underused services, Britain's overall unit costs were 22% higher than France. Britain had more track where there was low demand, and ran more frequent, older, smaller carriages and lightly loaded trains.[317] The average train load was, Joy stated, 'much lower' than the others. Indeed, Scotland alone had more physical track per mile of route than five of the six other nations. Joy thus endorsed reduced capacity, less track and signalling, with fewer, heavier-loaded trains.[318]

---

[314] S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 75; 78-79; D. Munby, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 11 (1963), 162; 166; 177; British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 4; 9-10; 54-55.
[315] BRB, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 4; 9; S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 60-63; 74-75; 79-82; 99-100; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 242; Foster believed these costs were higher than Joy asserted: C. Foster, 'Some Notes on Railway Costs and Costing', *Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics* (1962), 73-103; C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 9-10; 66.
[316] S. Joy, 'British Railways' Track Costs', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 13 (1964), 78-80; 89; Frequency of service could have little impact on the numbers using it compared to the speed of service: D. Hepburn, *Analysis of Changes in Rail Commuting to Central London* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-2; 8; 12, TRL.
[317] S. Joy, 'British Railways' Track Costs', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 13 (1964), 78-80; 89; Which is why Beeching sought to close underused services and track: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 11-12; P. White, 'Use of Public Transport in Towns and Cities of Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 29; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 242; 253; 257.
[318] S. Joy, 'British Railways' Track Costs', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 13 (1964), 77-79; 82-83; 85-87;

Instead of investing more in the main lines to boost demand, as Beeching argued, Joy saw little demand for more services and argued fares should be raised and costs reduced.[319] With an oversized network, rising debts, and stagnant demand, the railways were 'hopelessly over-capitalised' with too many depreciating assets as well as rising interest charges, which declining revenues could not cover.[320] This made the 1947 Transport Act's demand for the railways to break-even taking one year with another as hopeless as Beeching's efforts to do the same.[321] Joy thus argued debt write-offs and subsidies needed to come sooner, but the track capacity, rolling stock and labour force needed to be reduced more to suit demand.[322] However, this argument was hypothetical, underemphasising how loss-making services were not easily separated from the rest of the network as well as the financial and political problems of implementing these measures.

Denys Munby argued he could reduce services to cut costs, but this was also made hypothetically and needed many closures to work.[323] To determine which services should close, Beeching used a formula to measure their viability. This demonstrated BR's inclination towards high density provision.[324] The model service ran 32 trains a day with stations at 2.5 mile intervals, charging fares at 2d. per mile, and a train-mile cost of 4s. 6d. Such a daily service would need 17,000 passengers a week if the line had no freight business, and 10,000 passengers a week with freight, to cover its costs.[325] This frequent daily service, Munby

---

89; C. Foster, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975), 95; In 1961, 10,000 of BR's 17,830 route miles were double tracked and only 5,900 single track, but much of these were branch lines with low levels of demand: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 9-10.

[319] S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 60-62; 75; S. Glaister, in R. Layard and S. Glaister (eds), *Cost-Benefit Analysis* (Cambridge, 1994), 427.

[320] S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 71; 70-73; BRB, *Annual Report and Accounts*, 58, 1964, TNA, AN 19/1.

[321] S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 85.

[322] T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 295; 400; S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 71-75; 99.

[323] D. Munby, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 11 (1963), 173; 176; 181.

[324] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 9.

[325] Such a service, Beeching argued, would be better suited to bus transport: British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British* (London, 1963), 16-18; 97-101; *Guardian*, 9 May 1963.

argued, would 'load the dice in favour of closing', and it was possible to run fewer services with higher fares.[326]

To better cover direct costs according to Beeching's own formula, Munby argued for the use of rail buses and unmanned halts on a reduced 8 train a day service, which would cover direct costs with 1,000 passengers a week.[327] Beeching, however, argued that 'thinning out' trains and stations would worsen the deficit as demand declined in provincial areas because the costs of track and signalling remained.[328] With Munby's approach, reducing the network's capacity would cut the deficit without closing swathes of the network, and fares could be raised to 4 pence per mile. Munby also supported using the numbers of passengers on individual trains rather than flows per week to calculate costs, as was the Continental approach. The point here is that BR provided services and tracks at a higher capacity than was needed for their demand and European railways ran fewer, larger, heavier-loaded trains.[329] Beeching did, however, propose to reduce the capacity of track and signalling in his second report in 1965, but this came with closing much more of the network.[330]

Although Joy and Munby accepted the need for many closures,[331] their approach presented four problems. Firstly, not enough data had accrued to understand individually which branch lines would be worth saving in this regard and interest charges in 1964 were already at £58.4 million.[332] Secondly, the size of Britain's network in 1960, its losses, and the

---

[326] D. Munby, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 11 (1963), 179; *Guardian*, 9 May 1963; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 407.
[327] Ibid., 16-18; 97-101; D. Munby, 'The Reshaping', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 11 (1963), 176; *Guardian*, 9 May 1963.
[328] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 18.
[329] D. Munby, 'The Reshaping', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 13 (1963), 174-179-180; *Guardian*, 9 May 1963; Stewart Joy, 'British Railways' Track Costs', *Journal of Industrial Statistics,* 23 (1964), 78-79; 82-83; 89; BRB, *Reshaping of British* (London, 1963), 17; C. Nash, in K. Button and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics* (Aldershot, 1985), 240-260.
[330] BRB, *Development of the Major Trunk* (London, 1965), 7-9; 45-47; British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 15-18.
[331] S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 109.
[332] British Railways Board, Annual Report and Accounts, 1964, 20, TNA, AN 19/2; P. Smethurst to M. Barnett, Statistics Division, Prospects for Future Viability of the Railway System, 17 May 1963, TNA, MT 65/422.

growing financial stringency across the wider economy pushed the Exchequer under both Tory and Labour to side with Beeching.[333] Third, higher fares risked pushing passengers onto the roads, and improving management efficiency could not be achieved without more aggressive intervention in the operation of what was still an independent public enterprise.[334]

Fourthly, the argument for streamlining existing services on Britain's network to reduce costs was undeliverable in this period compared to the Continental experience of rebuilding after the war.[335] The General Manager of the Eastern Region, Gerard Fiennes, calculated in the 1960s that the East Suffolk line could be operated for around £90,000 a year with a revenue of £120,000 through the automation of signalling, crossings, and unmanned stations, approaches undertaken in Europe due to war damage enabling new equipment.[336] Joy highlighted the uses of mechanised but expensive signalling in bomb-damaged countries that allowed high capacity traffic with only one operator.[337] But this would have been very expensive on a national scale in Britain with its vast financial obligations and old network. Indeed, automated technology did not proliferate until the 1980s.[338]

BR's Research and Technical Panel experimented with these improvements, in fact, on the East Suffolk line and its 'Victorian' signalling system in 1980. But even then, it would cost BR £550,000 to carry out track, signalling and crossing automation, with an ultimate cost of around £2 million. It was estimated this would save the line £500,000 a year, which would not eradicate its deficit, so this approach on a national scale in the 1960s was not

---

[333] Handwritten note, 20 August 1974, TNA, AN 156/479; Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Development, September 1964, TNA, Treasury Papers, [henceforth T] 319/344; Reference of Passenger Rail Closure Proposals to the Regional Planning Councils, 19 March 1965, TNA, T 319/347.
[334] R. Millward, *Private and Public Enterprise* (Cambridge, 2005), 172; 180; 185; 189.
[335] Memorandum of Meeting Held at Norwich, 2 August 1966, 3, MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/327, MRC; *Railway Review*, 2 April 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 10 February 1964.
[336] G. Fiennes, *I Tried to Run a Railway* (London, 2015), 162-164; Munby also argued for unmanned halts: D. Munby, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 11 (1963), 178-181.
[337] S. Joy, 'British Railways' Track Costs', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, 13 (1964), 84.
[338] This did not stop Fiennes promoting the stripped-back 'basic' or 'bus stop' railway in the 1960s: *East Anglia Daily Times*: 5 July 1966; 9 July 1966; 12 July 1966; 16 July 1966; 4 August 1966; J. Glover, *BR Diary, 1978-1985* (London, 1985), 14.

feasible.[339] Many of the expensive features of the East Suffolk line, of double tracks and large numbers of signal boxes and level crossings were shared by the Varsity and Ashford to Hastings lines.[340] Beeching's commercial formula in 1963 was also set in a climate of many branch lines showing no signs of recovery and 'fighting a losing battle' against the car.[341] The savings from closures, he argued, would be multiplied by the effects of having a smaller network and concentrating investment into inter-city services by 1970.[342]

Again, rail economists were not against closures. Indeed, despite Joy's criticisms of Beeching he described Labour's subsidies in 1968 as too 'generous'.[343] France and Germany's subsidies were implemented at marginal cost, providing subsidy for increases in expenses year on year, which covered less than Britain's 'more generous' comprehensive subsidies.[344] This generosity came partly due to the lack of grasp of costs within BR, the size and losses of Britain's network, compounded by the unfolding of local closure proposals that Joy argued 'distilled emotion into fact'.[345] The notion Beeching's agenda was an ideological blunder is thus exaggerated. His blunt approach was shaped by his background at ICI, a capital-intensive chemicals firm, which could cut out or invest in machinery to increase productivity. This was more complex for Britain's rail network that had a bloated labour force and unproductive practices, which Beeching could not streamline quickly.[346] However, the examples in chapters one and two show BR were not averse to reducing or amalgamating

---

[339] 23 of the East Suffolk Line's crossings were still manned: Proposals for Change on the East Suffolk Line, Dr A. Wickens, 22 January 1980, 1-2; M. Posner Memorandum to Board Executive, 26 November 1980 ; P. Parker Letter to N. Fowler, 22 June 1981, TNA, AN 176/114; Newspapers suggested it could save the line in 1963: *The Times*, 17 October 1963; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 30 May 1963; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 16 October 1963.
[340] Ashford-Hastings Background, 1974, TNA, MT 188/57.
[341] British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 13; 15.
[342] Ibid., 54-5; 60.
[343] S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 131.
[344] Possible Means of Subsidy: Policy Review, 1972, TNA, T 319/1760.
[345] S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 132.
[346] British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 24-25; R. Pryke, *The Nationalised Industries: Policies and Performance* (Oxford, 1981), 74; S. Joy, *The Train that Ran Away* (London, 1973), 74; P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen, Vol. 2* (London, 1982), 148-150; 166-169; G. Allen, *British Rail After Beeching* (London, 1966), 88.

services rather than outright closures, despite repeatedly being accused of intentionally 'running down' services.[347]

In 1967, Castle established a unit to develop cost-benefit analyses and transport became the field in which they were most used, but they were not a solution to the issue of closures.[348] The Varsity line was partially closed by Castle that year, and the MOT under the Conservatives sought total closure into the 1970s.[349] The Ashford to Hastings line underwent a cost-benefit analysis in the 1970s that concluded closure outweighed the cause for retention, but, due to the local contingencies shown above, it was kept.[350] As a result, the government's rail finance unit found in 1972, that, as useful as cost-benefit analysis was, there were 'other aspects of decision-making' where it 'ceases to be helpful'.[351]

Measuring the feasibility of transport modes is thus highly complex. As transport services are 'intermediate goods', whose value comes from the conveyance of other products, their output values vary widely.[352] Cost-benefit analyses weight prices, costs, and social effects by ascribing money values to factors such as what people are able to pay; journey lengths; time; trip purpose; financial costs; and congestion, making them highly variable and open to dispute.[353] As the 1968 Transport Act's provisions proved inadequate to contain the railways' losses by the early 1970s, finding ways to decide which lines to save and which to close became harder still. Even after subsidies, the railways lost £92 million in 1972 and

---

[347] *Ipswich Evening Star*, 11 January 1965; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 25 August 1965.
[348] The CBA Approach: Background, December 1968, TNA, MT 124/1248; N. Hanley and C. Splash, *Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Environment* (Aldershot, 1993), 7; J. Dodgson, 'Railway Costs and Closures', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 18 (1984), 220.
[349] G. Cockerham to J. Dewdney letter, 22 June 1972, 14/10/117, DC; J. Stephens to Mr. Peeler letter, 12 February 1971, TNA, MT 97/787.
[350] R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 198; 205.
[351] D. Peeler to E. Price Letter, March 1972, TNA, MT 188/62.
[352] J. Grant, *The Politics of Urban Transport Planning* (London, 1977), 5; D. Peeler to E. Price letter, March 1972, TNA, MT 188/62.
[353] N. Hanley and C. Splash, *Cost-Benefit Analysis* (Aldershot, 1993), 8-21; 89; S. Glaister, *Fundamentals of Transport Economics* (Oxford, 1981), 58; Beeching stated in his report that the judgement of the quality of transport is subjective because individual convenience and total social benefit are not often compatible and competing forms of transport 'can not be costed on strictly comparable bases': British Railways Board, *Reshaping British Railways* (London, 1963), 1.

£169 million in 1973, prompting the need for block grants.[354]

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the complexity involved in closure decisions and how local opposition was often led by middle class institutions. It has shown successive governments were sensitive to local opposition but were also held back by local contingencies and the decline of bus services.[355] Contentious closures included large cross-country lines, which connected regions, but without the demand of commuter or inter-city services their financial losses were stark. The Varsity line, which has been described as 'the most regrettable of the 1960s closures',[356] was a poor, underused service in 1963, the closure of which Labour did not pay an electoral price for in 1966.[357] This chapter is in general agreement with Loft that successive governments carried out closures based on the data available but seeks to emphasise the effectiveness of the middle class, institutional nature of much opposition.[358]

Any hopes of a policy solution from the Continent were also not forthcoming due to the differences between each nation and the effects of war.[359] Reducing BR's track and passenger capacity could have reduced losses further, and the Treasury repeatedly found BR were 'far too optimistic' in their forecasts for future passenger revenue, increasing the need for single-manning and more cost cutting measures.[360] The nationalised railways' most

---

[354] In 1982 purchasing power: J. Dodgson, 'Railway Costs and Closures', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 18 (1984), 230; Press Notice by the MOT, 6 November 1967, 1-4, TNA, EW 19/39.
[355] *Bedfordshire Times*, 27 July 1973.
[356] C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 81.
[357] Labour gained the seats of South Bedfordshire and Oxford and gained Great Yarmouth along the East Suffolk line despite proposing it for closure: D. Butler and A. King, *The British General Elections, 1945-92: The British General Election of 1966* (Basingstoke, 1999), 261; 274; 318; 320; B. Castle, *HC Debs*, vol. 725, cc. 471, 8 March 1966.
[358] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization* (London, 2006), 149-151.
[359] D. Banister, *Transport Planning* (London, 2002), 205.
[360] S. Joy, 'British Railways' Track Costs', *Journal of Industrial Statistics*, 13 (1964), 75; Rail Policy Review, D. Howard, 19 October 1972, TNA, T 319/1760.

effective years, ironically, then came under the commercially-driven 'sector management' practices during Thatcher's premiership, although they saw little investment and buses were subjected to market forces by the 1985 Transport Act, fragmenting transport co-ordination further as Continental urban policy increasingly emphasised public transport.[361]

By 1975, the effects of inflation and the oil crisis were evident in the railways' annual deficit, rocketing the cost of the goods and services it needed to operate above what it could charge passengers.[362] But the impact of the 1973 oil crisis failed to push people back to public transport in substantial numbers. Contemporary studies found existing car owners spent more on fuel and prioritised their car journeys to save money.[363] The oil crisis has been seen as a potential moment to start a return to mass-use public transport, but inflation hampered the finances of the buses and railways and their ability to expand services.[364]

This chapter has also argued people's concerns over rail closures were based on their individual interests. Those actually affected often had no car and found regular bus use difficult for their needs, including the poor, women, and elderly as they took regular and often complicated journeys in provincial areas.[365] Indeed, compared to the Varsity line, journey times on the replacement bus would be on average 139% longer and fares between 50 and 200% higher.[366] The East Suffolk line took under two hours for a full return trip, which was under half that taken by the replacement bus service.[367] Age and gender were often peripheral to local authority arguments, who tended to focus on the effect of closures on

---

[361] T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 99; 117; 103-124; 200-202; 251-252.
[362] Ibid., 1; 22; B. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), 549.
[363] M. Mogridge, 'The Effect of the Oil Crisis on the Growth in the Ownership and Use of Cars', *Transportation*, 7 (1978), 46; 48-49; 64; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 4-14, TRL.
[364] T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 1-2; J. Tyme, *Motorways Versus Democracy* (London, 1978), 5; J. Dodgson, 'Railway Costs and Closures', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 18 (1984), 230.
[365] M. Hillman and A. Whalley, *The Social Consequences of Rail Closures* (London, 1980), 22; 36; 52-53; 63; 84-85; 89-92; 100; 113; M. Hillman et al, *Personal Mobility and Transport Policy* (London, 1973), 54-58.
[366] G. Brewis, 'Special Committee Booklet', 30 July 1964, 8-9; 11, TNA, MT 124/714.
[367] Proved in an experiment by Donald Newby: *East Anglian Daily Times*, 25 August 1965.

working men.[368] But chapter three will now look at those who used public transport the most in the 1960s because they had little access to cars – women, the poor, and the elderly.

[368] County of Buckingham Development Plan Review, Appendix 1: A City for the 70s, 1963, 1-3, TNA, MT 124/714.

Chapter 3: Women and the Fragmentation of Transport

"We are still a long way off being a car owning democracy…A car per family does not bring complete mobility. The breadwinner, the housewife, the old, the young – all have conflicting transport need".[1] – Richard Marsh, Labour Minister of Transport, November 1968.

By 1968, as this quote shows, central government's attitude to the car owning democracy had diverged from Buchanan's vision of the early 1960s.[2] However, the shift in policy came as loss-making rail closures in provincial areas were still being pursued. This chapter makes three arguments regarding this fragmentation in policy and how it affected modal choice. Firstly, provincial rail closures could have a detrimental effect on women and the elderly. There were many transport surveys in the 1960s and 1970s,[3] but fewer discerned the

[1] Press Notice, 'A Car Owning Democracy Can Miss the Bus', Richard Marsh, 14 November 1968, TNA, MT 152/115.
[2] S. Gunn, 'Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse of the Motor City Ideal', *The Historical Journal*, 61 (2018), 229; 245-248.
[3] Many transport studies were based on National Travel Surveys, Family Expenditure Surveys, Censuses, local surveys, and modelling, and so may not be absolutely exact but offer contemporary insight: Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 198; J. Tanner, 'Car and Motorcycle Ownership in the Counties of Great Britain in 1960', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 126 (1963); F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), TRL; A. Tulpule, *Characteristics of Households With and Without Cars in 1970* (Crowthorne, 1974), TRL; A. Pearman and K. Button, 'Regional Variations in Car Ownership', *Applied Economics*, 8 (1976); P. Bly, *The Effect of Fares on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1976), TRL; S. Divey, *Regional and National Convergence to Common Car Ownership Levels* (Crowthorne, 1979), TRL; J. Thomson, *Some Characteristics of Motorists in Central London* (London, 1968); P. Martin and R. Tunbridge, *The Optimisation of Public Transport in Small Towns* (Crowthorne, 1977), TRL.

movements of women, the old, and the poor, who drove less than men.[4] As rising car ownership cut across class, it then became clearer in surveys that gender and age were important in transport choice, but again, these studies did not proliferate until the 1970s.[5] Although mobility was expanding for many through the speed and flexibility of the car, ownership increased earlier in suburban and rural areas, and public transport was most abundant in urban space. Thus, women, the elderly and poor outside cities could see their mobility decline as bus and rail services closed, and often could not afford a car or were denied equal use.[6]

Secondly, women and the elderly were aware of this widening inequality and defended their local railway as a social service for the comfort and speed it offered. Although car ownership was higher than the national average in provincial areas, this was hurting bus finance,[7] which was the mode most used by women and the old.[8] But the bus was also the least voluntarily used mode, and on cross-country routes they provided poorer services over longer, rugged journeys compared to cars and trains. As Hibbs describes, replacement buses provided after a rail closure were 'slow, tedious, markedly less comfortable and frequently cold'. It was often 'preferable' not to travel at all.[9] Thus, people needing public transport in

---

[4] J. Wabe, 'Dispersal of Employment and the Journey to Work', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1 (1967), 348-353; R. Lawton, 'The Journey to Work in Britain', *Regional Studies*, 2 (1968), 33-38; J. Wheeler, 'Occupational Status and Work-Trips', *Social Forces*, 45 (1967), 511-514; W. Davies and T. Musson, 'Spatial Patterns of Commuting in South Wales', *Regional Studies*, 12 (1978), 354-356; J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 8; 63-64, TRL; C. Mitchell, *Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-8; 13, TRL.

[5] L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), TRL; J. Hopkin, *The Ownership and Use of Cars by Elderly People* (Crowthorne, 1981), TRL; L. Pickup and G. Giuliano, in D. Donaghy et al (eds), *Social Dimensions of Sustainable Transport: Transatlantic Perspectives* (Oxford, 2016), 39.

[6] This trend was national but pronounced in extra-urban areas; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 7; 18-23; J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 207; C. Mitchell, *Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 3-8, TRL; M. Dasgupta, *Manchester Travel-to-Work Survey* (Crowthorne, 1980), 5-8, TRL.

[7] The upper limit of car ownership in city centres was a third of households, but was 7 in 10 in many areas outside: J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 6; 34-53, TRL; Committee on Rural Bus Services Report: Introduction and Summary Conclusions, September 1960, TNA, MT 97/443; The greater speed of a railway system attracted more passengers: *The Times*, 17 July 1968.

[8] C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 3-5, TRL; J. Hopkin, *The Ownership and Use of Cars by Elderly People* (Crowthorne, 1981), 3-6; 37, TRL; R. Frankenberg, *Village on the Border: A Social Study* (London, 1957), 33-35.

[9] J. Hibbs, *The Bus and Coach Industry* (London, 1975), 65.

provincial areas could see their mobility and the experiences of it worsen with rail closures at the same time car ownership increased, prompting resistance to those closures.[10]

Third, the gradual spread of car ownership in Britain came with the even slower spread of driving among women,[11] but the cultural image of the woman driver began to improve in the 1960s. The social historiography of the postwar period has argued there were some increases in female autonomy through work, but within existing gender roles.[12] There was a similar pattern in transport due to relative economic and cultural shifts. More women worked and added to household spending, including affording a car by the 1950s, but their use of it came second to the husband due to his higher wages and status as the breadwinner. This situation shifted only slowly as incomes increased and it was not until female driving licences proliferated after 1975 that female driving began to approach parity.[13] But this chapter will show the shift towards greater female mobility started in the 1960s with an improvement in the image of the woman driver, and commercial efforts to increase their numbers.

---

[10] M. Hillman and A. Whalley, *The Social Consequences of Rail Closures* (London, 1980), 36-38; 52-53; 63; 70; 84-85; 89-92; 100; 113.
[11] K. Button, 'The Geographical Distribution of Car Ownership', *Annals of Regional Science*, 14 (1980), 26-28; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 21.
[12] D. Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 220-221; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 51-60; H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 48; 52-53; S. Brooke, 'Gender and Working Class Identity', *Journal of Social History*, 34 (2001), 786-788; F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1961), 44.
[13] M. Walsh, 'Gender in the History of Transportation Services', *Business History Review*, 82 (2007), 553-555; F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1961), 44; 65; 105-107; 175-177; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 44-51; 63-64; 84-85; 221; G. Lees-Maffei, in P. Wollen and J. Kerr (eds), *Autopia: Cars and Culture* (London, 2002), 364; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 21; S. O'Connell, in D. Thoms et al, *The Motor Car and Popular Culture* (Abingdon, 1998), 188; V. Klein, *Britain's Married Women Workers* (London, 1965), 39.

Gender and Modal Choice

Table 13. Main Mode of Transport for Journeys to Work by Gender (%), 1920-1979:

	1920-39	1940-59	1960-79
Men			
Walk	23.2	12.3	8.0
Bus	10.8	17.7	11.3
Train	17.5	18.9	17.9
Car	10.0	16.3	48.1
Women			
Walk	29.3	19.7	20.6
Bus	22.2	31.7	24.8
Train	20.3	18.1	11.1
Car	0.7	4.4	29.9

Source: C. Pooley, in D. Gilbert et al (eds), *Geographies of British Modernity* (Oxford, 2003), 88.

Table 13 shows several changes in transport use between the sexes up to 1979.[14] Firstly, there was a larger fall in walking among men than women, from 23.2% to just 8%. In towns, this meant that as men became drivers, women's mobility was obstructed by busy roads.[15] Journey lengths for men also increased with suburbanisation and they switched to the car as women continued to use the slower, less comfortable bus twice as much as men. Train use for men stayed stable due to their commutes into cities, but almost halved for women. Most of this drop also occurred after 1959, during ongoing rail closures.[16] Overall, then, postwar changes in modal choice saw a fragmentation of those available to women based on their class and where they lived at the same time driving increased for men.

Contemporary local surveys, census data, and government statistics suggest the inequality in driving between men and women remained wide in this period, and only began

[14] The sections on mobility patterns and modal choice are shaped by the work of historical geographer Colin Pooley but use many RRL surveys from the period; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005).
[15] B. Schmucki, 'If I Walked on My Own at Night', *Research in Transportation Economics*, 34 (2012), 80-81; T. Männistö-Funk, 'The Gender of Walking: Female Pedestrians in Street Photographs', *Urban History*, 48 (2021), 242; F. Hodgson, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 44.
[16] C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 18; 115; 200.

to decline from the mid-1960s.[17] By 1965, around half of men had a driving licence, including 60% of those between the ages of 20 and 50 and around 41% of men between 60 and 65. In contrast, in 1965 around 10% of women had a driving licence, again, mostly among those between the ages of 20 and 50, at between 13 and 18%. Only 6% of women between 60 and 65 years old, and 2% over 65s had a driving licence in 1965.[18] However, the rate at which men obtained driving licences after 1965 was recorded in local surveys to increase by 2 to 3% a year, compared to 10% for women.[19] By 1973, 63% of men had a driving licence, including 60% of those between 60 and 65, and 31% of over 65s. Over 70% between the ages of 20 and 50 had one by 1973. That year, 21% of women had a driving licence, including only 10% of those between 60 and 65, and 4% of over 65s. For women between the ages of 20 and 50, between 30 and 40% had a driving licence by 1973.[20]

Contemporary local surveys suggest that as people over the age of 65 in 1974 were those aged over 40 in the mid-1950s, when car ownership was only beginning to spread across class, many never learnt to drive. Thus, by 1975, only around 30% of people over 65 were estimated to be living in a household with a car, compared to 68% of younger adults. To add to this, 29% of those over 65 in the UK lived alone, and as many as 80% of them could be women. Also, only 5% of women over 65 worked in England compared to 16% of men.[21] Thus, as elderly women on average lived in households with lower incomes and lower occupancy, they were much less likely to own a car or have a driving licence.[22] There was

---

[17] Data on driving licences and travel patterns more widely are in incomplete before the 1970s. Licences were administered by local authorities before 1965: C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 21-23; 36-37; 61; C. Pooley, 'Landscapes Without the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 268; C. Pooley, 'Connecting Historical Studies of Transport', *Journal of Transport History*, 38 (2017), 255.
[18] J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 63-64, TRL; J. Tanner, *Saturation Levels in Car Ownership Models* (Crowthorne, 1981), 14, TRL; S. O'Connell, in F. Carnevali et al (eds), *20th Century Britain* (London, 2007), 117.
[19] J. Hopkin, *The Ownership and Use of Cars by Elderly People* (Crowthorne, 1981), 12-13, TRL; J. Tanner, *Saturation Levels of Car Ownership Models* (Crowthorne, 1980), 4-6, TRL.
[20] J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 63-4, TRL.
[21] J. Hopkin, *The Ownership and Use of Cars by Elderly People* (Crowthorne, 1981), 2; 12-13; 17-18; 24, TRL.
[22] Ibid., 2; 17-18.

also a regional class inequality among women drivers. In 1963 nearly twice as many women drove in the more affluent South East than the North East. But overall, in provincial areas, all women were more likely to need public transport than have regular access to a car.[23]

Why did these changes occur? Firstly, female employment increased in the postwar period, which enabled more households to afford a car, but gender roles remained. Average earnings for women stayed lower than men and they filled more manual roles in the working class and services in higher social grades.[24] Between 1951 and 1971, women in part-time work rose from 784,000 to 3.2 million. This took women from 30.8% of the workforce to 36%, and almost all female part-time workers were married.[25] The numbers of full-time women workers, who were mainly poorer and younger, working before marriage or childbirth, declined from 6 to 5.4 million as the marriage age dropped.[26] Thus, although the number of housewives was declining, and it became something women did in their twenties and thirties before returning to work, overall, there were slightly more housewives than working women at any given time in this period.[27]

Secondly, then, even as female employment increased, their family duties remained, and they worked closer to home.[28] This period saw female employment and more family-

---

[23] *Herald Express*, 4 October 1963; Socially mobile households also moved for the husband's job: M. Savage, 'The Missing Link? The Relationship between Spatial Mobility and Social Mobility', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 39 (1988), 559; 572; L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), TRL; C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Modal Choice and Modal Change', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 15; 19-21; 22.

[24] Domestic service declined in favour of better paid factory work from the interwar years and social mobility via higher education grew in the 1970s: E. Worth, 'Women, Education and Social Mobility in Britain During the Long 1970s', *Cultural and Social History*, 16 (2019), 77-79; P. Scott, 'Women, Other "Fresh" Workers, and the New Manufacturing Workforce', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (2000), 460-467; J. Giles, 'Help for Housewives: Domestic Service', *Women's History*, 10 (2001), 299-301; 316; J. Giles, 'A Home of One's Own: Women and Domesticity in England', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 16 (1993), 239-242; 250-251; H. McCarthy, in P. Thane (ed.), *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since 1945* (London, 2010), 108-113; H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 53.

[25] D. Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 209; 223.

[26] Ibid., 209; 223; H. McCarthy, in P. Thane (ed.), *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since 1945* (London, 2010), 108-111.

[27] L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), 2, TRL; D. Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 209.

[28] C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century? Changes in Everyday Mobility* (Aldershot, 2005), 115; 120; 133-138; P. Gordon et al, 'The Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis: Some New Evidence', *Urban Studies*, 26 (2016), 325.

orientated men and a rebalancing of power in the relationship, but these shifts were relative and came within gender roles.[29] This trend can be seen in transport choice. The differences in commutes between the sexes was surveyed by HLG in 1951. It found in suburban London the husband often 'travels many miles to work in the centre' but wives 'want only part time work…near home'. But there was great variety in different parts of the country, including occupations where 'the men must live near the job', such as agricultural, dock, and heavy industrial work. But in these areas, especially younger women were found to 'travel quite a long way to work' if there were few jobs nearby deemed suitable.[30] Women's gender roles often led them to work closer to home, therefore, but if there were no feminised roles nearby, they could travel further.[31]

Thus, economic and cultural forces shaped how labour, transport, and mobility were understood and governed according to gender.[32] This HLG study may have hinted at the variety of transport needs across gender, but stated that women 'want' part-time work near home, suggesting this was their choice rather than one shaped by patriarchal norms.[33] This was also reflected in contemporary transport studies, which often lacked attention, until the later 1970s, on the mobility inequalities of marginalised groups. Studies focused mainly on male-centric issues such as the journey to work, town planning, and took gender roles for granted, including men's dominant car use, rather than questioning women's lower wages and why he had priority use of the car over his wife.[34]

Thirdly, as gender roles became complicated by women in work, leisure time, smaller

---

[29] H. McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood* (London, 2020), 11-13.
[30] Dr Rutland notes on the Journey to Work Study, 20 February 1951, TNA, HLG 71/1536; M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core* (Cambridge, 1981), 98.
[31] J. Downes, *Variation of Household and Person Travel Times* (Crowthorne, 1980), 10-11, TRL.
[32] M. Walsh, 'Gendering Transport History', *Journal of Transport History*, 23 (2002), 1-7; J. Wallach Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), 1053-1075.
[33] Dr Rutland notes on the Journey to Work Study, 20 February 1951, TNA, HLG 71/1536.
[34] R. Law, 'Beyond 'Women and Transport': Towards New Geographies of Gender and Daily', *Progress in Human Geography*, 23 (1999), 567-569; 572; T. Cresswell and T. Uteng, in T. Cresswell and T. Uteng (eds), *Gendered Mobilities* (New York, 2008), 3-4; 8-10; L. Pickup and G. Giuliano, in D. Donaghy et al (eds), *Social Dimensions of Sustainable Transport: Transatlantic Perspectives* (Oxford, 2016), 39.

families, and labour-saving devices, so did transport choice.[35] The male breadwinner and domesticated mother remained powerful cultures after the 1950s across class. But the way married women's work was reconciled with their domestic role became nuanced. Their jobs, postponed in the early years of childrearing, added to their domestic duties by increasing the household income, despite a smaller expansion of the husband's domestic duties.[36] As we will see, this fragmentation occurred in transport. Despite women's incomes, men kept their position as the breadwinner, priority use of the car, and women were perceived as mothers, poor drivers, and secondary in transport policy. But these problems were challenged relatively by the mid-1960s.[37]

Modal Choice or Modal Leftovers?

Men travelled further to work and on faster modes of transport, including the car, fragmenting choice between gender, class, and location. In 1960, men travelled on average 12.1 kilometres at 21 kilometres an hour compared to women at 7.5 kilometres at 14 kilometres an hour.[38] The long-term rise of suburbanisation, faster public transport, and car ownership by the 1970s saw men travelling on average nearly twice as far to work as women.[39] However, as this is an average, it included men on higher incomes living further

[35] S. Brooke, 'Gender and Working Class Identity', *Journal of Social History*, 34 (2001), 775; 783-784; 787; M. Clapson, 'Working-Class Women's Experiences of Moving to New Housing Estates in England', *Twentieth Century History*, 10 (1999), 350; 352; 365; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 140.
[36] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1961), 23; 44-45; 177-178; H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 50-53; D. Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 206-207; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 140; Examples of women working and less traditional roles for men at home are found over a longer period: H. Rogers, in T. Broughton and H. Rogers (eds), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2007), 135; S. Rose, *Limited Livelihoods* (London, 1992), 14-17; 77.
[37] M. Walsh, 'Gender in the History of Transportation Services', *Business History Review*, 81 (2007), 552-553.
[38] C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 113-116.
[39] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'The Journey to Work: A Century of Change', *Area*, 31 (1999), 285-287; William Clark et al, 'Does Commuting Distance Matter? Commuting Tolerance and Residential Change', *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 33 (2001), 199; 203; 216; A. Warnes, 'Estimates of Journey to Work Distances from Census Statistics', *Regional Studies*, 6 (1972), 320; P. Gordon et al, 'The Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis: Some New Evidence', *Urban Studies*, 26 (2016), 325.

from work, much more likely to use the railways to commute than those on lower incomes.[40] In London, where incomes were higher, class was still a factor in rail use despite its vast network. Indeed, between 1953 and 1970, as rail and bus fares rose by 70%, bus miles fell by 40% as poorer people bought cars, but rail use stayed relatively stable.[41]

In central urban areas, people on lower incomes travelled shorter distances to work on foot or by bus, and there was less difference between the sexes. Inner London in the late 1950s saw a third of women working in the same borough in which they lived compared to nearly a quarter of men. But for the highest social groups the gap was wider because they lived further from work. There were approximately 700,000 higher earning men commuting long distances into London in 1960 by rail, compared to 275,000 women, employed in clerical or retail jobs.[42] Within cities, car use was lower partly because public transport was an alternative and due to the lower residential incomes there, but women walked and used the bus in urban areas more than men as car ownership spread.[43]

As cars ownership increased, mobility inequality between the sexes grew and the importance of class and location in determining car ownership fell. Men and women could use the bus for its low cost but also due to few alternatives, until mass car ownership.[44] Sample surveys showed on average, women could take 3 to 4 trips a week by bus, compared

---

[40] P. Daniels, 'Some Changes in the Journey to Work of Decentralised Workers', *The Town Planning Review*, 44 (1973), 183-185; 180; S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 16-17, TRL.

[41] M. Fairhurst, 'The Influence of Public Transport on Car Ownership in London', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 9 (1975), 206-207; G. Allen, *British Rail After Beeching* (London, 1966), 215; C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 3, TRL; F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 29, TRL.

[42] J. Westergaard, 'Journeys to Work in the London Region', *The Town Planning Review*, 28 (1957), 55-56; M. Mogridge, 'Changing Spatial Patterns in the Journey to Work', *Urban Studies*, 17 (1979), 181.

[43] M. Sheller, and J. Urry, 'The City and the Car', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (2000), 748-749; C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Modal Choice and Modal Change', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 15; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 119-120; M. Dasgupta, *Manchester Travel-to-Work Survey* (Crowthorne, 1980), 1-8, TRL; C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 10; 14, TRL.

[44] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Modal Choice and Modal Change', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 20.

to 2 to 3 for men in the mid-1960s, reflecting women's inferior mobility status.[45] Even in places in Solihull, where car ownership neared saturation by 1974, women used the bus considerably more than men.[46] Cars were also increasingly dominant in provincial areas, including Wales. Between the 1950s and early 1970s commuting distances along the south Wales coast grew so that nearly 40% of men commuted across local authority boundaries compared to just over a quarter of women.[47] Age was also important. As car ownership spread into the mid-1970s, bus use concentrated among the old and women. Those in their late teens and early twenties also used the bus, surveys finding that they took 5 to 6 trips a week on average, to school, college, or work.[48]

Outside the major inter-urban rail lines, rail use also fell in provincial Britain between the 1950s and 1970s due to car ownership, while urban bus journeys at the same time outnumbered rail ten to one.[49] In 1953, rail transport outside London accounted for 23.2% of total passenger miles. By 1973, it was 7% of passenger miles, and just 4% by 1993 as car ownership approached saturation.[50] Thus, growing car ownership, which favoured men, came with the closure of local provincial rail and bus routes, which could damage the mobility of those without a car, namely women, the old and the poor. The bus was also not used most by the poorest in society. It was most used by the richest households not quite yet able to afford a car outside inner urban areas, where walking dominated.[51] In provincial areas the bus could

---

[45] C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-2, TRL; C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 7-8; 12-14; 16, TRL.
[46] C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 5, TRL.
[47] W. Davies and T. Musson, 'Spatial Patterns of Commuting in South Wales', *Regional Studies*, 12 (1978), 354-356; R. Jones, 'Local Labour Markets, the Journey to Work', *The Town Planning Review*, 41 (1970), 168; 175-177; J. Sleeman, 'A New Look at the Distribution of Private Cars', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1968), 315-316.
[48] C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-2, TRL; Youth bus-use was more cross-class: C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 6, TRL.
[49] F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 8, TRL; C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 3, TRL.
[50] T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 3-5.
[51] F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends* (Crowthorne, 1977), 15-17; 30, TRL; C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 13-15, TRL; C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 4, TRL; S. Divey, *Regional and National Convergence to Common Car*

also be inconvenient for longer journeys. Thus, although poorer women in provincial areas travelled less, they could depend on a single mode for their weekly trips.

To add to this complexity, trip purposes in this period were different for men and women and fragmented further. Across the country, the most common journey for men was to work, but for women it was to the shops and to work equally, which meant they took more trips. However, it was the husband who had the car.[52] Commuter demand for buses thus declined, and women, the young and the old became increasingly the major users of buses. In 1965, 41% of bus trips were commutes. This dropped to 30% by 1976. This fall in working age male bus users saw shopping make up 16% of trips in 1965 and 24% by 1976. The share of bus users of pensionable age also rose from 11 to 20% in that period, and surveys showed women over the age of 16 could make up to 60% of local bus journeys by 1975.[53]

An increase in car ownership and employed women did not amount to greater mobility choices until they had their own car. Due to an increase in female work as well as the maintenance of their family duties, women mostly used buses and walked, and drove only when their husband did not, and only then if they had a licence. This meant that during working hours, the majority of housewives into the late 1970s were without a car when they did most of their errands, shopping, or family care journeys, unless the household was rich enough to have a second car. A survey of mid-1970s data found just 17% of journeys by housewives between the ages of 30 and 59 were as a car driver.[54] As women in poorer households worked longer hours, that 17% figure consisted of more affluent households.

Ownership (Crowthorne, 1979), 1-3, TRL; R. Oldfield, *The Effect of Income on Bus Travel* (Crowthorne, 1981), 1, TRL.

[52] C. Mitchell, *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977), 3-4, TRL; C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Modal Choice and Modal Change', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 15; 19.

[53] C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 7; 16, TRL; The elderly were prevalent users of buses in rural areas: P. Ellson and R. Tebb, *Traffic Characteristics of a Network of Co-Ordinated Rural Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1978), 10, TRL; P. White, 'Use of Public Transport in Towns and Cities of Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 34.

[54] L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), 1-5; 9, TRL; M. Dasgupta, *Manchester Travel-to-Work Survey* (Crowthorne, 1980), 15, TRL; C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 10-14, TRL; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 77; 97; 106; 121; 224.

Indeed, 52% of households with a housewife also had a car, compared to 35% who did not.[55]

Therefore, class remained an important determinant of car use between women, but gender was more important in shaping transport choice nationally. A 1972/3 National Travel Survey of over 5,000 households across Britain found that women in socioeconomic group A took 2.2 bus trips per week, women in group B 3.4 trips, 3.6 trips in group C, and 4.3 trips in group D.[56] This compared to 1.3 bus trips a week for men in socioeconomic group A, 2.2 in social group B, 2.6 in group C, and 3.5 in group D. Thus, women across the socioeconomic spectrum used buses more than men, and women in group A used them as much as men in social group B.[57] Across class, it was also estimated that women were passengers in male-driven cars on over 20% of commuting journeys in the 1960s, compared to 2.5% for men.[58] Thus, the husband and wife sharing the family car was not widespread by 1974.[59] This was a period of slow growth in women's modal choice within existing gender roles.

By the 1960s, the pay of women's part-time work was increasing and used to help buy homes and cars.[60] The justification for women's work in order to buy items like cars could vary from the belief that it was a woman's right, to gain interests outside the home, or out of practical financial need.[61] But the notion of topping up household incomes downplayed women's contribution to families and the wider economy.[62] It would also not be until the 1980s that many women became more financially independent, in the higher earning groups

---

[55] L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), 6, TRL; J. Downes, *Variation of Household and Person Travel Times Budgets in Reading* (Crowthorne, 1980), 4, TRL.
[56] C. Mitchell, *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980), 8-9, TRL.
[57] Ibid., 8-10.
[58] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Modal Choice and Modal Change', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 22.
[59] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1961), 105-107; S. O'Connell, *The Car in British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 44-63.
[60] D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book Two: A Shake of the Dice* (London, 2014), 211; London School of Economics, *Woman, Wife and Worker* (London, 1960), 4-5; 10-12; 27.
[61] L. King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity* (Oxford, 2015), 159; H. McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood* (London, 2020), 101-102; The notion women's work satisfied women mentally and socially was influenced by contemporary sociology: H. McCarthy, 'Social Science and Married Women's Employment in Post-War Britain', *Past and Present*, 233 (2016), 270.
[62] D. Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 207; 217; 221; 226.

first, which enabled them to buy their own cars. But even then, there was another incorporation into patriarchal culture as the wife most often drove children to school on the way to work rather than being dropped off by the husband, taking the bus, or walking.[63]

In the 1970s, TRRL surveys found that the number of journeys housewives took as a car driver was almost as much as women working full or part-time, showing the car was still the preserve of the husband.[64] However, around 40% of working women had a driving licence compared to around 30% of housewives by 1975, both being higher among richer households.[65] Women working full time across class were nearly twice as likely to live in a household with a car by 1975 than without one due to their increased household income, and they made more trips by car. These working women made more journeys a day than housewives, but half the family-orientated and social trips. Part-time working women, however, made more trips than full-time workers and housewives due to their greater commitments, but had no more overall access to a car than both.[66] Thus, although part-time work could amount to a relative advance and incomes correlated with increased mobility, transport choices were no easier for part-time working women than those who remained at home or worked full-time due to the power of gender roles.

For less affluent women in urban and suburban space, the 'remoteness of many overspill housing areas from jobs' and amenities also meant buses were initially inadequate but developed over time.[67] However, the next three sections will show that for working women, less affluent housewives, and elderly women in provincial areas, where bus services

---

[63] Small cars were advertised for women since the 1960s and actually designed for them by the 1980s: G. Lees-Maffei, in P. Wollen and J. Kerr (eds), *Autopia* (London, 2002), 364; 365-367; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 6; 61-62; 77; 97; 106; 121; 224.
[64] Only 10% of journeys by housewives in their 20s was as a driver: L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), 2-6; 20-22, TRL.
[65] Ibid., 5-6; 20.
[66] Ibid., 5-6; 20-22.
[67] Greater Manchester Council, *Structure Plan Report of Survey: Public Attitudes Survey*, May 1977, 25-28, Q711.3Gr2, MA; M. Clapson, 'Working Class Women's Experiences of Moving to New Housing Estates', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 352; 355-357.

were less convenient, a local railway could be an important mobility choice in the 1960s and early 1970s.[68] They will also show that these women were aware of this mobility inequality at a time car ownership was benefitting men.

Inconvenience or Hardship in Rail Closures?

As shown in chapter two, the opposition to rail closures was significant in different parts of Britain, but the numbers using those services were not always vast. However, their social impact compared to the local political uproar could be skewed along gender lines. Local rail closure proposals could impact the mobility of women of all ages, but they played a lesser role in the official objections by local authorities and industry, who tended to focus on male commuting and economic issues.[69] Thus, although the overall number of women affected by a closure could be small and the cases assessed can not be representative,[70] as railways offered a means to travel further, faster, and more comfortably than a bus in provincial areas, this chapter shows closures hindered women with limited car access.[71]

Political debates over rail closures failed to proportionately reflect the consequences facing women.[72] Frank Markham's opposition to the Varsity line closure in the Commons focused on how 'men will get to work'.[73] Labour MP Patrick Gordon Walker argued in 1960, as car ownership was accelerating, that the car was challenging the home as the ultimate

[68] L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), 2; 9; 11; 21, TRL.
[69] The TUCCs themselves were a development from the interwar period of voluntary talks between the railways, local government, and industrial groups: H. Shin, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 86-89.
[70] On qualitative transport sources: Colin Pooley, 'Spotlight on the Traveller', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 216-217.
[71] Beeching's emphasis was on the comfort of fast inter-city services. He argued BR carried less than 10% of rural public transport despite rural rail services making up 40% of total passenger train mileage: British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 16.
[72] A similar issue occurred during the planning of housing estates: M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs* (Manchester, 1998), 145-146.
[73] F. Markham, *HC Debs*, vol. 686, cc. 1596, 19 December 1963.

'expression of a man's sense of independence and self-respect'.[74] A study commissioned by British Rail in 1976 on the social effects of ten provincial rail closures in the Beeching period interviewed local people and organisations, finding the poor, women, and the elderly without a car still faced hardship after closure had taken place.[75]

This study found that closures underestimated the hardship suffered by those who needed the railway for regular use, and they were twice as likely to come from non-car owning households. Thus, it was a minority that faced 'distress or isolation', but those who could not afford or use a car could be genuinely cut off from their previous routines, and in some cases forced to move.[76] As many as 77% of those affected by closure also used the railway to go beyond their local branch line to visit family, and less than 25% of them continued to use the railways after closure, reducing social interactions.[77] Many of those who had commuted by rail then purchased a car as they were still economically active, which was less easy for women and the elderly on lower incomes, and fewer had a driving licence.[78]

Although women were often not central to official rail closure protests, their TUCC objections and letters sent to the Minister, were numerous and expressive of their concerns. However, their rhetorical strategies were highly variable. The argument that a replacement bus service would make life more difficult was common, but it was not always spelled out in hours and minutes how it would impact the individual. This could be because objectors did not know specific details about how replacement bus services would hinder them. But it was also self-evident that a bus would provide an inferior service, and many were skeptical that they performed as was claimed. Instead, many objections focused on the advantages of the

---

[74] P. Gordon-Walker, *HC Debs*, vol. 621, cc. 917, 11 April 1960; Also quoted in: S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 527.
[75] M. Hillman and A. Whalley, *The Social Consequences* (London, 1980), 4-11; 22; 36; 52-53; 63; 84-85; 87; 89-92; 100; 113.
[76] Ibid., 86; 99-100; 102.
[77] Ibid., 20; 31; 44; 61.
[78] Ibid., 19-20; 86; 88-92; 102-111.

railways to them as individuals, showing why existing bus services in provincial areas were less preferable, let alone a replacement.[79] Some objections were too vague to make a convincing case of the impact of closure, but others spelt out exactly how closure would hurt the person's daily life and what it meant to them, which made for a powerful argument.

The language of those objecting was also highly variable. Those who faced genuine hardship from closure could use strident language. But this was by no means guaranteed because an irregular user could still write an inflammatory letter, just as a person dependent on a railway might write in a restrained or stoic manner. Moreover, detailing exactly how a closure would affect someone's daily life could be a sign of its crucial significance to them. And yet, a woman or elderly person might not use the line very regularly for it still to have great importance to their mobility. The idea that an individual has the democratic right to have local transport provided thus framed closures as a loss of that right and the railways as a social service, whether that individual faced regular inconvenience or genuine hardship.[80]

The official avenue to object to a closure was to fill out a form for the TUCC hearing. Under the stipulations of the 1962 Transport Act, there was a focus on the details of how a closure would impact someone's daily life and the uses of a replacement bus to identify the nature of hardship. This often led objections to be constrained, centring on information about replacement buses and particular journeys.[81] However, personal letters sent to BR or the Minister could be expressive of how closure would impact the individual. It should also be remembered how much less convenient replacement buses could be. The Manchester to Buxton rail service proposed for closure in 1964, for example, took on average 49 minutes but

---

[79] Ibid., 85-86; 109.
[80] Mobility is considered by sociology as a social capability intrinsic to well-being that has seen the exclusion of women: D. Kronlid, in T. Uteng and T. Cresswell (eds), *Gendered Mobilities* (Aldershot, 2008), 19; 29-30; T. Cresswell, 'The Right to Mobility: The Production of Mobility', *Antipode*, 38 (2006), 742; Popular Individualism is also relevant here: E. Robinson et al, 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism', *Twentieth Century History*, 28 (2017), 274; 289-290.
[81] W. Ashworth, *The State in Business, 1945* (Basingstoke, 1991), 166-167.

the replacement bus 75 to 90 minutes. Indeed, the total return time by train was 102 minutes, compared to at least 180 minutes by bus, and the bus was only marginally cheaper.[82]

The middle class status of an objector could also make a closure more of an inconvenience than a threat of hardship, regardless of gender. Mr Russell, from London, objected to the closure of the Ashford to Hastings line as he was about to move from the capital to Appledore in Kent in 1967. He argued that closure may 'result in local residents having to buy a second car', to avert the experience of hardship.[83] Lord Ritchie, the Chairman of the Stock Exchange in the City of London also objected to the closure of the Ashford to Hastings line in May 1963 as it was 'an excellent train service which places it one and a half hours or less from London', and had 'become a place from which quite a number of people commute daily'.[84]

This was also seen among women, though more rarely. Miss Margaret Shepherd, objecting to the closure of the Ashford to Hastings line in June 1967, lived in London but had a holiday home in Rye and so found the closure irksome. 'Although the holder of a driving licence I do not own a car because I find no need for one in London', she wrote, showing the transport choice available in the capital. If the line closed, she argued, she would 'have to buy a car and make the journey by road'.[85] Dr Audrey Henson, an ophthalmologist from London, wrote to object to the Somerset and Dorset line closure as she worked in London, Glastonbury and Burnham-on-Sea and needed to visit patients. 'I do not consider myself a driver', Henson stated, and in any case, 'a car in central London is impossible' and she 'could not afford the time to mess about with buses'.[86] Miss Christine Addison wrote to the Minister

---

[82] Manchester (Piccadilly) – Buxton Proposed Closure, June 1964, 3, TNA, MT 100/122; Beeching stressed the availability of pre-existing bus services that were already more popular than the local rail service: British Railways Board, *Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963), 13-19.
[83] Letter from Mr E. Russell, 25 April 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[84] Letter from Lord Ritchie, 28 May 1963, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[85] Letter from M. Shepherd, 8 June 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[86] Letter from Dr Audrey Henson, 17 February 1965, TNA, MT 124/1195; Objection from Dr. Audrey Henson, 17 July 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.

opposing the closure of Louth station on the Peterborough to Grimsby line as she used it to visit her mother from London in 1967, stating that if the station was closed, 'I for one and many others…will have to buy a car'.[87]

Therefore, regardless of the financial position of a rail service, or the objector, the individual's perspective of their use was paramount to them. Miss E. Wright from Bath objected to the closure of the Firsby to Skegness line in May 1964, using it 'several times a year to visit elderly relatives' and she had 'no car!' This did not represent regular use to make the service profitable, but the individual's experience of it was always at the forefront of how they viewed its prospects. Indeed, Wright's argument that the line was 'too important' to close and that the railways could break-even was based on her own experience: 'Whenever I travel home the train is full, and the local train from Firsby very crowded', she wrote.[88]

Another objection to the closure of the Firsby to Skegness line showed how hardship could still result if a sporadic user had few alternatives because of age. Mrs Ramsdale from Nottingham declared that she was a 'railway traveller in the summer months', and 'an old age pensioner' without a driving licence. Her opposition was stated strongly: 'we have not all got cars'. Indeed she sought to 'beg' for the service not to be shut: 'Soon there will be none for the passenger whatever', which was making her 'sadly disillusioned' about the future due to the difficulty of making trips by bus.[89] Closures could result in genuine damage to women's choices without hope of becoming a driver, even if they were not daily users.

The use of the word 'convenient' could also have different meanings depending on the objector. Mr Banks, a car owner from Bournemouth, wrote to protest the closure of the

---

[87] Letter from Miss C. Addison, 28 February 1967, TNA, MT 124/718; Poorer residents of rural areas sometimes buy cars for mobility but the cost makes them poorer: D. Gray et al, 'Community Transport, Social Capital and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas', *Area*, 38 (2006), 92-94.
[88] Letter from Miss E. Wright, May 1964, TNA, MT 124/724; Perceptions of transport, although individually-based, can correlate with wider social values and favour public transport when those values are made obvious to the individual: M. Van Vugt and P. Van Lange, 'Commuting by Car or Public Transportation? A Social Dilemma', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 26 (1996), 274-276.
[89] Letter from Mrs Ramsdale, March 1965, TNA, MT 124/724.

Somerset and Dorset line in August 1965. Banks, 'as a fairly regular user', described the service as 'very convenient', and admonished BR's handling of the service that he believed had 'obviously been neglected'. He evoked the role of the railways as a social service, asking the Minister: Are Britain's Railways for [the] public or the economists?'[90] Mr Pullen, an 88 year old pensioner also wrote to ask Tom Fraser about the Somerset and Dorset line. But he showed how 'convenience' to an older person could mean more in the context of his bodily immobility. I 'cannot go on the bus', he argued 'as it is crowded', and his elderly wife was 'always tired' after using them compared to the more comfortable train. They used the line mostly to visit the seaside, which may not be considered an essential trip, but the choices open to the elderly were limited by their immobility and would be reduced after closure. Thus, for them, convenience was almost synonymous with mobility.[91]

Hardship and Women

This section will assess women's objections to local rail closures. They came from different social groups, and thus gender was at least as important as class in determining how women perceived them.[92] Firstly, closures could represent a threat to paid work. Miss C. Davies from Shepton Mallet had to 'rely on' the Somerset and Dorset line to commute to her job as a 'shorthand-typist' in Wincanton in 1963. Alternative transport was scant, and she stated that 'if it wasn't for the train I could not get to work at all, for I can't afford to run a car or buy a scooter'. The closure threatened her career after 'two years training', stating that it 'would be a waste just to work in a factory' closer to home.[93] The language of Mrs Elisabeth Koposita from Shepton Mallet had a sense of desperation about the closure. She had come to 'depend' on the train for her job as a nurse. She objected 'very strongly' at the TUCC, and

[90] Letter from Mr M. Banks, 26 August 1965, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[91] Letter from Mr F. Pullen, 26 August 1965, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[92] C. Pooley and M. Pooley, 'Young Women on the Move', *Social Science History*, 45 (2021), 495; 511.
[93] Objection from Miss C. Davies, 31 July 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.

pleaded for the decision makers to 'realise the chaos and havoc you will bring by closing the line'.[94] The railways transported women to work in provincial areas, and objectors' lives were disrupted by closures, regardless of the services' financial position.

Showing the prevalence of women in the teaching profession, Mrs Smith from Shepton Mallet objected in 1963, stating she must 'protest most strongly' against the closure of Somerset and Dorset line. 'I use the line daily to get to and from work' as a teacher in Bruton, she stated. She also stressed the importance of the railway to those with limited choice: 'People who use the railways are those without cars'.[95] Also opposing the Somerset and Dorset line closure, Mrs Amy Rocker from Wincanton informed the Minister that she was 'a school-teacher at Shepton Mallet' to which she had 'travelled daily' for 'several years'. 'If the railway closes', she stated, 'I must inevitably resign from my post'. Her objection also stressed her sense of 'the utmost scepticism of any assurances that alternative transport will become available'.[96] The language used by working women could be deeply felt but also restrained even when their employment was compromised.

Working women with family commitments could be affected by closure. Mrs Kate Griffiths, a 47 year old widow from Llanelltyd, objected to the Ruabon to Barmouth closure in the spring of 1964 because she lived with her 22 year old daughter who suffered from 'heart trouble and muscular dystrophy'. As a result, their visits to hospitals in Liverpool were regular and her daughter stayed overnight, including at the time, when she had been 'admitted to the Royal Infirmary'. In the past, Griffiths 'was able to get to Liverpool, visit my daughter and return home on the same day using the train'. After closure, she would not be able to visit her 'without staying at Liverpool for at least one night', adding expense and time to her limited income.[97]

---

[94] Objection from Mrs E. Koposita, 11 July 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[95] Objection from Mrs B. Smith, 2 August 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[96] Objection from Mrs H. Rocker, 1 July 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[97] Objection from Mrs K. Griffiths, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.

Working women without access to a car stressed Barbara Castle's gender to make their situation more palpable to the Minister. Mrs Doris Hardman, a working woman from Alford, wrote to object to the Peterborough to Grimsby line closure in January 1967. She appealed to Barbara Castle to give 'consideration to the plight of the hard-working women of Lincolnshire who rely' on the service to 'get to any town at all'. She pleaded to Castle from the 'woman's point of view, the fatal mistake this would be'. Hardman used to 'work for the LNER during the war', which gave her the insight to know the line 'is not making a profit'. But she also detailed her lack of access to a car. Indeed, 'to suggest that we travel…by road to catch a train' would mean 'our husbands then driving us to a distant station and coming to meet us from it at night', which would be impossible.[98] In households that did have a car, the primary use of it was the husband's.

Miss F. Glisbey opposed the closure of the Shanklin to Ventnor line on the Isle of Wight in the summer of 1966, writing to Barbara Castle twice. She appealed to Castle as a woman: 'I hoped you would see my letter, as being a woman you might appreciate more the difficulties that are experienced in the handling of luggage', and 'push chairs on buses', resulting in tiredness and discomfort.[99] Mrs Kathleen Souter, who worked for the National Women's Citizen's Association, also objected to the rail closures on the Isle of Wight in March 1967. 'We appeal to you as a woman', she wrote, for it was 'elderly, poor women who suffer this hardship'. The rich retirees are able to drive their 'huge motor cars!!' while 'the people I am writing about are poor retired elderly people – and there are thousands living on this island'. She asked the Minister to imagine elderly women 'struggling up the stairs' of the replacement buses, seeking to affect the Minister.[100]

Women's objection letters could stress that, as men became more mobile, rail closures

---

[98] Letter from Mrs D. Hardman, 9 January 1967, TNA, MT 124/718.
[99] Letter from Miss F. Glisbey, 20 June 1966; Letter from Miss F. Glisbey, 10 June 1966, TNA, MT 124/1193.
[100] Letter from Mrs K. Souter, 13 March 1967, TNA, MT 124/1194.

were making them less so. Mrs Olwen Hughes objected to the Ruabon to Barmouth closure as 'a housewife', stating from the start: 'My husband owns a car but I personally cannot drive', and therefore 'depend on public transport'. By stating her husband owned the car rather than her too, it suggests the vehicle was firmly in her husband's realm. Using the replacement bus service for Mrs Hughes also meant having to stay in Barmouth for two hours longer than she needed when doing the weekly shop or attending the local Women's Institute.[101] Mrs Dunford from a village near Bath, objecting to the Somerset and Dorset line closure, described herself as 'an ordinary housewife', and reiterated that 'great hardship will be suffered' by locals after the railway closes, 'excepting car owners' who will not have to worry about 'a most inadequate bus service' used by 'mothers with young children and people like myself'. 'This is 1963', she stated, mocking the government's modernisation as regressive.[102]

Mrs N. Fox objected to the Hailsham to Polegate line in 1967, stating, 'we are not all able to have cars and it is our only way to travel'. Her limited choices in connecting to London, and the speed of the train compared to the bus were understandably important. 'I do hope and pray in spite of "economics" a way will be found to keep this line open', she pleaded, arguing that 'to cut a market town off and a busy shopping centre seems a tragedy'.[103] Mrs Susan Rawnsley from Alford objected to the closure of the Peterborough to Grimsby line in 1965 by focusing on the inequality many faced with growing car use. 'It is often said', she stated, that 'everyone has a car now. But this is not so'. 'Even if every family had a car, one member of it cannot be taken to a distant station…neither can another member of the family be always free to act as chauffeur'. Even if the car is free for someone to use, 'that person, if she is a woman' might thus be unable to 'undertake a long drive'.[104]

---

[101] Objection from Mrs Olwen Hughes, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[102] Objection from Mrs E. Dunford, 29 July 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[103] Objection from Mrs N. Fox, September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[104] Letter from Mrs Susan Rawnsley, 1965, TNA, MT 100/108.

Little access to a car affected working women and housewives alike. Miss Delyth Evans from Dolgellau stated at the beginning of her objection to the Ruabon to Barmouth line closure in 1964: 'I am a single person and do not possess a motor car', immediately attracting attention to her lack of choice. She worked at the County Court Office in Wrexham and travelled home on Friday nights, and could return to Wrexham on the Monday morning by train. This routine, connecting Evans with her family, would not be possible with the replacement bus service as she would have to leave on the Saturday morning and return on the Sunday night. 'My very livelihood depends on the continued existence of the railway line', she argued, and closure would mean having to 'secure other employment'.[105] A 'housewife', Mary Jones from Merioneth, objected to the closure, stating: 'I do not own a motor car, and I rely exclusively upon public transport', arguing that her life 'will be isolated' and that the government was neglecting her.[106] Thus, the railways were framed by working women and housewives as ways to connect to people and places in their mobility inequality.

Younger women could also work long distances from home during the week and use the railway to return to relatives, making closure a threat to family ties. Miss Thelma Hird, from Alford objected to the closure of the Peterborough to Grimsby service as a threat to her employment. 'I am a school teacher in Grimsby', she wrote. 'I have to travel there and back every week' to get home. 'If the line is closed', she argued, 'I shall have to give up my post'.[107] Miss Rhian Thomas was a nurse at the War Memorial Hospital in Wrexham and used the Ruabon to Barmouth line to 'travel home' to her parents in Llandderfel every week. The poor bus service and insufficient pay to be able to afford a car as a nurse were central. As a result, she would 'not be able to go home as frequently', which would impact her work and social life.[108]

---

[105] Objection from Miss Delyth Evans, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[106] Objection from Mrs Mary Jones, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[107] Letter from Miss Thelma Hird, 1965, TNA, MT 100/108.
[108] Objection from Miss Rhian Thomas, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.

The hardship caused by the replacement bus service was detailed by working women. Mrs Knight from Sheringham in Norfolk protested the closure of the Sheringham to Melton Constable line in 1964 as a qualified teacher who did 'not drive a car'. The replacement bus service meant she would have to wait in Melton Constable for at least two hours after work before being able to return home, worsening her daily life.[109] These kinds of disruptions must have contrasted with men able to drive their cars home. Mrs E. Bartlett, from Appledore in Kent, was a 'nurse, working night duty at Willesborough Hospital' who wrote to object to the closure of the Ashford to Hastings line. Bartlett stressed the 'desperate situation of people' using the line, and wrote emphatically about the bus. 'A bus service would NOT be the answer', she wrote, which was 'desperately inadequate' and would add an hour to her daily commute. She reiterated 'not everyone can have a car', spelling out the inequality between drivers and the rest.[110]

During bad weather in February 1965, Miss E. Jones, a senior mistress at the high school in Dolgellau wrote of her experiences of the replacement bus after the closure of the Ruabon to Barmouth line. Her journey from Dolgellau to Ruabon, which took over an hour by train, saw the passengers arrive 'at Ruabon absolutely frozen' after a 3 hour bus journey. On arriving back late in Dolgellau, the connecting bus to Fairbourne had already left and those stranded had to 'make what arrangements they could to get home'. The bus stop connecting to the train station at Ruabon also required people to 'walk across the estuary bridge', often in the 'driving wind and rain', contrasting these experiences with car users.[111] Indeed, the added connections needed to use buses were troublesome. Mrs E. Ellis from Bristol was a 'regular user' of the Somerset and Dorset line between Glastonbury and Highbridge in 1963, and her replacement bus, she stated, would 'involve me in over a mile's

[109] Letter from Mrs G. Knight, 5 March 1964, TNA, MT 124/726.
[110] Letter from Mrs E. Bartlett, 9 January 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[111] Letter from Miss E. Jones, 14 February 1965, TNA, MT 124/1182.

walk', which was something the door-to-door car trip avoided.[112]

Older women who used the train to commute could object for the same reasons: their lack of access to cars, the inadequacy of buses, and the impact closure would have. Mrs Scammell from Islip worked as a music teacher in Oxford and wrote to Tom Fraser in July 1965 arguing the trains 'enable me to work', and 'not for sport or pleasure'.[113] Indeed, Scammell sent 5 letters objecting to the Varsity line closure between July 1964 and September 1965, and the situation for women were central in her arguments. In November 1964, she stressed that men had 'large pay packets' despite their 'continual striking, and causing trouble, yet women cannot get in'. The 'only alternative they have made for the women is to walk one and a quarter miles to the main road and hope to catch a bus there', she wrote. 'I have listened to Conservative political broadcasts, and also read in the newspapers' the slogans claiming 'opportunity for women and jobs for all', Scammell argued, which contrasted with her own experience.[114]

In July 1965, Scammell wrote that she was 'shocked beyond words to see the notice at Islip' for closure of the Varsity line. 'What are we to do?' she asked the Minister. 'Women have worked in Oxford as secretaries etc', but will no longer 'get to work'. She pleaded that closure would mean having to 'stay at home and twiddle my thumbs', and a life 'wasted'. She ended her second to last letter by pleading for 'some relaxation from this everlasting worry' due to the protracted nature of the closure, hoping that the Minister would 'arrange for a train to bring us home again, and not leave us stranded'.[115] Her final letter was angrier as the fate of the line became clear. It is '1965 and in our own country we cannot get around', she stated, asking for the government to 'think for a while how you would feel if you were deprived of

[112] Objection Mrs E. Ellis, 27 June 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[113] Letter from Mrs A. Scammell, 20 July 1965, TNA, MT 124/1137.
[114] Letter from Mrs A. Scammell, November 1964; Letter from Mrs A. Scammell, 22 July 1964, TNA, MT 124/714.
[115] Letter from Mrs A. Scammell, 20 July 1965, TNA, MT 124/1137.

travelling'. Having a railway line at the centre of this woman's mobility meant closure caused fear and hardship. The final sentence of her last letter in September 1965 stated: 'Life means nothing to us if we cannot get around and work'.[116]

Scammell was not the only older woman using the Varsity line to commute. Miss E. Barraud, a pensioner who worked as a laboratory assistant at Cambridge, commuted from Little Eversden and argued the line was useful 'for students young and old, and rural inhabitants wanting to get to the towns'. It was also a link to London and the North of England for those without a car.[117] Mrs E. Feetham, a 60 year old widow and clerical worker in Oxford wrote from Bicester in objection. She told Castle that the hardship caused would be 'worse than may be portrayed', highlighting the lack of coverage of marginal groups' mobility in the press. The replacement buses would also mean she would have an hour and a half added to her daily commute, which forced her to consider 'premature retirement'.[118]

Mrs Stellan from Aspley Guise used the Varsity line every day to commute to Bedford and stated in April 1966 that she would be 'out of work' without it. She also attacked the Labour government who had promised to stop the closure. 'I thought if you might have a letter from me (humble folk) it might help you understand the difficulties of the local residents', she wrote, feeling ignored as a less affluent woman.[119] Stellan wrote again in March 1967, when the mid-section of the line had been temporarily reprieved, showing the importance of the line to her. She thanked Barbara Castle for her 'generosity and kindness', stating: 'we are very grateful'.[120]

Other older women used the Varsity line for social reasons and felt the mobility inequality with the closure. Mrs Celia Reiss, a 77 year old from Great Shelford, wrote to

[116] Letter from Mrs A. Scammell, 10 September 1965, TNA, MT 124/714.
[117] Letter from Miss E. Barraud, 26 February 1966, TNA, MT 124/1137.
[118] Letter from Mrs E. Feetham, 29 November 1967, TNA, MT 124/1139.
[119] Letter from D. Stellan, 16 April 1966, TNA, MT 124/1137.
[120] Letter from Mrs D. Stellan, 29 March 1967, TNA, MT 124/1138.

object in April 1966, stressing the government's argument that the line suffered from low demand ignored those who use it. 'Even if it is only used by a limited number of passengers', she argued, 'it is essential to those passengers', highlighting the inequality elderly women faced. She used the line to go shopping, and to visit her son as often as she could, arguing the railways were of 'great value to the elderly'.[121] In November 1967, Reiss wrote again, seeing that the line was closing in sections. 'Perhaps we, who use it, are not important enough to matter', she wrote, resigned to the loss of the line.[122]

Mrs E. Johnson from Potton wrote to Barbara Castle objecting to the Varsity line closure in November 1967 as a parish councillor, asking her: 'Have you stopped to think what this means to young and old alike?' The train's 'amenities are our rights', she argued, framing the railways as a social service.[123] The line was also used by younger women such as student, Miss Felicity Collier from Sandy, who asked how the Labour government was 'going to build a better Britain if they discontinue rail', questioning Wilson's modernisation. She stated she was 'utterly in the hand of the government' without her own transport.[124] This underlines that the discourse on affluence in Britain should be seen in gendered terms at a time mobility was expanding for men more than women. Labour's traditional ideas of the male breadwinner was also slow to adapt to female concerns before the 1970s.[125]

The letter from Mrs F. Cubbage from Verney Junction showed the effects of the closure of the Varsity line on the daily lives of elderly women among the rural poor. 'We have no bus station for a mile', which meant she walked home 'laden with shopping'.[126] It must be remembered that compared to the Varsity line, the replacement bus journeys were

---

[121] Letter from Mrs C. Reiss, 8 April 1966, TNA, MT 124/1137.
[122] Letter from Mrs C. Reiss, 28 November 1967, TNA, MT 124/1139.
[123] Letter from Mrs E. Johnson, 27 November 1967, TNA, MT 124/1139.
[124] Letter from Miss F. Collier, 17 December 1967, TNA, MT 124/1139.
[125] A. Black and S. Brooke, 'The Labour Party, Women, and the Problem of Gender', *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (1997), 423-424; 449-450; R. Jobson, 'A New Hope for an Old Britain?' *The Journal of Policy History*, 27 (2015), 684-686.
[126] Letter from Mrs. F. Cubbage, 26 January 1968, TNA, AN 155/45.

estimated to be 139% longer and the fares between 50 and 200% higher.[127] Thus, 'Country people just won't be able to pay the fare', Cubbage argued. For a woman who used the line regularly, closure linked spatial mobility with social progress. It is 'distressing', she wrote, 'to see how derelict everywhere is getting', and this she linked to being 'cut off' after closure. 'Reconsider your decision and BRING BACK THE TRAINS, which are more comfortable, warmer and quicker' she pleaded, without the option of a car.[128] Objectors could also use the fear that their area would become a 'village backwater' to oppose closure, but others could write of their concern of being overrun by rich commuting newcomers in their cars.[129]

Indeed, women continued to write to the Minister after sections of the Varsity line were closed, exasperated at the decline of their mobility. Miss C. Atkey from Marsh Gibbon wrote to Castle in November 1967 on behalf of herself and her sister who she lived with. Atkey told Castle she had promised a replacement bus service but 'we have NO bus', as City of Oxford Motors say 'it is uneconomical to run the country service'. She acknowledged that 'true, many people have cars' today, 'but we are two spinsters living on a pension with no other means of transport'. The 'isolation and great inconvenience' she felt was exacerbated by the two and a half mile walk to the nearest village bus stop, showing that living without a car was personally difficult for those in rural areas. The use of the word 'inconvenience' here, despite this person's limited mobility choice, also suggests the language she used was constrained.[130] Indeed, by 1975, only 29% of women had a driving licence compared to 69% of men, and so local railways would have helped women with limited options.[131]

The objections to the Polegate to Hailsham line closure in Sussex in 1967 show

---

[127] G. Brewis, Special Committee Booklet, Appendix G, 30 July 1964, 11, TNA, MT 124/714.
[128] Letter from Mrs F. Cubbage, 26 January 1968, TNA, AN 155/45.
[129] Hastings in this case: Letter from Miss A. Page, 1 May 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198; Letter from J. Pankhurst, 30 May 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198; Similar concerns about newcomers in: M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core* (Cambridge, 1981), 41; 46; 91; 94-96; 189; 207.
[130] Letter from Miss C. Atkey, 20 November 1967, TNA, MT 124/1139.
[131] C. Pooley, 'Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion', *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), 107.

concentrations of women could use local railways to commute. Miss S. Carpenter from Hailsham objected 'very strongly' to the closure, writing: 'I travel to Eastbourne each day to work and if the line was closed I would have to spend at least another hour travelling by bus', and its fares were higher.[132] Mrs A. Fish from Hailsham used simple language to convey the importance of the line for her commute to Hampden Park in Eastbourne: 'You wish to know of the hardships this will bring to me', she argued, there is 'no bus on the return journey' and the bus is already 'inadequate'. 'I thought the railway was a public service', she pleaded, 'whether it pays or not'.[133] The mobility inequality developing in this period understandably made the financial losses of the railways less important than a person's ability to commute.

More working women objected to the Polegate to Hailsham closure. To 'protest strongly', Mrs P. Knight from Hailsham stated she had 'to travel to and from' Hampden Park for work every day. Bus fares were 'almost double what we pay now and it also adds over one hour extra on our daily travelling time', she argued.[134] Mrs E. Millard from Brighton stated the closure would 'cause acute hardship'. She was 'a middle aged widow', who had used the line via Eastbourne to Hailsham 'for the past 12 years' to get to work 'as a dentist receptionist', and feared closure would mean harder bus journeys or the 'need to seek work elsewhere'.[135] Mrs Joyce Piper worked for the East Sussex Education Committee and needed to travel between the towns of Hailsham, Lewes, Hasting, Hove, Uckfield and Newhaven, and argued these round-trips to different schools would be impossible by multiple buses.[136]

Miss S. Haffendon from Hailsham argued 'it is absolutely appalling that such drastic steps' were taken to close the rail service. She travelled 'to Hampden Park almost every day' for work, and the replacement would require her to walk part of the way at both ends of her

---

[132] Letter from Miss S. Carpenter, September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[133] Objection from Mrs A. Fish, 11 September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[134] Objection from Mrs P. Knight, 12 September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[135] Objection from Mrs E. Millard, September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[136] Objection from Mrs J. Piper, 16 September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.

journey, and cost double the rail fare.[137] Miss E. Harris, a tailor working in Eastbourne, took the train from Hailsham, having cycled from home, and feared that finding alternative work was going to be hard in her profession if she could no longer reach Eastbourne.[138] Mrs D. Harvey from Polegate had travelled to Hailsham 'for some 25 years, having held a season ticket for 21 years' for all her journeys. Harvey lived next to the Polegate train station, but the replacement bus service would require her to catch the bus to the main road and then change to reach Hailsham, which would mean more time and money spent.[139]

Objections from women, rather than using emotive language, could offer practical information to oppose closure. The objection from Miss M. Van Benthey argued the closure of the Polegate to Hailsham line would make her commute harder. 'I travel from Hailsham to Hampden Park and back every day', she stated, 'catching the eight twenty train going and the five twenty five returning.' She also questioned the replacement bus. 'My fares will be doubled by having to catch a bus', she argued, 'and then getting a connection will take much longer'.[140] Miss B. Wells from Hailsham worked in Lewes, and the alternative bus routes would mean having to 'leave home 40 minutes earlier to arrive at work' and then wait for 35 minutes 'on the roadside' on the return journey. 'This point', she argued, 'is not appreciated by people with cars'. Bus stops also lacked shelter in bad weather compared to the train's 'fixed stations with shelter for waiting passengers – and warmth when needed'.[141] The fixity, speed, and convenience of local railways, and the ability of car drivers to leave and return home when they wanted contrasted with local bus services.

These difficulties may appear manageable or trivial, but the mobility of many men was increasing with car ownership. By the late 1960s, nearly 60% of men had a driving licence

[137] Objection from Miss S. Haffendon, 12 September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[138] Objection from Miss E. Harris, 16 August 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[139] Objection from Mrs D. Harvey, 29 September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[140] Objection from Miss M. Van Benthey, September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[141] Objection from Miss B. Wells, 17 September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.

compared to less than 20% of women. Research by the Department of Transport's cost-benefit analysis unit in 1972 found that, on average, if half of rail users transferred to cars they would lose 10 minutes in journey times. But if they transferred to a bus, as women disproportionately would, their journey times increased by 42 minutes on average, demonstrating the hardship suffered by those without car access after a rail closure.[142]

Mothers and housewives also described their mobility disadvantages if the railways were to be replaced by buses. Mrs Raweasmouth, objecting to the Hull to Scarborough line closure, stressed to Barbara Castle that journeys to Bridlington from Hull with her family by rail took 40 minutes, but 2 hours by East Yorks Motor Services, involving much 'aggravation and boredom'.[143] Another objector in the area asked: 'Have you ever tried travelling on a bus with several young children, a pram, and the necessary luggage?'[144] Mrs Kitty Edwards objected to the closure of the Ruabon to Barmouth line in March 1964 as a young mother needing to take her son to the clinic in Corwen. There was 'no facility for accommodating a pram on a bus', she protested, and if several mothers travelled at the same time, it was 'impossible to find the room for them'.[145]

Some mothers used more emotive language. Edith Nethail objected to the closure of the Polegate to Hailsham line in August 1967 as a 'regular user'. 'It is astounding how the so called planners can ride roughshod over the public who are treated like sheep and stripped of all "say" in matters', she argued. 'What about young women with prams[?]' she probed, before mocking the bus: 'It is no use telling them that a bus service is available'. Then she asked the TUCC to picture young mothers 'fighting with a folding pram and baby without any help' to illustrate their mobility inequality.[146] Mrs S. Pierre from Eastbourne also

[142] I. Scooter and J. Hollingworth Thesis Outline CBA Procedure, 1971-74, TNA, MT 188/62.
[143] Letter from Mrs. Rawearmouth, March 1967, TNA, MT 124/1211.
[144] Letter from J. Milner, 11 February 1967, TNA, MT 124/1211.
[145] Objection from Mrs Kitty Edwards, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[146] Objection from E. Nethail, 10 August 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.

objected to the Polegate to Hailsham closure, stating: 'it is very appalling as not many people today think of the young mothers with prams that can't possibly fold up on to a bus'.[147] During these late stages of the baby boom, women with young children continued to have limited access to cars, and the advantages of trains over buses are clear in their objections.

Older People

Those around the age of 65 in 1976 were the last generation to see the advent of mass car ownership without many learning to drive as they were already in their mid-forties by the 1950s.[148] Car ownership had not started the tradition of Britons moving to small towns and villages for retirement, which developed from the beginning of the twentieth century for the community spirit, to be near relatives, or cheaper housing. Popular retirement areas included those moving from Merseyside to North Wales such as Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, and Rhyl. Many also moved to Norfolk and Suffolk from the East Midlands. The largest retirement movements were to the South and South West, such as the Sussex coast, which, by 1971 had a population almost a third of which was over 60. As Britain became an aging population, the elderly by the mid-1970s became more geographically separated from younger people compared to 1945 as they concentrated in suburbs, seaside resorts, and rural retirement areas.[149] As we have seen, many elderly widowed or single women, and many pensioner households could not afford a car, and if they did, the wife did not have priority use.

The objections from elderly people linked their lack of access to a car to the hardship caused by rail closures. Miss Margaret Williams living in Bryn Eryr, volunteered for the Baptist Missionary and started her objection to the Ruabon to Barmouth closure, thus: 'I am a

[147] Objection from S. Pierre, September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[148] J. Hopkin, *The Ownership and Use of Cars by Elderly People* (Crowthorne, 1981), 12, TRL.
[149] C. Law and A. Warnes, 'The Changing Geography of the Elderly in England and Wales', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 1 (1976), 453; 455-458; 460; 463-464; J. Hopkin, *The Ownership and Use of Cars by Elderly People* (Crowthorne, 1981), 23, TRL.

spinster and rely exclusively upon public transport and do not possess a motor car'. Williams connected her single status and gender with the need for public transport. She argued her 'friends help me carry luggage to the station at Cynwyd and porters are at hand', contrasting with bus stops with no staff.[150] Mrs M. King from Hailsham objected to the closure of the Polegate to Hailsham line in September 1967 because she used 'the train five days in the week' to visit her family. As a woman of 'over sixty years of age', she argued, she 'would not be able to manage to carry my luggage' on the replacement bus.[151] In contrast to urban areas where existing bus services were abundant, in provincial areas the replacement bus service was more relevant to rail users losing their service.

Mrs Olwen Jones also opened her objection to the Ruabon to Barmouth closure with: 'I do not possess a car'. Such a statement from a woman summed up their lack of mobility choices. Jones was a member of local county committees and of the Penllyn Bench of Magistrates. She found the replacement bus services would be 'of no assistance' in taking her to meetings in nearby towns. Indeed, 'there are many people, like myself, who do not possess cars', she argued, 'but who take an active part in the public life of the county'. She stated closure would mean 'people like myself would be virtually debarred from taking an active interest in many of the organisations' that serve the community.[152] Mrs A. Giles, a retiree from Henfield, wrote to object to the closure of the Brighton to Horsham line in May 1965. 'I have worked hard all my life', she stated, 'in the hope that we might have a little for luxuries when we retired. What a hope!' She feared retirement would be somewhat limited by the closure: 'You save, the government by their wicked waste, take it from you, and now closing the railway is the last straw', she wrote.[153]

Miss Alice Jones, from Bala, began her objection to the Ruabon to Barmouth closure

---

[150] Objection from Miss M. Williams, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[151] Objection from Mrs M. King, 14 September 1967, TNA, AN 177/236.
[152] Objection from Mrs Olwen Jones, March 1965, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[153] Letter from A. Giles, 15 May 1965, TNA, MT 124/1197.

by stating: 'I do not own a car. I am 67 years of age'. Stating her age and lack of access to a car summed up the importance of public transport. She used the line to go to Wrexham as it held the 'nearest big shopping centre'. Jones argued that she 'would not consider making long journeys of this nature by bus', due to its lack of speed, heating, comfort, and facilities. Closures 'would mean that I will be virtually confined to Bala', unable to make journeys as and when she wished.[154] Miss D Potts from Evercreech objected to the Somerset and Dorset line closure on behalf of Shepton Mallet Women's Institute, articulating what so many women did, that 'there are still many people who do not use a car', and women are able to 'take luggage, bicycles, invalid chairs and perambulators' on the railways, and 'none of these can be carried by omnibus' so easily.[155] Indeed, as we will see, the railways represented mobility for women, the elderly, but also people with disabilities.

Mrs A. Devey, from Penmaenpool, wrote in objection to the closure of the Ruabon to Barmouth line. Again, she opened her letter by stating: 'I am a widow living on my own', and 'I do not own a car'. 'Most of my time', she wrote was spent 'visiting her children' in Birmingham and Leicestershire, and therefore, as a widow, being unable to make these trips was daunting. She feared closure: 'I simply cannot visualise my life here if the railway closes as I shall be virtually cut off from my relations'.[156] Miss Margaret Herold was an 81 year old woman from Arthog, objecting to the closure of the Ruabon to Barmouth, again stating: 'I do not own a car, and I am therefore completely dependent on the train service'. She used the line to Barmouth 'for shopping', and to 'visit my many friends living in Dolgellau, Bala and Llangollen'. She considered the replacement bus 'unsuitable for a person of my age' and stated that 'many of my friends do not possess cars, and when they visit, they travel here by train'.[157] Closure in such a situation represented a real threat to social interactions.

---

[154] Objection from Miss Alice Jones, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[155] Objection from Miss D. Potts, 30 July 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[156] Objection from Mrs A. Devey, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[157] Objection from Miss Margaret Herold, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.

Mrs Mary Wilkinson, from Merioneth, wrote in objection to the Ruabon to Barmouth closure in March 1964, stating: 'I am a widow and do not possess a car', again implying the need for public transport. She used the train for shopping in Barmouth or Dolgellau three times a week and showed the rail return fare was 8 pence less than the bus, 'which is a big consideration to a widow with a limited income'. Wilkinson still worked as a private nursing sister to individuals and travelled 'all over the country'. When she was at home she went by train 'frequently to Wrexham for shopping purposes' where food is cheaper than in smaller towns nearby. She also used the railway to visit relatives in Birmingham and Northampton, stating: 'it is particularly comforting, especially as a widow to be able to keep in personal contact with friends and relatives'.[158] Mobility was key for many women in allowing them to live full lives, and the closure of a nearby railway in provincial areas was detrimental to that.

For some who were very elderly and whose social lives had declined, the railway could be perceived as the last mode of independent transport. Mildred Pearce from Bristol objected to the closure of the Somerset and Dorset line as a 'regular user' to Bath 'for some 30 years'. For her, closure would mean the 'giving up of the only pleasure of my getting out for my big shop over the years'. She described how she 'always found porters kind and helpful and I shall indeed be sad should the line be closed'.[159] Compared to a bus stop, train stations provided chances for social interaction and help for older people. Anne Barnes from Tenterden in Kent objected to the closure of the Ashford to Hastings line as 'a widow, in my sixties' who does 'not drive or possess a car'. She could 'no longer carry suitcases', making bus travel harder compared to rail. The cost and time taken for 'occasional holidays and visits to family and friends' would also increase. Her sense of individual fear of closure led her to argue the railway provided 'great social value to the neighbourhood'.[160]

---

[158] Objection from Mrs Mary Wilkinson, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[159] Objection from Mrs M. Pearce, 26 June 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.
[160] Letter from Lady A. Barnes, 30 May 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198.

Indeed, provincial railways often provided for physical and social connecting links for older people. Miss Margaret Jones of Bala, a 66 year old 'retired nurse', objected to the closure of the Ruabon to Barmouth line, stating: 'I do not possess a car'. The railway enabled her to visit her 'two brothers…living in London', who she liked 'to visit as often as possible'. Wrexham also provided her with the 'nearest big shopping centre', and thus closure she felt would leave her immobile without the comfort and convenience of the train. 'I will not contemplate undertaking the long and uncomfortable passenger bus journey', she stated, showing the impact closure was having psychologically.[161]

The railway was often given a central role in women's independence. Miss Mildred Moynihan, a pensioner, implored Barbara Castle not to close the Ashford to Hastings line because, 'for those of us without cars, this little stretch of railways line is a joy to travel upon and is much used', for which the replacement bus service would be a poor alternative.[162] Mrs Alice Marshall from Alford objected to the Peterborough to Grimsby line closure in 1966, and was a 'widow of nearly 94 and living mostly alone'. Marshall had a daughter in 'scholastic work in London', who she wrote had been 'coming to see me for nearly 30 years every 3rd weekend'. She therefore feared closure would make it much harder for her daughter to travel the long journey by bus, and jeopardise her own independence. The end of her objection stated: 'I am going to miss her company and help', that 'will I fear affect my health'.[163]

The greater convenience of the train compared to the bus was linked to a sense of freedom in women's mobility. Mrs Mary Howard from Carrog at the top of her objection to the Ruabon to Barmouth line stated: 'I am nearly seventy years of age, I am a widow and I do not possess a car', and 'depend completely on the railway service'. The bus stop 'on the main

[161] Objection from Miss Margaret Jones, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[162] Letter from Miss M. Moynihan, 24 April 1967, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[163] Letter from Mrs Alice Marshall, 1965, TNA, MT 100/108.

road' required Mary to walk up a 'steep hill' with her luggage compared to the train station which had 'porters to carry' it.[164] The railways were convenient. Miss W. Turner from Gloucester, protesting the closure of the Bristol to Worcester service, stated: 'We are all extremely worried about these trains being taken off' and that the replacement bus services were accessible 'only by walking miles'. Indeed, Turner's need to travel regularly along the line for work meant the replacement bus would require her to leave Gloucester at 5.30am and to arrive 'by 8am'.[165] Closure may have impacted small numbers locally, but those affected saw their mobility and daily life worsened.

A loss of individual choice could lead to a feeling of societal decay. Miss Margot Morley from near Alford in Lincolnshire opposed the closure of the Peterborough to Grimsby line in February 1968 and showed how closure could lead to a sense of isolation. Morley told Castle that the people who 'advise you…know nothing of conditions in the country and therefore cannot possibly visualise the hardships of this lunatic' procedure. She implored Castle to 'think of the hundreds, probably thousands of older people…who do not have cars' and that the 'bus service here is hopeless'. She argued that Castle's 'bus here, change here' transport integration 'would be beyond my health and strength…not to mention my purse'. It was not just the loss of one mode but the loss of choice for Morley. She accepted the nearby town of Alford was good enough to 'get most things which we <u>need</u>, but most of us like to visit larger places and shops' such as in Peterborough or Boston. Closure would take her part of rural England 'back to the days of horse and cart', an image she used to evoke the isolation she would suffer as an individual, linking spatial mobility with social progress.[166]

Also protesting the Peterborough to Grimsby closure, Miss Phylliss Hall of Louth in

---

[164] Objection from Mrs Mary Howard, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[165] Letter from Miss W. Turner, 21 October 1964, TNA, MT 124/1181.
[166] Letter from Miss M. Morley, 24 February 1968, TNA, MT 124/718; Women could be prevalent in linking spatial mobility with well-being and affluence: M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core* (Cambridge, 1981), 94-100; 185-189; More widely: E. Bott, *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms* (London, 1957), 106-108; 182-183.

Lincolnshire had already objected at the TUCC, but as the potential closure 'comes nearer and nearer' she felt the need 'to write' to Castle. She pleaded, 'from one woman to another, to implore' her to retain the line. 'I do not think you can realise – not knowing the place, or the conditions that prevail here, what tremendous deprivation it will be to us all'. In such instances it was understandable that individuals would project their hardship onto wider society because they felt they would be 'cut off without their train services'.[167] Mrs Hilda Kendrick from Spalding wrote to Barbara Castle in March 1967 to object to the closure. 'I have read with dismay your intentions to close our line', she wrote. 'It is alright for those with cars, which I do not posses', feeling a sense of loss at losing the railway. 'I do not know how I can get to Peterboro[ugh], the bus service is not good, I can not ride in them so well,' she wrote. At the close of her letter, she pleaded: 'please Mrs Castle, please do your best not to close our line'.[168]

In early March 1965, Mrs L. Orrells from Dolgellau demonstrated how much harder using the replacement bus service was for elderly women after the closure of the Ruabon to Barmouth line in Wales. She 'had to travel by bus' to take her sister 54 miles to Wrexham hospital in the 'bitter cold'. On the way back 'home we were stranded, owing to the roads being blocked by snow and had to stay two nights at Bala, which really we couldn't afford'. She reminded the Minister that 'had the line been open we would have been able to get home' that night. She also sent the bill for the expenses to Fraser to 'see how much we had to eat for the two days'. Orrells ended her letter, pleading: 'I am begging on you please do your best to reopen the line'.[169] These feelings were echoed by Mrs Elsie Skillicorn from Merioneth during the poor winter of 1965, writing 'the people here and all around are very bitter and angry'. 'We all feel so cut off since the line has been closed', and the snow fall

[167] Letter from Miss Phyllis Hall, 20 February 1968, TNA, MT 124/718.
[168] Letter from Mrs H. Kendrick, March 1967, TNA, MT 124/718.
[169] Letter from Mrs L. Orrells, March 1965, TNA, MT 124/1182.

meant 'the buses could not run'. She described the emotional toll of the closure: 'it is as if part of our lives have gone since the trains have been stopped'.[170]

The role of the railways in the lives of elderly women could also go beyond a sense of freedom, choice, or logistical needs. Miss Dora Rennison from Bridlington wrote to Barbara Castle protesting the closure of the Hull to Scarborough line in February 1967, revealing the railways could be an alleviation from loneliness. 'Our beloved Railway Station', she wrote repeatedly, 'means much more to us than a means of conveyance'. 'Its lights at night mean a good deal to us who live nearby. We are never lonely when we look out at the back of our cottages and see those lights', she wrote. For Rennison, the railways cohered historic events in her memory. 'In the 1914-18 war, countless servicemen said farewell forever on these platforms, as in the 1939-45 war'. Given this emotional attachment, the railways' financial losses were described as 'an economic twinge', and the replacement buses as 'unpleasant'. Scattered through her letter, she repeated the refrains, 'Please madam', and 'please, please do not have them taken from us', showing her personal link to the line.[171]

The elderly or disabled in provincial areas were often users of the railways for health reasons. Mrs C. Morgan of Shoscombe objected to the closure of the Somerset and Dorset line because she suffered 'rheumatoid arthritis and thyroid trouble', and so had to attend St. Martins hospital 'twice a week for treatment'. She stated plainly of the replacement bus stop on a nearby road that she could 'not walk that far to get' it. It was understandable Morgan would thus frame the railways as a social service, and her 'only means of transport'.[172] Mrs Florence Edwards of Minffordd objected to the closure of the Ruabon to Barmouth line in March 1964, stating that 'neither my husband nor myself owns a car', and admitted to 'considerable trouble with my eyesight', which required frequent journeys to hospital and so

[170] Letter from Mrs E. Skillicorn, 6 March 1965, TNA, MT 124/1182.
[171] Letter from Miss D. Rennison, 11 February 1967, TNA, MT 124/1211.
[172] Objection from Mrs C. Morgan, June 1963, TNA, MT 124/1196.

stated that she was 'completely dependent on public transport'.[173]

Mr T. O'Donnell from Hastings objected to the closure of the line to Ashford in November 1966, as it 'will be a disaster for my wife and myself' as they had moved close to the station intentionally. He informed Barbara Castle: 'my wife is totally blind and I am partially sighted', and the 'nearest bus stop is about two miles away'. He also wrote that as over 30 new homes were being built in Three Oaks just outside Hastings, whose owners will be car owners, those without a car will feel more isolated.[174] Mrs Freda Millward protested the closure of the service from Shanklin to Ventnor on the Isle of Wight in March 1967. 'Our little house is opposite Ventnor Railway Station, and my husband, who is blind, used to be able to travel to Ryde without a guide'. The bus service and their stops were 'not nearly as safe and convenient' for her husband, or her as his guide. Freda had 'to gather luggage, parcels and dog and go out to' the bus stop to wait before it arrived. She also described how as she sits on the bus now, she 'longed to have just stayed gently in the train', noting that 'already, there is an air of being cut off' from the wider area.[175]

Rebecca Lewis, from Spalding, wrote to object to the closure of the Peterborough to Grimsby line 'with deep concern' in April 1967. She disclosed that she was an 'OAP' and her husband had 'suffered from a nervous breakdown the last nine years'. She had fetched him from hospital in Sleaford at 'weekends by train' and dropped him off 'by train each Monday'. The fact that there was 'no bus service and we have no car', and a taxi to the hospital was unaffordable, showed how detrimental closure was to her routine.[176] The anguish felt was such that Lewis wrote a second letter to the Minister the same day, with an emotional language missing in her first, showing some did write objections with restraint. In it she asked: 'How would you feel if your husband had been a hospital patient some twenty four

[173] Objection from Mrs F. Edwards, March 1964, TNA, MT 124/1183.
[174] Letter from Mr T. O'Donnell, 18 November 1966, TNA, MT 124/1198.
[175] Letter from Mrs F. Millward, 27 March 1967, TNA, MT 124/1194.
[176] Letter from Mrs R. Lewis, 2 April 1967, TNA, MT 124/718.

miles distant and your only means of seeing him was to take a train', and then 'to hear the line was to be closed'? She ended her second letter stating: 'I assure you I am truly more than worried'.[177] Although this language was reflective of a more reserved social milieu, her personal difficulties and perhaps the expectations on women to be restrained could not obscure the anguish she felt about the potential closure.

The Woman Driver, 1959-1974

An outline of the historiography of women's position in British society will give a framework to understand how the male breadwinner had priority use of the car and women were perceived as inferior drivers. During the 1980s and 1990s, historians of gender refuted previous arguments that the period after the First World War saw growing emancipation, arguing the vote and legal protections did not fundamentally change women's position. Indeed, they stressed a social backlash against female advancement after 1918. From the 2000s, a greater emphasis on the multi-dimensional representations of women in the interwar years, not simply as domestic vassals, accepted there was no great advance before the later 1960s, but the backlash paradigm was over-stated. Women saw expansions in voluntary organisations, consumerism, media, employment, public freedoms, fashion, and companionate marriage.[178] But when it came to the car, advances were preserved to the upper and middle class, and women's mobility was defined in terms of their domestic role.[179]

From the 2000s, studies of women's position in the postwar period focused on a series of shifts. These included the gradual acceptance of women in work as a choice as well as

[177] Letter from Mrs R. Lewis, 2 April 1967, TNA, MT 124/718.
[178] A. Bingham, 'An Era of Domesticity? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004), 225-232.
[179] P. Tinkler and C. Warsh, 'Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain and North America: Corsets, Cars and Cigarettes', *Journal of Women's History*, 20 (2008), 115; 117-118; 122-128.

boosting the household income, but not during the early years of her children's lives. They also stressed the relative changes in marriage, seeing men spend more time at home with their children and doing a few domestic chores.[180] However, the historiography mostly sees this not as a dual independent-domestic role gained by women, but a double burden as they not only worked for a wage but still performed most domestic duties. A nuanced position emerged out of this that paid closer attention to the views of women at the time and of the importance of paid work, rather than feminist approaches stressing a lack of advancement and media representations framing female autonomy as a threat to society.[181]

This position argues women experienced relative advances through the fulfilment of work and a more equal relationship with her husband due to the power of her income.[182] Advances between 1945 and 1975 saw equal pay in the civil service, teaching, and the National Health Service, but more middle class married women in work was also encouraged due to labour shortages rather than new gender ideals. The culture of domesticity remained and was bolstered by a welfare state that became less pro-natalist by the 1960s, but did not champion the importance of women to the economy or provide financial support for working mothers.[183] Women continued to be over-represented in part-time, lower paid jobs and acknowledgement in the unions, and their efforts to seek equal pay between the sexes, did not progress quickly before the 1970s. Neither did cultural shifts such as the Women's Liberation

---

[180] H. McCarthy, *Double Lives* (London, 2020), 100-105; 110; 153-154; L. King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity* (Oxford, 2015), 2-3; 189-190; 200; H. McCarthy, 'Social Science and Married Women's Employment', *Past and Present*, 233 (2016), 286.

[181] H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work in Post-War Britain', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 47-48; 55-56; H. McCarthy, 'Social Science and Married Women's Employment in Post-War Britain', *Past and Present*, 233 (2016), 270-273; C. de Bellaigue et al, 'Rags to Riches?' New Histories of Social Mobility', *Journal of the Social History Society*, 16 (2019), 6; Women's work did help buy white goods and reduced their domestic work: F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 9.

[182] H. McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood* (London, 2020), 112; H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work in Post-War Britain', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 48.

[183] Ibid., 57; H. McCarthy, 'Social Science and Married Women's Employment in Post-War Britain', *Past and Present*, 233 (2016), 273; 299-303; H. McCarthy, in P. Thane (ed.), *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since 1945* (London, 2010), 108-110; P. Tinkler, 'Going Places or Out of Place?' *Twentieth Century British History*, 32 (2021), 216.

Movement in the late 1960s, or the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, stop prejudices such as the woman driver stereotype from enduring beyond 1980.[184]

Therefore, women saw increased opportunities, but these remained within existing gender roles. The mobility of young unmarried women as spatially and thus socially mobile, moving to the city from the late 1950s, gaining full-time employment, and experiencing independence, was a positive representation of social and cultural growth, albeit laced with potential loneliness and exploitation. The mobility of young women, said to be 'going places', was also sexualised, and her independence risked jeopardising her ultimate role as a wife and mother, a more immobile, stationary role.[185]

Men's anxiety over female mobility, across age and class, centred on their independence, and this was justified in discourse claiming they lacked men's skill and were dangerous drivers.[186] This limitation on women's independence was shaped culturally and economically. Dwelling is part of sociological understandings of the car, as an extension of the home,[187] but as men were so slow to take on household chores and hogged the car, it should be understood as an extension of his home rather than his wife's. Indeed, established middle class women suffered considerable financial outlay to access professional jobs due to the costs of childcare and running a car in the postwar period.[188] As more roads were built, mainly for male drivers, street space for working class women and children was also severely

---

[184] P. Scott, 'Women, 'Other "Fresh" Workers', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (2000), 473; J. Rice and C. Saunders, in D. Thoms et al, *The Motor Car and Popular Culture in the 20th Century* (Abingdon, 1998), 279-281; P. Taylor-Gooby, in P. Taylor-Gooby (ed.), *Welfare States Under Pressure* (London, 2001), 12; The TUC's Charter for Working Women came in 1975: H. McCarthy, in P. Thane (ed.), *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since 1945* (London, 2010), 108-111.
[185] P. Tinkler, 'Going Places or Out of Place?' *Twentieth Century British History*, 32 (2021), 215; 217; 223; J. Laite, 'Immoral Traffic: Mobility, Health, Labour', *Journal of British Studies*, 52 (2013), 697-698; S. Spencer, 'Schoolgirl to Career Girl: The City as Educative Space', *International Journal of the History of Education*, 39 (2003), 122-124; 133.
[186] J. Laite, 'Immoral Traffic: Mobility, Health, Labour', *Journal of British Studies*, 52 (2013), 712-715; P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 99-110.
[187] M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 38 (2006), 208-209; 214; 216; On roads and dwelling: P. Merriman, 'Driving Places: Marc Augé', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21 (2004), 146; 160-162.
[188] H. McCarthy, *Double Lives* (London, 2020), 120.

reduced.[189] Car makers reflected these patterns, so that the technology and design of cars were shaped primarily as masculine, justified by discourse on the physical skill and strength needed to drive and maintain them.[190] As Cresswell argues, mobility exclusion comes as much from the affirmative traits given to the preferred subject as those deemed the 'other'.[191]

However, the stereotype of a woman's place being in the passenger seat shifted gradually in the 1960s.[192] This was despite more women learning to drive and maintain vehicles during both World Wars before being paradigmatically returned to men.[193] This shift by the 1960s came partly due to the advance of technology and the market logics of increasing the number of women drivers. When the spread of warning lights in cars came in the decade, it was partly to help women. And yet, these lights were nicknamed 'the idiot panel' by men.[194] The car continued to be the man's domain, but mass production and new technologies produced utilitarian designs targeting women.[195] Thus, even as it was said that women do 'stupid things' when driving, 'automatic gears, power steering, power brakes, and automatic window control' had 'all been produced to meet women's needs' as well as men's.[196] This shift in market logics was enhanced by the contribution working women's wages made to the household. But while she could choose the colour of the car, her husband

---

[189] K. Cowman, 'Play Streets: Women, Children and the Problem of Urban Traffic', *Social History*, 42 (2017), 253-255.
[190] P. Keiller, in P. Wollen and J. Kerr (eds), *Autopia: Cars and Culture* (London, 2002), 343-344; 353; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 5; 45-46; 50; 57-59; 63; 221.
[191] T. Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (Oxford, 2006), 161.
[192] Aspects of car design catered to feminine and masculine stereotypes: M. Sheller, 'Automotive Emotions: Feeling', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21 (2004), 231.
[193] On Women Drivers, Baroness Lorentz, 1968, 2, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA; L. Doan, 'Primum Mobile: Women and Auto-Mobility in the Era of the Great War', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 17 (2006), 26-28; 37-39; The late Queen worked as a driver and mechanic in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1945: K. Williams, *Young Elizabeth: The Making of Our Queen* (London, 2012), 188-189; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 49.
[194] *The Times*, 16 May 1966.
[195] By the mid-1980s, 31% of women drove a hatchback compared to 22% of men: *Basingstoke Gazette*, 19 June 1985, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.
[196] This technology was driven by the United States as many more women drove there: *The Times*, 16 May 1966; *The Times,* 15 October 1956; P. Marsh and P. Collett, *Driving Passion: The Psychology of the Car* (London, 1986), 121.

used it most.[197]

Stereotypes of women drivers as lacking strength, decisiveness and posing a risk remained, but saw relative decline in the 1960s for two reasons. Firstly, the desire for market expansion as well as the growth of statistics enabled insurance brokers, transport analysts, and the car lobby all to challenge the stereotype as it was clear women drivers were less dangerous than men.[198] Secondly, at a time of rising road accidents, women's domestic image and safe driving record, rather than proving their indecision and timidity, was used to evoke their suitability to driving to further legitimise the age of mass motoring.[199]

Women had long been represented as indecisive and thus dangerous drivers by men. In July 1930, the London *Evening News* published an article on the Automobile Association's memories from the beginning of the century claiming, 'we shuffled a little uneasily in our seats when we had the first application from a woman driver'. This was because men 'thought in those days that no one except a quick-thinking, resourceful man ought to be at the wheel'. But by 1930, women, and their 'delicately manicured fingers' on the wheel were also deemed 'splendid' by the AA.[200] This displays some introspection about women's right to drive, but most before the 1960s were middle class and this gendered bias remained.[201] Middle class women, however, were starting to use family cars in daily life to run errands. A speech made by an AA employee in May 1930 at a women's voluntary organisation, titled 'Women and Progress' illustrated this image. 'Where the distance between house and station

---

[197] AA, *Daily News Digest*, 28 July 1972, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 64-65; 220-221; H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 53-54; D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book Two: A Shake of the Dice* (London, 2014), 219.
[198] *The Times*, 21 May 1969; *The Times*, 13 December 1975; AA News Release – Motoring Equality Changes up a Gear, 7 June 1985, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA; *Daily Mail*, 21 May 1969; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 58; The powerful influence of insurance companies was also seen in the effective campaign against state-run pension schemes: H. Pemberton, 'The Failure of 'Nationalisation by Attraction', *Economic History Review*, 65 (2012), 1445-1446.
[199] *Daily Mail*, 14 January 1966.
[200] *Evening News*, 17 July 1930, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.
[201] P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 98-99; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 51-52; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 21.

is two miles or more, wives or daughters make it a daily practice to drive father to the [railway] station and before returning home, doing the necessary shopping'.[202]

As O'Connell has shown, even in the 1930s there were studies by government and insurers on driver safety that found women were no more dangerous than men. But stereotypes prevailed.[203] The car magazine, *Good Motoring* ran a memoir of a former driving instructor in September 1951, titled 'My Experiences with Women'. It described the woman driver as obsessed with looking the part by wearing 'mannish clothes' but also 'her attention' being 'distracted by a nice view'.[204] This projection of gendered traits onto women behind the wheel was evident in 1956 when the *Evening Standard* interviewed a female driving instructor. The journalist, before meeting her, imagined a 'sergeant majorish aspect; tall, definitely tweedy, flat-heeled and full of mechanical technicalities'. But to his surprise, the woman he actually met was 'slightly built, gentle to the point of diffidence in voice and manner, and dressed in a neat street suit and high-heeled shoes'.[205]

There was thus only a slow advance in the introspection of men on women drivers by the 1950s, despite car companies being 'at pains to woo women motorists' by making cars easier to drive and their numbers slowly growing.[206] But even by the mid-1960s, only 13% of women had a driving licence.[207] Men in private still enjoyed the trope of the 'woman driver', and although it was deemed not worth 'repeating in mixed company', the attitude of men towards women drivers was described thusly: 'If Chivalry ever passed his driving test, the lessons have long since been forgotten'.[208] The AA, however, as in the interwar period, found

---

[202] Women and Progress Speech, 6 May 1930, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.
[203] S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 58; G. Lees-Maffei, in P. Wollen and J. Kerr (eds), *Autopia: Cars and Culture* (London, 2002), 364; 365-367.
[204] *Good Motoring*, September 1951, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.
[205] *Evening Standard*, 15 June 1956, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.
[206] *The Times,* 15 October 1956.
[207] S. O'Connell, in F. Carnevali et al (eds), *20th Century Britain* (London, 2007), 117.
[208] *The Times*, 12 July 1956; *The Times*, 18 October 1956; *The Times*, 11 March 1960; *The Times,* 4 October 1967; A Gallup poll in 1957 found 50% believed men were safer drivers compared to 7% who believed women were: G. Gallup, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975, Vol. I* (New York, 1976), 413.

more women were driving and those in the middle class continued to drive the family car after 1945 to shop and run errands, and was keen to shift this paradigm.[209]

The mid-1960s then saw discursive attempts to counter the car 'as a symbol of manliness' and 'virility', and re-emphasise safety, 'modesty and good manners' in driving.[210] The AA published literature on 'Motorway Manners', kept statistics on road accidents, and used 'incessant propaganda' to promote safe driving to maintain public confidence as mass motoring dawned.[211] As the economy grew and the price of cars fell, insurers again found in their data that women were safer to insure. These findings were described in a 1960 Scottish newspaper titled 'Women Drivers Aren't So Bad After All'.[212] Thus, despite increasing acknowledgement of their safety, women drivers were not considered equal to men, but this improved relatively. The AA's short-lived London Pilot Service, where members would have their cars driven for them through the busy streets of London, included women 'dressed in khaki uniforms with black berets'. Despite their overly masculine attire, this was considered 'downright shocking' before the 1950s, but a small number continued to do it in the 1960s.[213]

From 1965, women were employed as driving instructors by the British School of Motoring for the first time, but pupils could still choose not to be taught by one.[214] Gendered stereotypes were thus maintained within relative advances. Indeed, when the government's car service changed its women's uniform in 1966 from its less feminine trouser suit to a waisted jacket and blouse akin to an air hostess, whether the skirt would remain 'below the knee' was a consideration discussed in the press, but the head of the department insisted we

---

[209] On Women Drivers, Baroness Lorentz, 1968, 3, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.
[210] *The Times*, 26 August 1966; *The Times*, 2 August 1966; Motorway driving was associated with masculinity in the 1960s, but it was not described in the discourse as unfeminine: P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces* (Oxford, 2007), 167-168.
[211] AA, *Annual Report, 1962*, 13; AA, *Annual Report, 1960*, 15, AA, 73m94/H2/7, HA; Motorway Manners Pamphlets, AA, 73m94/G1/1/595, HA; P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces* (Oxford, 2007), 9; 143-145; 153-162; 174-178.
[212] *The Scotsman*, 20 June 1960.
[213] Women were not on the AA patrol though: *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 6 October 1960.
[214] *Daily Mail*, 29 March 1965.

'do not pick our girls for their figures'.[215] During debates over the new 70 mile per hour speed limit in 1965 and rising accidents, many government ministers and civil servants had a woman driver, considered 'more reliable'.[216] At the same time, when rising congestion triggered debates about car use in cities, the AA reacted by seeking the expansion of the numbers of women driving as, 'even if commuters cannot use their cars, then their wives will'.[217]

Therefore, within these gendered tropes, the 1960s and 70s saw a faster rate of change in public discourse on women drivers, and this came through the connection between their safe driving at a time of concern over accidents, and the market logic of increasing the numbers of drivers.[218] Women were beginning to be represented in the media as driving beyond the occasional trip to the shops. The Institute of Advanced Motorists was a lobby group repeatedly promoting women's driving in this period, and held a safe driving contest in October 1963, with 4,000 competitors that saw two women come first and second. This, the *Herald Express* argued, had 'once and for all punctured the myth that they are scatter-brain road-users', as a 23 year old mother of two from Glasgow beat 23 men to win the contest.[219] The safe driving of women was used to justify their increased participation at a time of rising car ownership, road accidents, and regulation in the 1960s, which saw avid road safety research under Marples and Castle, the professionalisation of driving instructors, new standards for tyres, car noise, and lights, bus lane and parking rules, a national speed limit in

---

[215] *The Times,* 10 May 1966.
[216] *The Times*, 6 February 1964; AA, *Annual Report, 1965*, 6, AA, 73m94/H2/7, HA.
[217] Society of Motor Manufactures and Traders Press Release, 2 December 1964, Birmingham School of Traffic Engineering, 1959-1966, 2-3; Sponsors Report, 1964, 2, AA, 73M94/G1/1/169, HA.
[218] *The Times*, 23 April 1968; *Daily Mail*, 21 May 1969; B. Luckin, 'A Kind of Consensus on the Roads?', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21 (2010), 365; J. Moran, 'Crossing the Road in Britain, 1931-1976', *The Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), 495; Safety concerns: G. Strauss, *HC Debs*, vol. 654, cc. 1373, 28 February 1962; B. Castle, *HC Debs*, vol. 724, cc. 655, 10 February 1966; *Guardian*, 31 December 1966; *The Times*, 5 July 1967.
[219] *Herald Express*, 4 October 1963, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.

1965, stricter drink-driving laws in 1967,[220] and a revised Highway Code in 1969.[221]

To control their mobility before 1945, women drivers had been framed as cautious, weak, and dangerous,[222] but they were discursively reframed in a 'new deal' by the later 1960s that presented them as 'low…risk', 'calm' and 'courteous', in the age of mass motoring.[223] Indeed, the highest number of postwar road fatalities in Britain was in 1966, at 7,985, and it had steadily increased until then, which was stressed by Barbara Castle.[224] Around this time, positive depictions of women drivers became common in the press. The *Daily Mail* published regular articles refuting the 'woman driver' stereotype.[225] It ran stories of women's successes in competitions behind the wheel.[226] It also had a 'Woman Driver of the Year' competition to find the 'most outstanding ordinary woman driver', whose qualities were: 'skill and safety'; 'non-professional, safe and skilful'.[227] Therefore, such initiatives framed women as safe drivers, but they also championed the spread of driving in general as a social norm without aligning with government intervention in automobility.[228]

The *Daily Mail* was vociferous in covering different aspects of the discrimination of women behind the wheel, but without challenging gender roles. An article titled 'Women Driver Jokes Go On Trial', described how Bournemouth's Accident Prevention Committee

---

[220] Gallup polls in 1964 found majorities for harsher drink-driving and road offence punishments: G. Gallup, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975, Vol. I* (New York, 1976), 726.
[221] *Guardian*, 5 February 1966; *The Times*, 6 May 1966; *The Times*, 28 April 1966; *The Times*, 18 November 1966; *The Times*, 13 May 1967; *Guardian*, 19 November 1968; B. Luckin and D. Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility', *Cultural and Social History*, 6 (2009), 213; 222; B. Luckin, 'Anti-Drink Driving Reform in Britain, c.1920-90', *Addiction*, 105 (2010), 1538-1542; C. Pooley, 'Landscapes without the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 268; AA, *Annual Report, 1968*, 4, AA, 73M94/H2/7, HA.
[222] S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 54; P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Abingdon, 2012), 105.
[223] *Guardian*, 21 May 1969; Daily *Mail*, 20 January 1968.
[224] B. Castle, *HC Debs*, vol. 724, cc. 655, 10 February 1966; *Guardian*, 12 July 1966; *Guardian*, 9 July 1967; *The Times*, 31 December 1966; Fatalities did not drop in a concerted way until the 1970s onwards: K. Laybourn and D. Taylor, *The Battle for the Roads of Britain* (Basingstoke, 2015), 3-4.
[225] *Daily Mail*, 22 April 1966; *Daily Mail*, 15 January 1968; *Daily Mail*, 20 January 1968; *Daily Mail*, 4 February 1969; *Daily Mail*, 13 July 1970; *Daily Mail*, 7 June 1971.
[226] *Daily Mail*, 30 September 1963.
[227] *Daily Mail*, 11 September 1972; *Daily Mail*, 19 June 1971.
[228] *Daily Mail*, 23 September 1959; The *Daily Mail*, 21 December 1964; *Daily Mail*, 20 May 1965; *Daily Mail*, 11 April 1968; *Daily Mail*, 31 August 1971; *Daily Mail*, 6 December 1973.

asked the local police to investigate whether men or women caused more accidents after a woman committee member became 'furious about women driver jokes'. Despite this, however, she admitted 'she "never drives" with her husband'.[229] Another article described how women are 'good at obeying' road rules compared to men, and some men 'bully' women drivers.[230] Indeed, male drivers were described as 'aggressive, pompous, dangerous', and hostile to women.[231] Yet, these articles still described how women drivers could be 'bitchy', 'prone to panic', and how a new car with heavy steering 'would be a handful for women drivers trying to manoeuvre into parking spaces'.[232] Advances came within the gendered tropes of women's softness, compliance, anxiety, and safety, compared to men's strengths.

The newspaper also covered legal discrimination. The disgust of a lady disparaged as a 'woman driver' by a policeman in her questioning for apparent careless driving at a Magistrate's Court in 1968 was covered. The lady argued the incident had 'nothing to do with women drivers' and after her case was dismissed, she stated the result was 'one in the eye for the men who are always on about bad women drivers'.[233] The *Daily Mail* also published stories warning women when driving not to dress in 'tight corsets and bras, tight skirts' as a safety issue, highlighting the continuing connection between gendered tropes and driving skill. However, this story also stated that the Road Research Laboratory, after '17 years of intense study' into accidents, had 'failed' to find out 'why some people are more accident prone than others', showing an ambivalence to any link between women and dangerous driving.[234] Thus, there was scant suggestion that women were causing the rise in road accidents in this period, but gendered perceptions continued to frame them differently.

However, the AA's data collection on women drivers by 1968 showed the numbers of

---

[229] *Daily Mail*, 22 April 1966.
[230] *Daily Mail*, 15 January 1968.
[231] *Daily Mail*, 4 February 1969.
[232] *Daily Mail*, 13 July 1970; *Daily Mail*, 15 January 1968.
[233] *Daily Mail*, 14 January 1966.
[234] *Daily Mail*, 4 December 1963.

women with licences was only slowly increasing, and that the 'number of jokes and cartoons on the woman driver' was still 'legion'. The main theme continued to be the 'little woman is a scatterbrain the moment she gets behind the wheel'. Despite this, 300,000 of the AA's 3.7 million members in 1968 were female (8.1%), compared to 70,000 in 1939.[235] By 1966, the car making industry was thus 'awakened to the market potential of women drivers', and Ford had a female colour specialist in its design team in Essex, again showing how advances were gradual and gendered.[236] By 1988, 37% of the AA's membership was female.[237]

The AA and RAC were thus responding to economic shifts by the late 1960s, trying to get more women to drive, as well as seeking to maintain the legitimacy of mass motoring. In May 1969, the AA stated publicly they considered women safer drivers than men based on data from Lloyds of London, and that women's premiums would be lowered as a result.[238] The release of Lloyd's data saw national media coverage in which women were framed as 'good risks' at a time of concern over the dangers of mass motoring.[239] The *Evening News* claimed the Executive Vice Chairman of the RAC was 'a bit shocked' by the findings.[240] The *Daily Standard* and *The Times* also drew attention to the fact that women could get two shillings in the pound off their car insurance premiums, a 10% reduction.[241] Thus, women were framed not just as safer physically than men but financially too by the late 1960s. The *Daily Mail* relished the story, stating: 'Now it will pay to put the man in the passenger seat', and the 'wife can demand the car for her shopping while the husband creeps off to work by public transport'.[242]

Although there was a shift in the discourse and in vehicle technologies, this was

---

[235] On Women Drivers, Baroness Lorentz, 1968, 3-4, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.
[236] *The Times*, 24 November 1967.
[237] Women Take the Driving Seat Press Release, 22 September 1988, 3, AA, 73m94/G1/1/1053, HA.
[238] *Daily Mail*, 21 May 1969.
[239] *The Sun*, 21 May 1969; *Daily Mail*, 21 May 1969; *The Times*, 22 February 1968.
[240] *Evening News*, 20 May 1969.
[241] *Daily Standard*, 21 May 1969; *The Times*, 21 May 1969; *Daily Mail* 20 August 1969.
[242] *Daily Mail*, 21 May 1969.

relative. Car reviews in the press in 1970, such as for the Ford Cortina, predicted women would want one because 'it was easy to drive, would carry hordes of children and shopping, and was as reliable as they could wish'.[243] Such adverts, although providing information for and appealing to women commercially, maintained gendered tropes. Women also took mainly canteen and backroom jobs in the public transport industry before the mid-1970s, alongside ethnic minorities. In 1971, there were just 530 female bus drivers compared to 98,130 men in Britain, though they were increasingly sought due to male shortages by the late 1960s.[244] Despite union resistance to this, discussions to allow women to drive buses in London grew frequent by 1966.[245] Indeed, a woman driving a car became considered increasingly safe, and this perception shifted reasonably quickly to legitimise women driving large London buses, though economic logics were clearly an influence here too. The first driver of a London bus was Jill Viner, who started in 1974.[246] The same year, the AA decided to support compulsory seat belts, opposing the 'libertarian argument' against them.[247] The market need to entrench mass motoring sought to frame driving as safe and moved away from libertarian arguments, which included using women's safety record and their stereotype as cautious to do so.

By 1977, the TRRL study by Valerie Storie on the performance of men and women behind the wheel took data from 2,654 drivers, finding women were safer. A vast 85% of

---

[243] *Daily Mail*, 9 October 1970.
[244] D. Munby, *Inland Transport Statistics Great Britain, Volume I* (Oxford, 1978), 53-54; 276; 290-293; *The Times*, 21 February 1966; Women had been bus conductors during the war, which was made permanent in 1951, but they were not allowed to drive buses or have equal pension schemes: S. Taylor, *The Moving Metropolis: A History of London's Transport* (London, 2001), 22; 289; 297; 353-355; M. Walsh, 'Gender in the History of Transportation Services', *Business History Review*, 81 (2007), 558; P. Goodwin, in M. Grieco et al (eds), *Gender, Transport and Employment: The Impact of Travel Constraints* (Aldershot, 1989), 127.
[245] *The Times*, 21 February 1966; When London Transport considered recruiting women as bus drivers in 1966, due to staff shortages, the London busmen's negotiating committee protested: *The Times,* 21 February 1966; *Daily Mail*, 21 February 1966; *Daily Mail*, 17 March 1966. In late 1968, busmen of the TGWU voted against allowing women bus drivers in London, and the newspaper article covering the vote thought it was 'doubtful' women would want to drive a double-decker bus anyway: *The Times*, 20 November 1968.
[246] *Daily Mail*, 25 May 1974; *The Times*, 4 January 1974; *The Times*, 25 May 1974.
[247] AA, *Annual Report, 1974*, 8, AA, 73M94/H2/8, HA.

accidents involved men, compared to women at 15%. This was partly due to men driving many more miles than women. Indeed, relative to the number of miles driven, women had a similar proportion of accidents to men, but they were far less severe. Women's accidents occurred at lower speeds, the majority being within 10 miles from home, and due to their lack of experience from the fewer miles driven. The study also found women more often crashed due to being distracted, but men were more likely to crash dangerously because they paid less attention to the road at high speeds.[248]

Despite these findings, the *Evening Standard* reported on Valerie Storie's survey, stating: the 'gentler sex are more easily distracted', but it acknowledged men were guilty of drink-driving much more than women.[249] By 1983, as more women drove, only 7% of convicted drivers were female, in a year with 7.2 million driving offences.[250] Women's driving also continued to be associated with poorer skills into the 1990s, which women internalised, leading to their perception of cars as practical items compared to the status and sexual associations for men.[251] Therefore, even though lobbyists used female safety as a means to legitimise mass motoring and the upheavals it brought, the double standard of the woman driver endured, although this period saw change in a positive direction.

---

[248] It studied 2,036 accidents over 4 years: V. Storie, *Male and Female Drivers: Differences Observed in Accidents* (Crowthorne, 1977), 1-3; 5; 10-12; 18-20, TRL; Storie was herself the victim of rape and attempted murder in a car, by the 'A6 Murderer': *The Times*, 26 August 1961; *The Times*, 30 August 1961; *Guardian*, 11 May 2002; *Daily Mail*, 16 April 2016.

[249] *Evening Standard*, 13 May 1977; V. Storie, *Male and Female Drivers: Differences Observed in Accidents* (Crowthorne, 1977), 7; 9, TRL; Much work on drink-driving restrictions was done by Marples before the breathalyser was introduced by Castle in 1967: B. Luckin, 'Anti-Drink Driving Reform in Britain, c.1920-90', *Addiction*, 105 (2010), 1538-1542.

[250] *Daily Telegraph*, 12 October 1984; West Germany, France, Italy, and Holland all had far worse road death rates than Britain by 1973: Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics* (London, 1976), 180.

[251] J. Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Cambridge, 1991), 129; 135; 152; Sheller and Urry argue women's domestic role pushed them towards safer, family cars while men chose cars to fit idealised visions of themselves: M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'The City and the Car', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (2000), 748.

Conclusion

A combination of factors brought a relative shift in the narrative of the woman driver in the 1960s. Rising car ownership, the growth of statistics on car use,[252] accidents, market logics, pro-car institutions such as the AA and the Institute of Advanced Motorists, and popular narratives, presented discursive inconsistencies but also progress in the discourse on women. However, arguments in favour were framed within the idea that women were 'safer', cautious drivers, that, while dropping the notion of female weakness and indecision, aligned with traditional gendered tropes.[253] Therefore, mobility inequality between men and women was compounded by the barriers to women's driving and provincial rail closures as public subsidies for buses and rail focused on cities and male-centric commuter needs. However, this chapter shows women were not prepared to watch their local rail service close without resistance, declaring how it would hurt their mobility. Although these were qualitative samples, it also shows the prominence of women defending their mobility in this period as well as their mobility independence.[254]

Levels of car access and people's daily patterns of movement can be a barometer of gender equality, but statistics can obscure the full detail and lasting nature of inequality without the analysis of cultural discourse.[255] Women were among the most affected by the accelerating inequality between those who could drive and those who could not. When local

---

[252] Male-centric commuter-based studies first: J. Wabe, 'Dispersal of Employment and the Journey to Work', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1 (1967), 348-353; R. Lawton, 'The Journey to Work in Britain', *Regional Studies*, 2 (1968), 33-38; J. Wheeler, 'Occupational Status and Work-Trips', *Social Forces*, 45 (1967), 511-514; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 112-113; Then more socially based studies but without enough scrutiny of gender roles themselves: J. Tanner, *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977), 8; 63-64, TRL; L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), 1-6; 20-22, TRL; L. Pickup, in M. Grieco et al (eds), *Gender, Transport and Employment: The Impact of Travel Constraints* (Aldershot, 1989), 216-220.

[253] *Daily Mail*, 31 August 1971; A. Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 16.

[254] C. Pooley, 'Spotlight on the Traveller', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 216-217; C. Pooley and M. Pooley, 'Young Women on the Move', *Social Science History*, 45 (2021), 495-497; 511-514; G. Clarsen, in G. Mom et al (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art* (Neuchatel, 2009), 238-241.

[255] R. Hjorthol, in T. Cresswell and T. Uteng (eds), *Gendered Mobilities* (New York, 2008), 206.

railways were closed many thus argued for their retention from the perspective of individual choice, framing the service as a democratic social service. The local press also sided with retention, writing a narrative of rural localism threatened by a centralised state. When the Bath to Bournemouth line was proposed for closure in 1965, the *Western Daily Press* interviewed local villagers who claimed: 'this station is our life'.[256] However, the ways in which closures affected women were not central to these public discourses, which was very different to how the woman driver was increasingly celebrated in national newspapers from the mid-1960s for commercial as well as social reasons.

Ironically, had more women been allowed to drive buses earlier, more rail lines may have been able to close due to a greater availability of replacement bus drivers. However, the spread of driving licences of all kinds among women was slow. In urban and suburban areas too, bus routes could be more easily re-configured to rising car ownership compared to provincial areas, where journeys were longer, more challenging, and better by rail.[257] A Ministry of Transport policy review in 1973 stated that there are 'small communities whose sole public transport to the wider world is the two-car DMU' (a small diesel service), but their large financial losses also had to be considered.[258] This made the loss of a local rail line worrying and impactful for working and domestically based women, and the elderly.[259]

This period has been described by McCarthy as one of 'instability and flux' in a positive direction for women, rather than one of gendered stasis.[260] This chapter shows there was greater stasis than flux in women's mobility when it came to the railways, but women were vociferous in opposing closures. O'Connell has also shown that up to the 1940s, women

---

[256] *Western Daily Press*, 12 April 1965.
[257] J. Hibbs, *The Bus and Coach Industry* (London, 1975), 65.
[258] Rail Policy Review: The Administration of Unremunerative Railway Passenger Service Grants and Closures', 16 May 1973, 22, TNA, MT 188/1.
[259] Car dependency in rural areas has continued: D. Gray et al, 'Community, Transport, Social Capital and Social Exclusion', *Area*, 38 (2006), 92-94; I. Shergold and G. Pankhurst, 'Transport-Related Social Exclusion Amongst Older People', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 28 (2012), 412; 419.
[260] Work and incomes were crucial in improving the commonality of marriages and enhancing the wife's power in the relationship: H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 48.

increasingly drove cars, and no worse than men, but the gendered image of the woman driver continued. He also stated that histories of the car after 1945 awaited analysis.[261] This chapter has shown cars certainly were a site of gender flux by the mid-1960s. There was greater ground made in the discourse over the woman driver than a stasis framework would allow, and although stereotypes remained, had childcare been given through the state earlier, enabling greater career advancement and incomes,[262] automobility among swathes of the female population may have had wide-ranging social effects.[263] Indeed, car ownership should be seen more by the historiography as a site of social flux and advance as well as of pollution, inequality, urban decay, and accidents, as the next chapter argues.

---

[261] S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 36-38; 59; 71; 220-221.
[262] H. McCarthy, in P. Thane (ed.), *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since 1945* (London, 2010), 108; H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 48; 53-54; H. McCarthy, 'Social Science and Married Women's', *Past and Present*, 233 (2016), 273; 300-303.
[263] The greater mobility equality the car can afford women, despite its pollution, creates a tension for eco-feminism: J. Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Cambridge, 1991), 135.

Chapter 4: The Car and New Patterns of Life in the Suburbs

This chapter makes three arguments about working class perceptions of the car and bus, and how they reshaped daily patterns of movement in the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s. Firstly, working people saw these modes of transport as ways to expand their choices as individuals, and secondly, after moving to the suburbs they were relatively less attached to the traditional movements of the urban areas they left behind. The historiography has rightly shown that despite the invention of these modes and the impact of suburbanisation lengthening and quickening daily movements, the types of journeys people took over the twentieth century stayed relatively stable rather being transformed.[1]

However, this chapter argues recent emphases on continuities have obscured, only relatively, the changes in the daily patterns of movement that occurred for the working class on moving to the suburbs through transport. Neither has the historiography given enough emphasis to the potential people saw in the car and bus to expand their lives, regardless of whether their movements were fundamentally transformed or not. On moving to the suburbs, which could be physically removed from employment and amenities, people were prepared to take longer, harder journeys by bus or car to get to work, the shops, for leisure, or to see family than the historiography has stressed. The previous daily patterns of life in dense urban

[1] C. Pooley et al (eds), *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 1-4; 21-23.

areas may have been easier, shorter, and more habitual, and they were upturned in the suburbs with expensive journeys and poor bus provision. But these new and vastly different movements were tolerated and often embraced due to the greater spaciousness and choice suburban living offered through the bus or car.[2]

Thirdly, the use of the bus and car in the suburbs to expand individual choice reveals the traditional ties of working class community to be relatively weaker than is sometimes suggested. This chapter seeks to reduce relatively the importance of habitual movements and notions of community to the working class, by contrasting them with their choices and mobility in the suburbs.[3] Again, the historiography has rightly linked the short, routine daily movements of the working class to high population densities in industrial districts, traditional class-based cultures of community, and how transport could be integrated into those routines. These routines were also then incorporated into life in the suburbs.[4]

This chapter finds similar patterns in how people maintained their family and friendship networks in the suburbs. But it also argues more emphasis should be put on people's willingness to take very different, longer journeys to live more individually-based lives there.[5] To do this, it will analyse social surveys investigating different locations across different income levels within the working class as it became more stratified by rising affluence. This chapter challenges the narratives of these social surveys arguing that greater mobility and suburbanisation was dissipating working class daily life and their sense of

---

[2] M. Clapson, 'The Suburban Aspiration in England since 1919', *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), 155; 160; M. Clapson, 'Working Class Women's Experiences of Moving to New Housing Estates', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 352; 355-357; P. Shapely, *The Politics of Housing: Power, Consumers* (Manchester, 2007), 147-148.

[3] Many affluence and community studies had a patrician view of the working class: M. Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain* (Oxford, 2010), 1; 115; 162; Noted in: A. Campsie, 'Mass-Observation, Left Intellectuals and the Politics of Everyday', *English Historical Review*, 131 (2016), 100.

[4] S. Gunn, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 232-233; 235; M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 158.

[5] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London, 1961), 104; 112; 261; P. Emmerson and J. Downes, *Travel Changes in Reading Between 1962, 1971 and 1976* (Crowthorne, 1982), 4-5; 12, TRL.

community.[6]

As chapter one stressed, population density correlated negatively with income, and this saw the car spreading faster from the late 1950s outside inner cities, beginning with the upper working class.[7] But instead of emphasising the ways traditional working class values and patterns of daily movement endured without mechanical transport in denser, industrial areas, this chapter argues the uses and perceptions of the car and bus were actually based on a more complex range of factors than class and location alone. These were: incomes, the availability of public transport, gender, age, and individual circumstances, that interplayed in a complex and unstable way, making analysis according to class or location alone deterministic.[8] Indeed, as a major factor preventing a faster spread of cars in Britain was low incomes and their high price, rather than cultural aversions, and cars spread among the working class faster in other countries, more should be made of its appeal across class.[9] More should also be made of buses in expanding individual choice before incomes rose enough to make cars affordable, seen by surveys in the northern suburbs in this chapter.[10]

As people's interactions with transport were partly centred on individual choice, this chapter will also show the car could be perceived and used similarly across the middle and working class. Indeed, the factors of income, the availability of public transport, gender, age,

---

[6] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, (London, 1957); F. Zweig, *Men in the Pits* (London, 1949); University of Liverpool, *Neighbourhood and Community: An Enquiry into Social Relationship on Housing Estates in Liverpool and Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1954); F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1961); R. Pahl, 'Class and Community in English Commuter Villages', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965); R. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure: The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire* (London, 1965); R. Pahl, 'The Two Class Village', *New Society*, 27 February 1964.
[7] C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Commuting, Transport and Urban Form: Manchester and Glasgow', *Urban History*, 27 (2000), 382-383; M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership and Public Policy', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 185; AA, *The Motorist Today* (1965), 2-3, AA, 73m94/G1/1/594, HA.
[8] C. Pooley, in, D. Gilbert et al (eds), *Geographies of British Modernity* (London, 2003), 81-82; 93; Acknowledging the diversity of individual traits: E. Bott, *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms* (London, 1957), 109; F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1961), xi; 134; University of Liverpool, *Neighbourhood and Community: An Enquiry into Social Relationship on Housing Estates in Liverpool and Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1954), 13.
[9] Political and Economic Planning, *Motor Vehicles* (London, 1950), 60-65; 145; J. Tanner, *International Comparisons of Cars and Car Usage* (Crowthorne, 1983), 59, TRL.
[10] Urry argued the car 'transformed the concept of speed into that of convenience', making public transport inferior choices: J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 6-11; 17-19; 44; 109.

and personal circumstances were all important.[11] This is not to argue that class and location were not important, or that working class perceptions of transport, and their patterns of movement, became the same as the middle class.[12] Higher income workers travelled further as mass car ownership spread and they lived further from work and could afford to travel more.[13] Rather, the ways the car was used fragmented according to this complex range of factors, reducing relatively the importance of class and location. Indeed, a greater desire for an individually-based life that the choices cars and buses met, were as important as people's class or previous patterns of movement. This contradicts the tropes of contemporary social surveys, which emphasised working class alienation caused by consumerism and the disruption to traditional patterns of movement in the suburbs.[14]

This chapter seeks to increase the extent to which the historiography frames the car and bus more positively, rather than problematic necessities in the suburbs. In 2001, Rudy Koshar wrote of the lack of historiography on the car in everyday life in Europe and argued for cultural approaches to connect to the economic strands of manufacturing, car design, and driving laws, that together, brought that technology into the cultural sphere, making it acceptable in everyday life in the 1920s. This has been largely achieved since then. But he also argued that cultural approaches can be distant from the experiences and perceptions of people in everyday life, making social perspectives crucial. On that, however, he argued the historiography's analysis of the uses and perceptions of the car had a problem: 'Scholars

---

[11] J. Hopkin, *The Role of an Understanding of Social Factors in Forecasting Car Ownership* (Crowthorne, 1981), 12-15, TRL.
[12] J. Sleeman, 'A New Look at the Distribution of Private Cars in Britain', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1968), 308; C. Pooley et al (eds), *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 5-9; 18.
[13] J. Wheeler, 'Occupational Status and Work-Trips', *Social Forces*, 45 (1967), 511-512; 81; N. McAlpine and A. Smyth, in R. Roth and M. Polino (eds), *The City and the Railway in Europe* (Aldershot, 2003), 177-178; 182; M. Law, 'Speed and Blood on the Bypass', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 490-492; 500; R. Lawton, 'The Journey to Work in Britain', *Regional Studies*, 2 (1968), 35; 38-39; J. Tanner, 'Car and Motorcycle Ownership in the Counties', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 12 (1963), 280-281; A. Tulpule, *Characteristics of Households with and without Cars in 1970* (Crowthorne, 1974), 2; 5-6; 7, TRL.
[14] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, (London, 1957); F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London, 1961).

across a number of disciplines hold extremely negative views of the car', and those 'views blind them to the ways in which the automobile has served as both instigator and index of an array of social relationships, productive as well as destructive'.[15]

The historiography over the last thirty years has analysed the car's cultural and social impact and found numerous ways in which it was used and perceived in daily life in Britain. The car was an expensive status item revealing British inequalities as late as 1961, but was becoming affordable by 1971, albeit symbolic of growing materialism.[16] The car and its roads were perceived positively, negatively, and ambivalently through the twentieth century, with an increasing malaise as they became everyday objects.[17] The car, therefore has been both desired and detested.[18] There were multiple, unstable perceptions and uses of the car, as there were with other purchases.[19] The car was a practical necessity, but also a leisure item.[20] The car could be a symbol of the good life and a better future, which enhanced living standards.[21] But it could also be a marker of status, material competition within and across class,

---

[15] R. Koshar, 'On the History of the Automobile in Everyday Life', *Contemporary European History*, 10 (2001), 143-145; 149; Gijs Mom stated in 2003 that transport history has been 'heavily biased towards 'collective mobility'': G. Mom, 'What Kind of Transport History Did We Get? Half a Century of *JTH*', *Journal of Transport History*, 24 (2003), 130.

[16] S. Majima and Mike Savage, 'Contesting Affluence: An Introduction', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 445-447; A. Offer, 'British Manual Workers: From Producers to Consumers', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 540; 542-543; 560; C. Pooley et al (eds), *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 21-23; S. Majima, 'Affluence and the Dynamics of Spending in Britain, 1961-2004', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 581-583; 588; 591; S. Majima and A. Warde, 'Elite Consumption in Britain, 1961-2004', *The Sociological Review*, 56 (2008), 218; 228-233.

[17] J. Moran, *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London, 2017), 10-30; S. O'Connell, *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring* (Manchester, 1998), 219; M. Föllmer, 'Cities of Choice: Elective Affinities', *Contemporary European History*, 24 (2015), 595; Mundane but multifarious: P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces* (Oxford, 2007), 6-10; 20.

[18] P. Wollen, in P. Wollen and J. Kerr (eds), *Autopia: Cars and Culture* (London, 2002), 10-13; 17.

[19] M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'The City and the Car', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (2000), 743; 751; C. Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40 (2005), 346-348; F. Trentmann, 'Beyond Consumerism: New Historical', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39 (2004), 377; 390.

[20] W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London, 1971), 323; J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me* (Oxford, 2019), 126-127; 226; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 231; 234; S. Gunn, 'Spatial Mobility in Later Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2021), 8.

[21] D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book One: Opening the Box* (London, 2013), 337-345; G. McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods* (Indianapolis, 1990), 77; 81; 111; D. Kynaston, *Family Britain, 1951*-57 (London, 2009), 459-460.

expanding private goals, and associate social mobility with spatial mobility.[22] The car could represent a British escape to the countryside, enhancing the rural economy, but also threaten the rural idyll and local people's sense of place.[23]

The consumption of items such as the car have been explored in terms of gender. The car could be important to masculine identity, and its representations of speed and status evoked sexual machismo.[24] Representations and uses of the car, roads, and other modes were gendered, but the car included an increasing freedom for women, though the husband maintained priority use.[25] But women, often working outside the home by the 1950s, could also contribute to the purchase of a car, and drive when her husband did not. The car was, therefore, a site of change and conformity between the sexes.[26] The car was also a symbol of

---

[22] B. Jones, 'Slum Clearance, Privatisation and Residualization: The Practices and Politics of Council Housing', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21 (2010), 526-528; M. Beaumont and M. Freeman, in M. Beaumont and M. Freeman (eds), *The Railway and Modernity* (Oxford, 2007), 28; M. Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940* (Oxford, 2010), 37; 75; 142; 182; 218; J. Goldthorpe et al, *The Affluent Worker, Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour* (Cambridge, 1968), 106; F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 264.

[23] D. Jeremiah, 'Motoring and the British Countryside', *Rural History*, 21 (2010), 234; 244-245; 247-249; B. Knights, in R. Burden and S. Kohl (eds), *Landscape and Englishness, Spatial Practices* (New York, 2006), 166-172; 179-181; S. Kohl, in R. Burden and S. Kohl (eds), *Landscape and Englishness, Spatial Practices* (New York, 2006), 188-190; 194; T. Cole, in J. Agar and J. Ward (eds), *Histories of Technology, the Environment and Modern Britain* (London, 2018), 125; 127; 129-130; 133; 136-138.

[24] F. Mort, *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth Century Britain* (Abingdon, 1996), 131; 140-142; 172; P. Marsh and P. Collett, *Driving Passion: The Psychology of the Car* (London, 1986), 126; 184-185; 205; G. Lees-Maffei, in P. Wollen and J. Kerr (eds), *Autopia: Cars and Culture* (London, 2002), 363-365; 368-370; S. Bayley, *Sex, Drink and Fat Cars: The Creation and Consumption of Images* (London, 1986), 1-7; 32-33; 101.

[25] L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), 2, TRL; P. Tinkler, 'Going Places or Out of Place? Representations of Mobile Girls and Young Women in Late-1950s and 1960s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 32 (2021), 217; 221-222; R. Law, 'Beyond 'Women and Transport': Towards New Geographies of Gender and Daily Mobility', *Progress in Human Geography*, 23 (1999), 578-579; J. Laite, 'Immoral Traffic: Mobility, Health, Labour and the "Lorry Girl" in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 52 (2013), 713; 718-721; P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 98; 99-110; M. Clapson, 'Working-Class Women's Experiences of Moving to New Housing Estates', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 347; 352-357; P. Tinkler and C. Warsh, 'Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain', *Journal of Women's History*, 20 (2008), 117-118; 122-128.

[26] London School of Economics, *Woman, Wife and Worker* (London, 1960), 4-5; 10-12; 27; D. Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 207; 217; 221; S. Brooke, 'Gender and Working Class Identity in Britain during the 1950s', *Journal of Social History*, 34 (2001), 780; S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester, 1998), 34; 218; H. McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 53-54; D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book Two* (London, 2014), 219; J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me* (Oxford, 2019), 156.

growing 'affluence' from the 1950s, and of Americanisation.[27] This brought associations to the car as a Tory consumer item, informing debates among sociologists and factions within the Labour party.[28] However, despite the emergence of utilitarian car designs by the late 1950s, such as the Mini Cooper, seeking to make the car sympathetic to urban communities, people overall purchased cars for themselves and convenience, rather than societal ideals, and would have needed financial incentives to buy specialised city cars.[29]

The car could expand individual choice in new suburban spaces, but working class neighbourliness and community could be maintained, including through shared ownership and lifts.[30] They could also threaten community by changing how people experienced the local landscape and the street, limiting pedestrian movements, people's field of view, behaviour, transport choices, and their sensory experience of movement.[31] They also brought about only a relative change in the number and length of trips people took, and what for,[32]

---

[27] G. Darley, 'Ian Nairn and Jane Jacobs, the Lessons from Britain and America', *The Journal of Architecture*, 17 (2012), 733-739; 741; S. Brooke, 'Slumming in Swinging London? Class, Gender and the Post-War City', *Cultural and Social History*, 9 (2012), 434; 437; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 226; 234; P. Gurney, *The Making of Consumer Culture in Modern Britain* (London, 2017), 171.

[28] L. Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain* (Basingstoke, 2003), 118-121; J. Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 10 (2013), 284-287; P. Gurney, *The Making of Consumer Culture in Modern Britain* (London, 2017), 169-170; 181; L. Black, 'Social Democracy as a Way of Life', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 533; B. Jones, *The Working Class in Mid-Twentieth Century England* (Manchester, 2012), 96-97.

[29] The Hillman Sunbeam Stiletto was marketed for 'motorists wanting more than a Mini's space' but 'who are as concerned with economy as with a high standard of finish': *The Times*, 1 July 1969; *The Economist*, 25 October 1958; L. Setright, *Drive On! A Social History of the Motor Car* (London, 2002), 174-177; 190; Ministry of Transport, *Cars for Cities: A Study* (London, 1967), 19; 33; Cars for Cities Study: Working Group Minutes, 26 November 1964, TNA, MT 102/291; In the United States: D. Gartman, in G. Mom et al (eds), *Mobility in History* (Neuchatel, 2009), 99.

[30] S. Ramsden, 'Remaking Working-Class Community: Sociability, Belonging and 'Affluence', *Contemporary British History*, 29 (2015), 13-14; S. Ramsden, *Working Class Community in the Age of Affluence* (Abingdon, 2017), 42-53; 71; 125-127; 178-192; F. Devine, *Affluent Workers Revisited: Privatism and the Working Class* (Edinburgh, 1992), 6-7; 23-26; 33-36; 93; 202-206; J. Greenhalgh, 'Consuming Communities: The Neighbourhood Unit and the Role of Retain Spaces', *Urban History*, 43 (2016), 165-168; J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me* (Oxford, 2019), 1-6.

[31] J. Moran, 'Imagining the Street in Post-War Britain', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 176-178; 184; P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces: Motorway* (Oxford, 2007), 3-6; P. Merriman, 'Materiality, Subjectification, and Government', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23 (2005), 240-244; P. Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 12-13; S. Brooke, 'Revisiting Southam Street', *Journal of British Studies*, 53 (2014), 461; 470; 479.

[32] C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 1-4.

contradicting mobilities' sociological claims of the car's revolutionary impact.[33] Growing consumption of items such as the car changed government policy to cater to the citizen-consumer by building larger council houses and more garages for new car owners.[34] The impact of race in transport employment, especially bus drivers, and the mobility inequality between different modes as immigrants settled in urban areas has been explored.[35]

The car has been studied in terms of policy mistakes, especially in the city, through the failures of modernist redevelopment, urban planning, and then conservation, and anti-car environmental movements by the 1970s.[36] The car changed the way the street and roads were designed and policed with rising accidents, and curbed street-based life that was governed mostly through liberalism in Britain.[37] This included restricting drink-driving, more road policing, but also the removal of pedestrians from the street, which had been a social space

---

[33] F. Cairncross, *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution is Changing Our Lives* (London, 1997), 1; 11; 19-21; 190-192; M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning*, 38 (2006), 208-209.

[34] A. Kefford, 'Housing the Citizen Consumer: The Parker Morris Report', *Twentieth Century British History*, 29 (2018), 226; 232; 256-257; M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns* (Manchester, 1998), 162; D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book Two: A Shake of the Dice* (London, 2014), 33; K. Morrison and J. Minnis, *Carscapes: The Motor Car, Architecture and Landscapes in England* (London, 2012), 97-105.

[35] Cotton Seiler, 'The Significance of Race to Transport History', *Journal of Transport History*, 28 (2007), 307-309; D. Feldman, in D. Feldman and J. Lawrence (eds), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011), 281-283; 286; M. Clapson, 'The Suburban Aspiration in England since 1919', *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), 160-165; P. Merriman, 'Operation Motorway: Landscapes of Construction on England's M1', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31 (2005), 128; S. Gunn, 'Spatial Mobility in Later Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2021), 6; 10-13; O. Saumarez Smith, 'Action for Cities: The Thatcher Government', *Urban History*, 47 (2020), 276; 286; 290; M. Parkinson, 'The Thatcher Government's Urban Policy', *Town Planning Review*, 60 (1989), 427-428; A. Fortier, in P. Adey et al (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 67-68.

[36] S. Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problem of Traffic', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 535; 538; S. Gunn, 'Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse of the Motor City Ideal', *The Historical Journal*, 61 (2018), 245-248; S. Gunn, 'The Rise and Fall of British Urban Modernism: Planning Bradford', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 861; 868; O. Saumarez-Smith, *Boom Cities* (Oxford, 209), 2; 8-9; G. Ortolano, *Thatcher's Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism* (Cambridge, 2019), 20-27; 59-60; 403; G. Ortolano, 'Planning the Urban Future in 1960s Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 54 (2011), 483; 489; 498; A. Powers, 'The Heroic Period of Conservation', *Twentieth Century Architecture*, 7 (2004), 10-12; K. Morrison and J. Minnis, *Carscapes: The Motor Car* (London, 2012), 348-378; D. Rooney, 'The Political Economy of Congestion: Road Pricing and the Neoliberal Project', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (2014), 630; J. Pendlebury, *Conservation in the Age of Consensus* (London, 2009); 50-81; S. Robertson, 'Visions of Urban Mobility: The Westway, London, England', *Cultural Geographies*, 14 (2007), 76.

[37] J. Moran, 'Crossing the Road in Britain, 1931-1976', *The Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), 489-492; B. Luckin and D. Sheen, 'Defining Early modern Automobility: The Road Traffic', *Cultural and Social History*, 6 (2009), 223-224; S. O'Connell, *The Car in British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 112; 218; J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 76-77; 118-120; With some increase in policing laws: C. Emsley, 'Mother, What *Did* Policemen Do When There Weren't Any Motor?', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 357; 377-381.

for women, children, and the working class.[38] Histories have also looked across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, showing how the conditions were set for the car's supremacy by the 1950s, which came through favourable media and artistic representations, the industry's importance to the economy, upper middle class favourability impacting on road laws and fashions which incorporated it into wider norms before mass production arrived, making resisting its rise from the 1950s difficult. They have also sought ways in which that might never have happened, through different policies, especially those preserving the tram and pedestrian space, avoiding Beeching's closures, restrictions on cars, and emphasising the degrading influence of the road lobby.[39]

The genesis of the expansion of bus services, how regulations shaped its path, and its supremacy over the tram and railway by 1945 have also been studied, as well as its muddled nationalisation after 1945.[40] Popular attitudes towards the bus have been found to be largely negative compared to the car and railways, despite being the most used form of public transport. But its public image, though in decline, has not been entirely bad. From an alternative to the railways for the upper working class in the nineteenth century, to a flexible, comfortable commuter for middle class suburbs where trams were not operated in the early

---

[38] B. Luckin, 'Anti-Drink Driving Reform in Britain, c.1920-90', *Addiction*, 105 (2010), 1538; 1541-1542; L. Jackson and Angela Bartie, 'Children of the City': Juvenile Justice, Property, and Place', *Economic History*, *Economic History Review*, 64 (2011), 88-89; 94-97; 102; 107; C. Williams, in T. Crook and M. Esbester (eds), *Governing Risks in Modern Britain: Danger, Safety, and Accidents* (London, 2016), 218; G. O'Hara, in T. Crook and M. Esbester (eds), *Governing Risks in Modern Britain: Danger, Safety, and Accidents* (London, 2016), 228-229; K. Laybourn and D. Taylor, *The Battle for the Roads of Britain* (Basingstoke, 2015), 36; K. Cowman, 'Play Streets: Women, Children and the Problem of Urban Traffic, 1930-1970', *Social History*, 42 (2017), 233-236; 240-241; 254.

[39] D. Thoms, in D. Thoms et al, *The Motor Car and Popular Culture in the 20th Century* (Abingdon, 1998), 41; 48-49; C. Divall, in C. Divall (ed.), *Cultural Histories of Sociabilities, Spaces and Mobilities* (London, 2015), 3-5; H. Shin, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 88-90; C. Divall, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 109; C. Pooley, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016), 58-60; M. Law, 'The Car Indispensable': The Hidden Influence of the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 38 (2012), 427; 431-2; M. Hamer, *Wheels Within Wheels* (London, 1987), 80; 100-103; S. O'Connell, *The Car in British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 37-38; C. Divall, in M. Grieco and J. Urry (eds), *Mobilities: New Perspectives* (Farnham, 2011), 313.

[40] C. Mulley, in M. Walsh (ed.), *Motor Transport* (Aldershot, 1997), 123-125; 138; C. Mulley, 'The Nationalisation of the Bus Industry', *The Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 122-127; J. Hibbs, *The Bus and Coach Industry* (London, 1975), 41; 71; 83; 168; J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot), 1989), 69; 108; 179; 208.

twentieth century, a modern alternative to the tram for urban planners, a practical and cheap mode in provincial areas, and a staple of women, the elderly, and the poor by the 1960s, perceptions of the bus have been multiple.[41] Bus use could also create class judgements as the car became a symbol of status on estates.[42] Bus stops and queues were common sites of social interaction reflecting national character and inequality, but also enabled a first-come-first-serve culture.[43] On postwar suburban housing estates, the car could expand people's choices, but they could also be irrelevant for those on low incomes, forced to use inadequate bus services for longer, complex journeys to get to work and local amenities.[44] But with decentralisation, new suburban dwellers increasingly worked locally.[45] The bus has generally been viewed as the 'option of last resort' by people compared to other modes.[46]

Within this historiography, this chapter argues there has not been enough emphasis on the car and bus as productive aspects of daily life, rather than destructive, in Koshar's paradigm. The car and bus in the suburbs provided greater choice and flexibility.[47] To do this, this chapter will relate to two historiographical strands looking at the extent to which the car either reshaped or was integrated into existing patterns of life, and the nature of working class community. Firstly, Gunn shows that the working class wanted and enjoyed the car for expanding their choices, but it spread unevenly, and in any case, was often integrated into existing patterns of urban life, but also expanded movements in leisure and eventually

---

[41] J. Hibbs, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 9-11; C. Pooley, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 7; 18-21; 24-32; 57-64; 116-117; 207; 210; 216-220.
[42] D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book One: Opening the Box* (London, 2013), 28-29; 47-48; 65-66; 157; 192; 210; D. Kynaston, *Austerity Britain, 1945-51* (London, 2007), 605.
[43] J. Moran, *Reading the Everyday* (Oxford, 2005), 2-3.
[44] S. Todd, 'Phoenix Rising: Working Class Life and Urban Reconstruction', *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), 693-694; M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs* (Manchester, 1998), 145-146; S. Todd, 'Affluence, Class and Crown Street: Reinvestigating the Post-War Working Class', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 509; M. Clapson, 'Working-Class Women's Experiences', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 355; West Midlands County Councils, *Transport Policies and Programme*, 1975, 22, WCB; These estates were popular: P. Scott, 'Marketing Mass Home Ownership', *Business History*, 50 (2008), 6; 16.
[45] M. Dasgupta, *Access to Employment Opportunities by Car and by Bus* (Crowthorne, 1982), 1-5, TRL.
[46] J. Shaw and I. Docherty, *The Transport Debate* (Bristol, 2014), 3.
[47] It is important to distinguish mobility in the suburbs from central urban areas, where there was a relative turn away from cars to public transport in local authority planning by the 1970s: S. Gunn and S. Townsend, *Automobility and the City* (London, 2019), 159-160; D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 71.

commuting. In doing, Gunn qualifies with historical nuance the sociology of mobilities' framing that the car fundamentally changed the way society works by highlighting its fragmented, habitual uses, and incomplete coverage.[48]

Secondly, Jon Lawrence has shown that community was less bound by physical space and proximity than contemporary social surveys suggested, and so the increase in individual choice and mobility in this period did not lead to a decline of community, but one based more on the individual's terms.[49] This is part of a wider field of work re-assessing the community studies and other social investigations of the late 1950s and early 1960s that shows surveys such as Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London*, though nuanced and insightful, produced deterministic narratives of working class patterns of life and social bonds.[50] This narrative associated the suburbs and their wider 'motoring distances' with consumerist privatism and the traditional working class neighbourhood with the walked street and the virtues of neighbourliness and solidarity.[51] But these working class values had been built through the necessity of poverty, and had always included instrumentalism, privatism and consumerism, which were better expressed when affluence spread.[52]

This chapter seeks to build on these two historiographical positions by further reducing the importance to working class people of their traditional patterns of movement when they were able to use buses or afford a car. This is not to argue the historiography takes a conflicting view, or to side with the mobilities' paradigm of a revolution in people's

---

[48] S. Gunn, 'People and the Car', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 233; 235; 236-237.
[49] J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me?* (Oxford, 2019), 1-7; Working class community was reconstituted with greater mobility and suburban space: B. Jones, *The Working Class in Mid-Twentieth Century England* (Manchester, 2012), 198.
[50] J. Lawrence, 'Inventing the 'Traditional Working Class': A Re-Analysis of Interview Notes from Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship*', *The Historical Journal*, 59 (2916), 571; 592; L. Butler, 'Michael Young, the Institute of Community Studies, and the Politics of Kinship', *Twentieth Century British History*, 26 (2015), 203; 223-224; P. Summerfield, 'Mass-Observation: Social Research or Social Movement?', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 20 (1985), 442; M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs* (Manchester, 1998), 1; 62-65 66-67; J. Moran, 'Imagining the Street', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 171-172; 177-178; 181; 184.
[51] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 158.
[52] J. Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life', *Cultural and Social History*, 19 (2013), 289.

movements. This chapter agrees with Gunn that the slow spread of the car is crucial to understanding its impact as it was unstably incorporated into existing patterns of life, making class an important factor. But this chapter emphasises more the desire for working class people to own cars and use buses for a more choice-based life, and their weaker association with the archetypal patterns that they were often cast in by contemporary social studies.[53]

Indeed, if people's incomes were higher, the car would have spread further and faster, as it did in other countries, and gender, income, age, and individual circumstance need greater emphasis compared to class in shaping people's mobility and connection to their community.[54] It will be shown that despite the initial changes in movements, and problems with transport on moving to the suburbs in commuting, visiting family, or accessing new places, people did not want to move back to their former neighbourhoods, tolerated vast changes to their routines, and saw them mainly as expansions of choice. This makes their former patterns of movement and attachments to old neighbourhoods weaker than the opportunities symbolised by items such as the car than is currently considered.[55]

A central reason why they were less attached to the old neighbourhoods and patterns of life was that they were not as dependent on its community as was argued by the contemporary social surveys, as Lawrence shows.[56] This chapter therefore agrees with Lawrence's argument that the working class were less bound by physical space than the narratives of contemporary social surveys. He shows the archetypes of working class community among those in Bethnal Green and Debden were relatively peripheral to the more individual concerns of family, work, and higher living standards. But this chapter tries to take

---

[53] Indeed, in a recent article Gunn asks what the scale and significance of spatial mobility for different groups was, and over what distances were their lives planned, perceived and lived. This, he shows will inform the historiographies of affluence and individualism: S. Gunn, 'Spatial Mobility in Later Twentieth', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2021), 2. This thesis argues people were willing to cover greater distances and in less class-bound or predictable ways than the historiography currently suggests.
[54] J. Tanner, *International Comparisons of Cars and Car Usage* (Crowthorne, 1983), 17; 59, TRL; Political and Economic Planning, *Motor Vehicles* (London, 1950), 60-65; 145.
[55] J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 220.
[56] J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me?* (Oxford, 2019), 106; 115.

this further, emphasising a little more people's desire for more choice, and their choices were based on their individual and immediate families' desires. This makes the effects of consumerism and status-seeking through car ownership, long commutes, or using buses to visit new shops, not as isolating or atomising to the working class as is suggested.[57] Indeed, this chapter shows gender and age could be far more important in the atomisation and isolation people felt, rather than class, when it came to mobility and transport in the suburbs.

This chapter also agrees with Moran's argument that suburban life and consumer items such as the car were embraced and were more private than contemporary social surveys claimed. But this chapter seeks to go relatively further in stressing people's desire to expand individual choice even if it did not amount to vast changes in practice. Moran calls the rise of privacy, property ownership and the car part of a 'proto-Thatcherite sensibility' that prioritised private space over more collective cultures.[58] This chapter seeks to alter this relatively, to show that people wanted more individual choice, but this was not an ideological or overtly political position, nor did people hold it as a counter-weight to working class community. It was one held across voting intentions long before Thatcher, that saw all forms of transport, whether public or private, as ways to expand individual choice and convenience, and was too variable to categorise solely through the notions of class-based community or individualism.[59] The historiography has sometimes framed the rise of the car in the 1950s and 1960s as the preface to the 'me first' individualism of the Thatcher years.[60] But this can be

---

[57] J. Lawrence, 'Inventing the 'Traditional Working Class', *The Historical Journal*, 59 (2916), 593; J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me?* (Oxford, 2019), 2; 16-17.
[58] J. Moran, 'Imagining the Street', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 178; 181.
[59] Works showing voting intentions are more complex, and consumer individualism was not divided by voting intention: H. Eysenck, 'The Structure of Social Attitudes', *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 14 (1975), 323; G. Radice, *Southern Discomfort* (London, 1994), 7; 9; 13; 15; 17-20; D. Butler and R. Rose, *The British General Election of 1959* (London, 1960), 11-17; However, public opinion's swing against nationalisation occurred after it became associated with coincidental economic crises: S. Kalyvas, 'Hegemony Breakdown: The Collapse of Nationalization', *Politics & Society*, 22 (1994), 335.
[60] J. Moran, 'Imagining the Street in Post-War Britain', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 178; 181; P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces* (Oxford, 2007), 66-67; T. Gourvish, *British Rail, 1974-97* (Oxford, 2002), 4; On the rise of individualism: A. Offer, 'British Manual Workers: From Producers to Consumers', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 545-548; 560-561; The phrase 'me first' was not used in reference to transport but comes

disproportionate, as is the image of the railways as the nation's socially equitable, collectivist mode of transport, and Beeching as its axeman.[61]

The car, and the car industry, can be framed as forcing itself, and consumerism, on society. But among most people, they were popular because they wanted increased mobility choice and benefitted from their convenience.[62] Luckin and Sheen have sought to apply to the past, the frameworks of mobility studies looking at the social relations of movement. Focusing on the interwar years, they find that commercial and political power supported the car, despite low levels of car ownership among those suffering most from road accidents.[63] But this chapter looks at the postwar period of mass-car ownership, when the political and economic realities of the interwar years had changed, and mass-motoring dawned.[64]

This is not to contest that the car is a prime example of society's disregard for a technology's side-effects, in this case, pollution, urban congestion and decay, and a terrible rise in road accidents.[65] But the evidence from working class people in this chapter shows the car and bus were mainly positives, and that their ways of life were not deeply linked to a close-knit solidarity through physical proximity and low mobility that postwar surveys emphasized. Although these surveys identified income, population density, the availability of public transport, age, gender, and individual circumstances in the shaping of transport patterns and perceptions, their complexity was not given enough importance due to their

---

from: F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 'The Decline of Deference and the Left', *Juncture*, 23 (2016), 132; M. Hilton et al, 'New Times Revisited: Britain in the 1980s', *Contemporary British History*, 31 (2017), 155.

[61] D. Henshaw, *The Great Railway Conspiracy* (Hawes, 1991), 151; 232-234; J. Moran, *On Roads* (London, 2010), 41; 177; 246; 151; Study of Rural Transport in West Suffolk, Report of the Steering Group, May 1971, TNA, MT 152/115.

[62] L. Setright, *Drive On! A Social History of the Motor Car* (London, 2002), 178-179.

[63] B. Luckin and D. Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility', *Cultural and Social History*, 6 (2009), 224.

[64] The car was the most used mode of transport by 1974, including for 'work-related travel': AA, *Annual Report, 1975*, 5, AA, 73M94/H2/8, HA.

[65] L. Setright, *Drive On! A Social History of the Motor Car* (London, 2002), 178-179; S. Wetherell, *Foundations: How the Built Environment Made Twentieth Century Britain* (Woodstock, 2020), 55-58; 62; 86-88; 144; 151; Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain* (London, 1976), 180; A. Hickman, *Atmospheric Pollution Measurements in West London* (Crowthorne, 1973), 1, TRL; *Financial Times*, 26 January 1973.

overarching emphasis on class.

Early Analyses of Transport and Social Change

Postwar surveys on car ownership and perceptions of transport varied according to their focus and approach. But across these studies, the car and bus were often linked to employment and residential decentralisation, and increased choice was seen through the prism of class traditions. An early transport study came just before the end of the Second World War with Kate Liepmann's survey of the journey to work in urban areas across the country, using data from before the war. It found that the rise of the car and dormitory suburbs were making the journey to work more complex and difficult for town planning to organise. As with most later investigations, it also found that across British cities people used the most convenient mode to commute relative to their income, which meant working class urbanites walked or took cheap trams and buses. But it also found working-class journeys by public transport were often multiple, time-consuming, and straining compared to the car.[66]

One reason for this was that people's homes were decentralising, producing longer journeys as well as new transport needs. Indeed, in Birmingham, only 18.8% of the working class population lived in its central wards by 1940, compared to 28.6% in the Middle Ring and 52.6% in the Outer Ring, even before the advent of postwar dispersal schemes. This led to longer, more fragmented journeys by tram, bus, or train. Moving to a suburban estate also led to longer journeys and higher fares for many workers commuting back into cities, which were 'not proportional' to their low wages.[67] The strain and hardship of daily commutes was emphasised, and rail use as relatively less important, partly due to the historic disinterest in 'workmen's trains' by railway companies. However, workmen's trains (concession fares at

[66] K. Liepmann, *The Journey to Work: Its Significance for Industrial and Community Life* (London, 1944), 5- 7; 28-31; 51-54; 61; 70-71; 137-138; 142; 149; 190-194.
[67] Ibid., 45-46; 121; J. Whitehand and C. Carr, 'England's Interwar Suburban Landscape and Reality', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25 (1999), 490-493.

early peak times), were used most in London, and were not fundamental to working class commuting nationally in part due to their expense, but also their reduced use in reaching decentralised areas.[68]

Thus, Liepmann finds the bus was the most common mode used in the 1940s but describes the car's potential for commuting. If one could afford it, the car 'reduces the time and probably the strain, as compared with transport by a public conveyance', she wrote.[69] A forerunner for the prevalence of the car came in her findings at the Austin motor works in suburban Longbridge, Birmingham. At least 21.1% of male staff and over 13.6% of day-workers commuted by car already, which was 'uncommonly high' for 1940s Britain due to their access to cars and above average incomes, a trend that continued into the 1970s. Thanks to war-time rule relaxations, many colleagues commuted together by car and were 'sharing the costs', which shows it was not an anti-community pursuit cutting people off from each other, but one based on convenience.[70] Car ownership, then, correlated with incomes and decentralisation, but were not solely individualistic and before the 1950s the bus and tram were more heavily used than the railways, and cycling as well as walking were prominent.[71]

The importance of income levels in car ownership was also studied in the 1950s, which led to the speculation of whether higher wages would disrupt class-based choices. A Political and Economic Planning study of car ownership and its manufacturing industry in 1950, before mass ownership took off later in the decade, found that demand for the car correlated with income, enabling 2.5 million of Britain's middle class to afford one by 1939. Such a limited market of relatively expensive cars, the study suggested, meant they could be

---

[68] K. Liepmann, *The Journey to Work* (London, 1944), 27-32; 49; 53; 61.
[69] Ibid., 49; 61; 128.
[70] The 21.1% was an average between men and women so the proportion of male car commuters was higher: Ibid., 64-65; 149-151; The bus remained the main mode of public transport in Birmingham and car ownership was higher for plant workers at Longbridge in 1975: West Midlands County Councils, *Transport Policies and Programme: Submission*, 1975, 22-27; 29, WCB.
[71] K. Liepmann, *The Journey to Work* (London, 1944), 35; 45-46; 64-65.

a class-specific item, making car taxes a 'class consciousness' issue, not for a mass market of workers but the lower middle class.[72] Indeed, based on the cost of a car in Britain, it was possible to argue in the 1940s that car ownership could be 'approaching its upper limit'.[73] However, the study also stated that although 'the tradition of running a car had not been strong in the British working class, the ambition to do so is probably widespread'.[74] This suggested that even as the economy was struggling in the late 1940s, making cars expensive for the salaried classes, wage earners may want to use more of their income to own one.

Despite these class-based approaches, the study also showed there was great potential for mass car ownership and provided several reasons for its slow development by 1950 that are not linked to the durability of working class patterns of life, or negative attitudes towards the car. Outside of incomes, the slow spread of the car came from the industries' lack of standardisation, higher production and maintenance costs, and high taxes, making cars more expensive in Britain than in Western Europe, the United States, and Australia, where the working class owned cars earlier. These costs had made British manufacturers provide a range of relatively small cars for the gradations of the middle class.[75]

As Scott, Bain, Bowden, Turner, and others have shown, across many different consumer products, the limited ranges available to the middle class in the interwar and early postwar years came due to the small size of the market able to afford one, but also production and tax costs still being too high to make mass production viable, rather than a lack of appetite across class. Indeed, with financing, other cheaper goods became mass produced earlier, such as furniture and televisions, with cars becoming popular by the mid-1950s as the

---

[72] Political and Economic Planning, *Motor Vehicles: A Report on the Organisation and Structure of the Industry* (London, 1950), 58-65.
[73] Ibid., 58.
[74] Ibid., 60.
[75] Ibid., 60-65; 144-145; P. Scott, *The Market Makers: Creating Mass Markets for Consumer Durables in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2017), 332.

economy improved and incomes rose.[76] This led manufacturers to increase their volumes when the cost of production fell, and a second-hand car market developed. The gradual spread of the car by the 1960s, therefore, was based on its affordability. Increased use of hire purchase helped, which had been a site of class-based stigma before 1939,[77] but class-ridden associations with consumption or patterns of movement were not central by the 1960s.

The bus could also be associated with greater individual choice, materialism, and the decline of working class patterns of movement in social surveys before mass car ownership arrived. Ferdynand Zweig's *Men in the Pits* in 1948 explored the daily lives of colliers in England and South Wales through their social and cultural habits. He found that miners enjoyed communal leisure such as snooker, watching sport, and socialising in public houses. But he also found that when people's choices increased, especially younger people, collective activities declined in favour of more individual pursuits, mechanised work and travel, and frustration with consumer purchases being held back by 'the purchase tax'. One example was when choirs and voluntary organisations declined after the advent of mass bus services. Through the mobility of the bus, people could pursue leisure and take an instrumentalist view of work, making trips to shops or the seaside.[78] 'In thirty minutes or so the bus can take them right to a town or some other centre of amusement', Zweig wrote, linking increased mobility with consumption and the decline of traditional working class movements.[79]

Social surveys also analysed the effects of transport and the building of new estates on

---

[76] Ibid., 319-322; Using consumer demand theory: S. Bowden and P. Turner, 'Some Cross-Section Evidence on the Determinants of the Diffusion of Car Ownership', *Business History*, 35 (1993), 59; 67; A. Bain, 'The Growth of Television Ownership in the United Kingdom', *International Economic Review*, 3 (1962), 147; S. Bowden and P. Turner, 'The Demand for Consumer Durables in the United Kingdom in the Interwar Period', *Journal of Economic History*, 53 (1993), 245; P. Scott, 'Mr Drage, Mr Everyman, and the Creation of a Mass Market for Domestic Furniture in Interwar Britain', *Economic History Review*, 62 (2009), 826; M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns* (Manchester, 1998), 62-65.
[77] W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics, 1896-1970* (London, 1971), 323; 326-327; P. Scott, *The Market Makers* (Oxford, 2017), 324-325; S. O'Connell, *The Car in British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 29-33; Motor Transactions Survey, W. Kemsley for the Social Survey, TNA, RG 23/232.
[78] F. Zweig, *Men in the Pits* (London, 1949), 19-22; 82-86; 106-112; 142-143; 154; 175.
[79] Ibid., 21; 28; 41; 144-154.

the social bonds and daily patterns of working class life. A 1954 study, which had started before 1945 but continued after, looked at how town planning shaped the daily movements and community organisation of working class people after moving to housing estates in outer Sheffield and Liverpool, and again framed their habits and choices in terms of class 'consciousness'. It shows many desired privacy but felt a sense of alienation due to the increased need and costs of motorised transport to get around, which was not well provided initially.[80] The study also described the roads bordering the estates as defining features of the new suburban landscape, both separating and connecting the working class back to the city.[81]

But poor transport links and increasing physical mobility, described as transience uprooting traditional community, also came with greater desire for individual choice and privacy. Frustrations were voiced by respondents about the cost and inadequacy of bus services compared to those in middle class areas of the city that were catering to their needs.[82] Although they were considered expensive, residents also used buses to access the city centre and visit better shops and cinemas further away, and to get their children into newer suburban schools.[83] The problems with public transport also improved with new bus and tram services.[84] Again, decentralisation was an important factor here, as bus services were relatively easy to provide in suburban areas due to existing services to new factories built nearby, as well as new amenities in the area.[85]

Indeed, as with other studies assessed below, these transport difficulties were not perceived by residents as reason enough to regret the move. Although respondents faced challenges getting used to a new life on an estate, their choices of housing and daily

---

[80] University of Liverpool, *Neighbourhood and Community: An Enquiry into Social Relationship on Housing Estates in Liverpool and Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1954), 7-14; 19; 24; 80; 89; 103; 147-148.
[81] Ibid., 8; 19; 80.
[82] Ibid., 19; 24-25; 80-81; 91-103; 147-148.
[83] Ibid., 24-25; 93; 103-104.
[84] Ibid., 9; 66-67; 19.
[85] Ibid., 24; 80-81; The process of decentralisation scattered close-knit communities was found by William Watson's study of Leigh, Greater Manchester: W. Watson, *Discovery*, May 1963, 33-35, ABMS 5/36, CCA.

movements, often using motorised transport, saw only a minority want to return to city centre life. Indeed, many of those who wanted to leave wanted to move somewhere less homogenous and more private to avoid those they saw as unseemly on the estate.[86] This contrasted with some communal spaces, such as bus services and their routes, that were described as a way to cultivate connections between people with different material aspirations and standards of behaviour.[87] Therefore, as working class people were given opportunities for new housing, the expansion of individual choice became more important than the old patterns of daily life and its communal spaces.

But traditional notions of behaviour and community did not disappear. The bus could be a way of maintaining a sense of community in the sparser suburban setting, but this was often shaped by gender and age. The bus-stop was a meeting place for housewives on the way to the shops, allowing spontaneous but selective socialising that would have to be actively organised without it on the estate.[88] Older people too, could feel there was 'too much privacy' on the estate, and appreciated living near a bus route for the sense of activity it provided outside their own home.[89] Therefore, although the study shows most people took advantage of the privacy of the estate in the evenings when male workers returned, during the day, buses could provide communal space for women and the elderly as well as those on the way to work or the cinema in the evening.[90]

Thus, the Liverpool and Sheffield study shows that a traditional sense of working class community became less important as people's mobility and individual choice increased. The study's classist framings described the growth of consumption among residents as acquisitiveness, along with a general lack of community that planners had sort to maintain in

---

[86] University of Liverpool, *Neighbourhood and Community* (Liverpool, 1954), 41-42; 63-67; 81; 148.
[87] Ibid., 124.
[88] Ibid., 63; 115.
[89] Ibid., 117.
[90] Ibid., 91; 103.

the suburbs.[91] This came through in the growing atomisation and competition in material and occupational status between residents, but how this was something unique to a single class or the particular environment of the suburban housing estate, is not made clear.[92] Neither were these conflicts yet able to be expressed through mass car ownership, but by the later 1950s, the car had to be incorporated into postwar social surveys as it became a mass-owned item.

Community and Proximity

One of the most scrutinised of the postwar community studies, Michael Young and Peter Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London*, partially frames mechanical transport as facilitating a wider decline of working class community on the suburban housing estate.[93] It studied how the lives of those moving from the dense East London streets of Bethnal Green to the Essex housing estate at Debden changed as a result, showing some of the advantages of suburban life such as better housing, but making a wider conclusion of familial and community-based inertia. A more spacious, choice-driven life has benefits, but they were too high a price to pay for the loss of kin and working class social bonds, it suggests.[94] The study was nuanced in its findings, but selective in its overall narrative on the perceptions and uses of mechanical transport by the newly-suburban working class. Indeed, the bus, car, and train are important to the study because they enable the working class to leave behind the physical proximity of the old neighbourhoods that had moulded them, which then creates problems the study claims their technological prowess can not remedy.

---

[91] Ibid., 12; 49.
[92] Ibid., 49; 72.
[93] Sociology at this time saw urban working class neighbourhoods as a product of industrialisation, forming inner-urban networks of community solidarity based on kinship and shared economic and cultural class, which was broken apart by suburbanisation, consumerism, and mobility through the car: J. Scott, *Stratification and Power: Structures of Class, Status and Command* (Cambridge, 1996), 228-245; M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 11; 196.
[94] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 159.

At a time of growing public discourse on affluence and Labour's focus on embourgeoisement and the nuclear family, the study sees physical proximity as crucial to forming working class community.[95] The study's introduction pre-empts this by framing suburban space as the product of the upper and middle classes, forming a social barrier to the working class.[96] However, this was less true by the interwar period, when voluntary working class suburbanisation to private housing accelerated, and housing estates were often a mix of different backgrounds.[97] The study then stresses the importance of physical proximity by framing walking as the traditional form of mobility.[98] Its evocation of Bethnal Green is thus one of people having 'close connexion' with each other, street-based socialising, and children playing 'hopscotch or 'he' in the roadways'.[99] These were people with no need for a car. Indeed, it reports that so few in Bethnal Green used buses or trains that they were referred to as 'riding fares'. Paying for transport was considered 'outlandish' and 'a little daring' in Bethnal Green.[100]

Physical proximity is also seen as central to gender roles in Bethnal Green. Newly-married couples are shown to be often still living in a parent's home, which created frictions between family members.[101] But when the couple find their own home, women are presented as the anchor of traditional home life, with grandmother, mother, and her grown daughter supporting each other in close proximity, though there is description of the husband's

---

[95] P. Gurney, *The Making of Consumer Culture in Modern Britain* (London, 2017), 134; 170-178; J. Moran, 'Imagining the Street', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 170-172; 186; A. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism* (London, 1957), 175-176; 226; 254-255; 282-285; 378; 506; As did William Watson's study of Leigh, Greater Manchester: W. Watson, *Discovery*, May 1963, 28-35, ABMS 5/36, CCA.
[96] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 11-12.
[97] J. Armstrong, in M. Daunton (ed.), (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. 3* (Cambridge, 2000), 243-245 (229-258); R. Lawton and C. Pooley, in G. Gordon (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK, 1890-1980* (London, 1986), 77-80.
[98] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 159; J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 19; 87-89; 220; Michel De Certeau has framed walking through the city as part of people's urban discourse and political agency constituted in space, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall (London, 2011), 97-110.
[99] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 14; 38; 84.
[100] Ibid., 112; 159.
[101] Ibid., 32-33.

increased role in the home too.[102] The working class husband also has kin close by, but can maintain his social bonds of friendship at work and the local pub.[103] Kinship is also cast within a wider network of the 'ancient family' of parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews, threatened by the Industrial Revolution, but 'still very much alive' in working class Bethnal Green.[104] The study also shows that relationships with the extended family are regulated, and access to the private home for those outside the family similarly controlled in the working class tradition. But the home was also connected to a maze of streets filled with neighbours, friends, and social spaces for community to grow.[105] In contrast, in Debden, the home, rather than simply being private, it is isolated, and less self-sufficient due to work, play and kin being physically scattered and requiring travel.[106]

Again, the study acknowledges the nuances of social change at the time.[107] One explanation for Bethnal Green's close-knit community was that work was rooted locally across a vast array of trades.[108] But the study does describe how the old loyalties to manual work were breaking down in favour of further education and white collar work.[109] Companionate marriage, falling birth rates, social mobility for children, and the sharing of household duties were also described. Due to the chronic shortage of houses, people who would prefer to live further from their family were also unable to.[110] But its solution to this is the provision of housing and jobs in situ, which feeds into one of its themes that declining proximity was damaging, and precipitated the decline of working class community. It thus argues against suburban sprawl, which it suggests was due to the spread of the railways, and

---

[102] Ibid., 21; 26-28; 46-49; 189.
[103] Ibid., 28-29; 34-36; 63; 103.
[104] Ibid., 11-12.
[105] Ibid., 22-23; 83-88; 107-110; P. Townsend, *The Family Life of Old People: An Enquiry in East London* (London, 1957), 120-126.
[106] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 158.
[107] Ibid., 20-30; J. Lawrence, 'Inventing the 'Traditional Working Class', *The Historical Journal*, 59 (2916), 571.
[108] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 13; 89; 93-94; 135.
[109] Ibid., 28-29.
[110] Ibid., 20-28; 32-35; 42-43; 186.

opposes high-rise flats for trying to artificially recreate community.[111]

However, redeveloping existing homes in city centres was not the focus of government policy through overspill schemes, and only developed in the 1970s to combat blight. Nor was the redevelopment of existing urban housing in high enough demand to receive state or private capital as housing and employment continued to decentralise, as they had since the nineteenth century.[112] Indeed, a survey completed for the City of Manchester Plan in 1945 on slum clearance found that 93% of households asked in some working class areas wanted to leave the city centre.[113] Work was also already further from home for many than Young and Willmott suggested, and there was a much greater movement of people in and out of Bethnal Green than they described, showing working class patterns of life were not so uniform or bound by physical proximity, even before mass suburbanisation.[114]

One consequence of decentralisation removing a class from the communities that formed them, for Young and Willmott, is that they become partly dependent on transport, making them more mobile and untied to locality. Each suburban house coldly sits 'beside a concrete road', the study describes.[115] This leads to an isolated depiction of Debden compared to Bethnal Green, symbolised by its transport: 'Less than twenty miles away from Bethnal Green, the automatic doors of the tube train open to the new land' of suburbia. The tube line is cast as part of the growing links between the two places, so that housing estates 'are no longer Siberias to which other, unknown people are banished'.[116] The enjoyment of

---

[111] Ibid., 197-198; B. Ineichen and D. Hooper, 'Wives' Mental Health and Children's Behaviour in Contrasting Residential Estates', *Social Science and Medicine*, 8 (1974), 369; 373.
[112] Peter Scott, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 521-522; C. Pooley, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2001), 464; A. Powers, 'The Heroic Period of Conservation', *Twentieth Century Architecture*, 7 (2004), 13; A. Kefford, 'Disruption, Destruction and the Creation of 'the Inner Cities', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 499; 508-509; 512; P. Scott, 'Dispersion Versus Decentralisation: British Location of Industry Policies', *Economy and Society*, 26 (1997), 595-596; An early call for redevelopment and conservation rather than decentralisation: K. Liepmann, *The Journey to Work: Its Significance for Industrial and Community Life* (London, 1944), 193-194.
[113] R. Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan: Prepared for the City Council* (Manchester, 1945), 19-21; 210-212.
[114] J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me* (Oxford, 2019), 60-61; 93.
[115] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 121.
[116] Ibid., 121-124.

items such as the car, televisions, and private gardens, are then framed less as voluntary pursuits, as ways to compensate, 'to support the family in its isolation'.[117]

By contrast, in Bethnal Green motorised transport is less needed, and walking is the norm because of the closeness of work, play and kin. Relatives' houses are 'within five minutes walk' when you need them.[118] People, it is said, walk by the kitchen window and stop for a chat.[119] Simply going out for a walk brought locals in contact with 'people they played with as children', and when walking the busy streets, locals 'know the faces in the crowd'.[120] The act of walking, due to physical proximity, is thus used as a means of connection and cultivation of community by Young and Willmott. The 'influence of proximity' is so integral that the study states: 'Geography is an influence as well as genealogy', defining the working class family locally within a wider physical neighbourhood and community of neighbours.[121]

In Debden, the study claims the loss of physical proximity had made life practically and financially harder, and mechanised transport is used as a symbol of this rupture. Rather than an advance, the car and bus are partly necessities used to try to recover community bonds. The effect of moving to the suburbs in breaking familial networks is epitomized by the wife's isolation there, which she is unable to overcome due to a lack of transport. Husbands who still worked in Bethnal Green, however, could bump into family and friends 'on their walk from tube station to workplace'.[122] Indeed, it is suggested that the 'presence at the other end of the line' of his old neighbourhood 'may relieve' the husband's new commute compared to his wife's position.[123] In Debden, this isolation is made worse by 'the distance'

---

[117] Ibid., 143-145.
[118] Ibid., 37; 47; 105; 116; 136.
[119] Ibid., 45.
[120] Ibid., 105; 116.
[121] Ibid., 86; 170-185.
[122] Ibid., 136; 146.
[123] Ibid., 135.

to local shops and amenities being over 'twenty minutes to walk'. The loss of the ability to walk thus entrenches a sense of isolation in the new locale.[124] This was particularly affecting for women, but it was not just the distance but 'the cost' that made errands and visiting kin difficult. If 'fares were cheaper you could afford to go more often and it wouldn't be so bad', one woman lamented.[125] The car is thus cast as a necessity, but a somewhat compulsory one because it was 'cheaper to run' for some 'than it is to pay [rail] fares'.[126]

These arguments can be contextualised to show they are somewhat selective. Despite the notion that many husbands still continued to work in Bethnal Green after moving to Debden, Young and Willmott state that less than 40% still worked there after moving to Debden, with more working locally or in other parts of London.[127] How social surveys could frame their argument to suit a certain conclusion was also shown at the time by market research seeking to suggest young housewives wanted to move away from their mothers to live a different, modern, consumer-driven life. This market research found a more heterogenous mix of mother-daughter relationships, with some mothers wanting their daughters to move further away because they asked for help too often, and only a small number wanted to live close by because they enjoyed each other's company.[128] The extent to which these narratives were selective in depicting how transport was used and perceived will now be assessed by evaluating Young and Willmott's field notes.[129]

---

[124] Ibid., 142; 153.
[125] Ibid., 136.
[126] Ibid., 159.
[127] Ibid., 135.
[128] S. Nixon, 'Understanding Ordinary Women: Advertising, Consumer Research and Mass Consumption', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 2 (2009), 310; 315-317; Consumer and market research could produce progressive, public-oriented but also consumerist visions of the nature and impact of affluence: S. Schwarzkopf, in T. Crook and G. O'Hara (eds), *Statistics and the Public Sphere* (New York, 2011), 158-160.
[129] This approach was shaped by Jon Lawrence: J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me* (Oxford, 2019).

Transport in the Suburbs

This, and the following sections will look at the factors influencing people's perceptions of transport in relation to a range of factors. Again, these were: their income, population density, the availability of public transport, age, gender, and their individual circumstances. However, these will be shown to interplay too unstably across class and location to produce Young and Willmott's deterministic framework. By analysing the study's original field notes it can be shown that there was a greater desire for an individually-based life than Young and Willmott suggested, and these were often facilitated by the bus and car, despite often providing harder or longer journeys.

Young and Willmott used roads to evoke the alienation for those who had moved to Debden. 'Instead of the sociable squash of people and houses' they describe in Bethnal Green, in Debden, there are 'drawn-out roads' and the 'spacious open ground of the usual low-density estate'.[130] These new voids between people are described as 'motoring distances', and 'not walking distances anymore'.[131] However, respondents in the survey's notes preferred Debden, and wanted as many transport choices as they could to maximise their individual and family choices, whether publicly or privately provided. Many experienced transport problems in their daily patterns of movement after the move to the suburbs, due to longer journeys to work and shops, and poor initial bus provision. But this did not lead them to reject Debden, or the opportunities offered by the bus or car, neither were their former traditional patterns of life and community favoured in comparison.

The field notes show there were real difficulties in accessing transport and local amenities when the estate was first established, but these frustrations did not lead to a desire to return to the densely populated community of Bethnal Green, and they improved over

[130] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 122.
[131] Ibid., 158.

time. Mrs Rutland expressed an appreciation for the improvement in local transport and amenities after 18 months on the estate, saying the prices at the 'lovely' shopping centre were dropping, and 'the buses are better too'. She worked part-time on moving to the estate at a local hospital, which she 'liked', stating: 'It's much better now because I go by bus', when 'before I had to walk'.[132] Taking a bus to a new job and newer shopping areas in the suburbs was perceived as a positive for Rutland, aiding here very different daily patterns of movement, although she felt fares were expensive. But due to gendered social roles, aspects of Mrs Rutland's daily pattern of life in Debden were retained from Bethnal Green. 'I do the shopping up at the Broadway and walk back' to work, she said. 'Then I go home and cook…It's the same old thing'. The wife's domestic duties remained, although these routines required greater public transport provision and vastly different movements in the suburbs.

However, the Rutlands did not want to leave Debden due to transport problems. Mr Rutland, who 'worked with horse vans' in Poplar, had to 'walk to the [rail] station at quarter past five in the morning'. Despite this, which Young and Willmott causally link to the detriment of working class patterns of daily life and community, Mr Rutland said he 'doesn't want to live in a flat in London', and expressed joy at the increased space they now had.[133] His wife also stated he did not complain about the bus provision because he is a 'quiet man'. His age and lack of mobility after undergoing an operation were also factors making the commute harder.[134] But physical proximity was not as desirable as was claimed, local transport was improving, and the problems coming from a completely new daily routine were tolerated due to the potential of greater choice and better housing compared to Bethnal Green.

The culture inculcated in the dense streets of Bethnal Green is framed as almost the

---

[132] Interview with Mrs Rutland, 29 Rockwood Gardens, 22 September and 22 October 1955, The Papers of Michael Young [henceforth YUNG] 1/5/1/2, CCA.
[133] Interview with Mrs Rutland, 29 Rockwood Gardens, 22 September and 22 October 1955, YUNG 1/5/1/2, CCA.
[134] Interview with Mrs Rutland, 29 Rockwood Gardens, 9 June 1953, YUNG 1/5/1/2, CCA.

opposite to Debden by Young and Willmott. It is suggested that a man simply 'does not have to have a car' there 'because relatives and friends, even work, are at walking distance'.[135] As well as this, it is argued that in Bethnal Green, 'status, in so far as it is determined by a job and income and education, is more or less irrelevant', and the material 'urge is less compulsive' due to its social uniformity and proximity.[136] Life in Debden is described in contrast as less 'personal',[137] and the car is framed as necessary to bolt together a 'self-contained' private life at home and a scattered existence outside it.[138] This picture is similar to recent sociological descriptions of private cars, which have used Young and Willmott's survey to argue that the car atomised society.[139] However, the study, and its original notes show people did not want to move back to Bethnal Green exactly because its neighbourhoods were so densely packed, or 'closed in', and there were more jobs and amenities opening in the suburbs.[140]

Mr and Mrs Robertson had been offered a house in Debden because the husband was paralysed – a move in which his 'invalid chair was replaced by a car' so he could get around in the sparser surroundings. He was also given an allowance for the insurance and running costs of the car, enabling the household to use it on the husband's income as a clerk. The couple describe how they 'got to town in the car once a week', and the wife enjoyed being dropped off to shop at the new Sainsbury's and Woolworths while the husband waited in the car. Essentially, this household was living as many with the requisite income already did in the early 1950s, and as many would in the years ahead, which would change the way people used nearby towns and cities.[141] It was also clear the Robertsons enjoyed the sparser, greener

---

[135] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1957), 140; 157.
[136] Ibid., 159-162.
[137] Ibid., 164; 170; 208.
[138] Ibid., 157-158.
[139] J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 55-56; 124-130; 219-230.
[140] Interview with Mr George Rutland, 29 Rockwood Gardens, Debden, 15 October 1955, YUNG 1/5/1/2, CCA.
[141] Interview with Mr and Mr Robertson, 24 Carter Close, Debden, 1953-1955, YUNG, 1/5/1/1, CCA.

environment of Debden, shopping on the Broadway, and the car was described by the interviewer as a 'blessing' in making that possible for them. For those affected by physical disability, then, automobility could mean less dense suburban space represented a better life compared to bus transport in or outside of town.[142]

Unsurprisingly, the couple said they 'could not understand it' how some had claimed they felt cut off in Debden compared to Bethnal Green. Indeed, as the husband did not get on well with his family in London, he did not use the car to visit them, although it was 'possible and easy for him to see them if he wants'.[143] The car and their new house, compared to his old wheel chair and Bethnal Green, in the context of the husband's disability, must have also fuelled a greater sense of fulfilment and provided individually-based choices in Debden. This shows the significance of automobility in expanding people's choices and taking very different daily patterns of movement in the suburbs. Of course, someone with more bodily mobility would have been able to live a more mobile choice-driven life in Bethnal Green, or used the bus in a similar way in Debden, but the increase in choices provided by the car in the suburbs for this family was stark.

Thus, personal circumstances could be crucial in shaping perceptions and the use of transport, which was shown by an interview with Mrs Silk in Debden. She had been recently widowed after her husband died in the workplace and wanted to move back to London to be closer to her mother and get her old job as a machinist. But in the difficult period after the loss of her husband, the car became representative of familial ties with her brothers-in-law, 'because we've been able to use their cars'. They had given her and her father lifts to sort out her affairs, and as her father was physically disabled, she said that he 'wouldn't have been able to get to the court and get round to see people about the claim unless he'd been able to

---

[142] Interview with Mr and Mr Robertson, 24 Carter Close, Debden, 1953-1955, YUNG, 1/5/1/1, CCA; J. Hine, in M. Grieco and J. Urry (eds), *Mobilities: New Perspectives* (Farnham, 2011), 30.
[143] Interview with Mr and Mr Robertson, 24 Carter Close, Debden, 1953-1955, YUNG, 1/5/1/1, CCA.

go in their cars'. 'They carried us around in their cars – to the court and everything', she said, and her husband's employer also offered her the use of their vehicle too. These lifts, and the offers of lifts, may have been relatively easy gestures, but they would not have been made without the ownership of those cars, and they provided a sense of kinship and convenience for those with disability or personal problems. For Mrs Silk the car had allowed things to run smoothly at a difficult time and allowed her family to make more individual choices.[144]

The Preston household interview showed how men, still working in Bethnal Green, had to pay more to commute but preferred life in Debden. Mr Preston, who made mirrors in Bethnal Green, spoke of the 'considerable expense' due to the commute compared to Bethnal Green, where 'he could walk to work and come home to mum's for dinner'. Despite these added strains, he stated 'he does not mind it' and did not intend to leave.[145] Here we see the breaking of two traditions – the short walk to work and returning home for meals with kin. Indeed, TRRL household trip studies in Reading through this period suggested as people increasingly lived further from work, they went home for lunch less, and took conjoined journeys by car.[146] Mr Barr stated bus expenses to get to work from Debden 'comes near enough to £1 a week', but despite this, he did not want to leave. Due to the distance from work, Barr said: 'I have to take sandwiches now. I used to go home for dinner when we were living up there'.[147] Again, changes to daily routines, and the greater use of mechanical transport were tolerated for the greater choice and space suburban life offered.

Others said the longer commute from Debden was not a problem. Mr Tarry, a butcher in Bethnal Green, found the longer commute via bus and train was not an issue, saying 'it's very nice now to have a bus to get you to the station in the mornings. It's not really much

---

[144] Debden Recall: Mrs Silk, 76 Goldingham Avenue, YUNG, 1/5/1/3, CCA.
[145] Interview with Irene Preston and Mr Preston, 255 Oakwood Hill, 1952, Debden, YUNG, 1/5/1/1, CCA.
[146] P. Emmerson and J. Downes, *Travel Changes in Reading Between 1962, 1971 and 1976* (Crowthorne, 1982), 12-13, TRL; F. Fawcett and J. Downes, *The Spatial Uniformity of Trip Rates in the Reading Area in 1971* (Crowthorne, 1977), 9, TRL.
[147] Interview with Mr Barr, 27 Harvey Gardens, Debden, 7 November 1955, YUNG, 1/5/1/2, CCA.

trouble for me to get to work', indeed, he said it 'only takes about twenty minutes'.[148] Mrs Brockington, whose daughter worked at a printing firm that was relocating from London, nearer to Debden, also described the perks of a longer commute for a young woman. Brockington said her daughter 'is sorry they are moving here because she likes to go travelling, it's a bit of life'. For a young woman with the security of a job and still living at home, therefore, a longer commute by train was perceived to be eye-opening and preferable to a shorter, cheaper walk through a familiar neighbourhood.[149] This also suggests that women were more assertive in their mobility than has sometimes been suggested in the historiography, and that the use and perceptions of transport were more individually based.[150]

Indeed, of those still living in Bethnal Green, the reasons for not moving to a suburban estate often centred on lower incomes, age, jobs, and family ties, rather than the loss of a wider community or a daily routine. Neither did living in Bethnal Green guarantee a better social life. Mr and Mrs Christopher Colvill lived there, but Mrs Colvill stated that she 'had few friends in' and wanted a 'more social life', which included pursuits that locals would consider snobbish, such as the ballet and visiting art galleries. They also greatly enjoyed their new television, suggesting life was not so archetypally communitarian and that the television was wanted by people in Bethnal Green as well as Debden.[151] Mrs Colvill also spoke of her brother-in-law who was 'very comfortably off with just himself and one child and he has a car'.[152] For the Colvills, items such as the car represented an advance because they offered greater status, choice, and privacy.[153] Indeed, the Colvills opposed getting a flat

---

[148] Interview with Mr Tarry, 125 Colebrook Lane, Debden, 2 December 1955, YUNG, 1/5/1/2, CCA.
[149] Interview with Mrs Brockington, 14 Westall Road, Debden, 4 October 1955, YUNG, 1/5/1/3, CCA.
[150] C. Pooley and M. Pooley, 'Young Women on the Move', *Social Science History*, 45 (2021), 495-497; 511-514; C. Pooley and S. Pooley, 'Constructing a Suburban Identity: Youth, Femininity', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 402; 408; C. Pooley, 'Cities, Spaces and Movement: Everyday Experiences of Urban Travel in England', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 94; 99.
[151] Interview with Christopher Colvill, 236 Old Ford Road, October 1953, YUNG 1/5/1/5, CCA.
[152] Interview with Mrs Colvill, 236 Old Ford Road, 30 March 1953, YUNG, 1/5/1/5, CCA.
[153] Cars and greater wealth could also be a cause for friction between kin: M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 173; 184.

in London exactly because they were too densely populated. Mrs Colvill, especially, was put off by 'the impossibility of quarrelling with your husband without everyone hearing'.[154] Even when people stayed, they had similar material aspirations to the people moving out, and class ties to the community were not as important as claimed.[155]

It could also be hard for people on lower incomes to find new work in the suburbs, making a move difficult. Mr and Mrs Newman did not want to move partly because of the husband's work, which was on the railways. Working for London Transport, he knew 'there aren't any all-night buses on the estates' yet, which he would need to get into work, showing public transport was underdeveloped initially in the suburbs. But he also knew that transferring jobs within London Transport after moving to a suburban area was already in high demand. Indeed, there was a '2 to 3 year wait', and seniority of status received first preference, meaning the Newmans would not be able to make the move.[156] Some in Bethnal Green also did not see a change in daily patterns of life as a problem. Mr and Mrs Smith, for example, stated that they wanted to move for better housing, and that they 'don't mind' if that means moving away from Bethnal Green. Mr Smith was also described as saying he 'wouldn't mind the daily journey' after making the move, 'as his time's his own, he being his own master', showing an openness to a different, individually-based pattern of life.[157]

Young and Willmott describe those in Debden as making the best of a bad situation, compensating through consumerism, which they argue goes 'some way to explain the competition for status' on the estate, 'which is in itself the result of isolation from kin and the cause of estrangement from neighbours'.[158] This narrative makes physical proximity and mobility stasis central to working class values and does not give enough weight to people's

---

[154] Interview with Christopher Colville, 236 Old Ford Road, October 1953, YUNG 1/5/1/5, CCA.
[155] J. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me* (Oxford, 2019).
[156] Interview with Mr William Newman, 31 Mendip Homes Globe Road, 17 June 1953, YUNG 1/5/1/5, CCA.
[157] Interview with Mr and Mrs Smith, 24 Bolton Street, 1 July 1955, YUNG 1/5/1/6, CCA.
[158] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 154.

acceptance of greater transport costs and journey times, changing their patterns of daily movement, to maximise a choice-based life. Young and Willmott argue cars and telephones on the estate 'represent not so much a new and higher standard of life but…a means of clinging to something of the old' by enabling contact with people in their now distant community.[159] But this required a selective approach framing the use of mechanical transport as necessitous rather than also expanding choices and convenience.

This selective approach leads to multiple, unstable framings of the car. A Mr Adams stated, 'I do not want to win $75,000, I just want to win £500 – so that I can get myself a little car', which 'you really need down here'. The need to maintain family ties in suburban space now made the car a priceless necessity, which was still out of the reach of many.[160] Another suburban respondent described how people 'watch each other' in a competition for status and claimed not to feel the urge to compete. But they then expanded on their own desire for a car, separate from social status and class: 'I don't mean by that I wouldn't like a car. Of course, I would. It's a pleasure to have a car'.[161] People's desire for more choice, demonstrated by items such as the car, separate from class distinctions and the connotations of affluence, are underemphasized.

A description of the trains at rush hour by one man highlights the study's use of mechanical transport to deflect from people's desire to live a more choice-driven life. 'If we were animals the RSPCA would lock up the tube for cruelty', the man said, referring to the packed trains in the morning.[162] However, the frustration from this man, a Mr Turner, in Young and Willmott's original field notes, shows it stemmed from his work being relocated rather than the commute itself. He 'had been working in Debden' since he moved there but had to change jobs, which required him to commute into London. Despite this, the field notes

[159] Ibid., 158-160.
[160] Ibid., 158.
[161] Ibid., 184.
[162] Ibid., 144.

show he said: 'I don't mind the travelling, it's the discomfort' of the crowded rush hour that annoyed him. Again, the convenience offered by transport to the individual was central to perceptions of it. But Turner also stated that he 'hopes to return out this way, to Woodford or somewhere' for work, and did not want to leave Debden. Indeed, he said that although his family were not the most social, his neighbours were 'a nice lot', suggesting community bonds were not as faint as the published study suggested.[163] He and many others also complained of the high rents in Debden, but did not want to return to Bethnal Green. This suggests there needs to be a greater acceptance, that in the same way people were willing to move house to live more spacious, private lives in the suburbs, they were also willing to pay more and spend more time on transport to do so.[164]

Other contemporary social and anthropological surveys looked at the rise of car ownership in the 1960s and early 1970s. Despite some, again, having ideological leanings, all of them reveal that although the car could expose conflicts between classes, and uproot working class people's routines, it was also a means to expand choices. Zweig's study, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, looked at the lifestyles of manual workers across different urban economies.[165] It shows income and age, in northern and southern areas, more than the notions of class, drove car ownership and perceptions of it as younger, lower skilled workers earning more than higher skilled older workers bought cars sooner.[166] Car sharing also existed among early owners.[167] As with Young and Willmott's study, its findings offer much nuance into individual perspectives and the advantages of affluence and suburban life, but more widely, they are still framed as weakening the social bonds of the working class.[168]

---

[163] Interview with Mr and Mrs Turner, 202 Chester Road, 23 September 1955, YUNG 1/5/1/1, CCA.
[164] M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns* (Manchester, 1998), 2-9; 36; 205; J. Lawrence, 'Inventing the 'Traditional Working Class', *The Historical Journal*, 59 (2916), 575.
[165] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London, 1962), 1-10; 137.
[166] Ibid., xv; 9; 60; 104-106; 138.
[167] Ibid., 74-75; 105-107; 127.
[168] Ibid., 135-138; 165.

Zweig does not frame this change as pessimistically as Young and Willmott, studying how men psychologically prioritised their choices. One effect of the car, which he labels 'an instrument of social change', is men's awkward attempt to use consumerism to adapt to affluence and a home-centred life.[169] The car is cast both as an expression of masculinity, but also self-centredness, and a cushion against the decline of that masculinity in the suburbs. Zweig suggests that these budding consumer habits were distracting different types of younger men from their masculine roles, categorising them into three groups: the single man who wants a car more than a wife; the husband who wants a car more than a child; and the man who works overtime to buy a car, perversely, which he needs in order to commute to do overtime.[170] In each case, acquisitiveness drove the motivation for a car but it came at the cost of distracting them from their role in reproducing the social bonds of kinship, making cars a 'toy', or 'playthings'.[171]

Conversely, for middle-aged married men, consumer items such as the car could increase the time he spent at home with his family. The car for the middle aged man thus threatened his social bonds with friends of his class as they spent much time 'cleaning, polishing and fiddling' with their cars in a home-centred life.[172] O'Connell has shown that tinkering with cars was a mainly male pastime across class before cars become more reliable.[173] The physical mobility provided by the car also re-orientated 'the compass of a man's mind, according to Zweig, as he drops the insularity of his own class'. This home-centred man, therefore, may have been able to travel where he pleased, but this took him away from the traditional masculinity of his friends, 'weakening the ties with mates', and leaving him in 'complete isolation', ironically in the 'quest for freedom'.[174] Again, a loss of

---

[169] Ibid., 5-6; 75; 104; 193-194; 208.
[170] Ibid., 15-16; 60; 104-107; 155; 210; 263.
[171] Ibid., 16; 106; 195.
[172] Ibid., 106; 118.
[173] S. O'Connell, *The Car in British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 101.
[174] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 107; 119; 194-195; 208.

proximity weakened working class social bonds and it is replaced by acquisitiveness, privacy, and motorised mobility.[175] As the car enabled working class men to live and work further from their former neighbourhoods, it took them 'out of the reach of the 'local'', working men's clubs, and the extended family, into class-mixed spaces, encouraging the dilution of the working class scepticism of the property-owning classes.[176]

Marilyn Strathern's anthropological study, *Kinship at the Core*, found social tensions between newcomers and established villagers in the Essex commuter village of Elmdon in the 1960s and 70s, in which the car was a multi-dimensional force. The village had a static housing supply between 1964 and 1977, which was a root of these tensions. By 1977, over 40% of residents of Elmdon had moved there in the last 10 years, many of whom were in the professional classes, and the number born there had more than halved, as had those working in agriculture.[177] The car, in this context, was perceived both as good for daily life, and a symbol of the newcomers invading the village. Old people could be taken to hospital by car and brought meals, visit family, and the car was a wider convenience for many.[178] But for long-established villagers often on lower incomes and older, bus services were more important. This produced conflicts between newcomers and core residents along the lines of income and age. 'If you have a car, it does not matter that the bus service is meagre', the study stated. Whereas for newcomers, the motivation to move to Elmdon centred on the desire for village life, which could be contingent on the car getting them to work, though bus links were well-used and had improved over a longer period.[179]

The car could, therefore, be imbued with multiple meanings by the 'core' residents.

---

[175] Ibid., 108; 116-117; 138; 208; 228.
[176] Ibid., 107; 119; 124-128.
[177] M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core: An Anthropology of Elmdon, a Village in North-West Essex in the Nineteen Sixties* (Cambridge, 1981), xv; xxxi; 210-215.
[178] Ibid., 4; 6; 41; 207.
[179] Ibid., 70; 86; 219-221; This is backed up by another study of Elmdon: J. Robin, *Elmdon: Continuity and Change in a North-West Essex Village, 1861-1964* (Cambridge, 1980), 38-42.

Negative connotations came from their relative lack of access to cars and the clear presence of them among the newcomers, who they considered intruders. But cars were also used by kin to give each other lifts to work.[180] Despite being framed as a 'source of conspicuous consumption' for younger core residents, they were desired along with greater consumer choice, and the ambition for their children to go to university for better employment.[181] Young core women had the keenest desire for new consumer goods and cars, associating them with social and physical mobility, but they did not drive as much as men.[182] The newcomers could also resent working class affluence, which could be symbolised by the car. As one middle class newcomer remarked, her gardener and cleaner, who were a local husband and wife, 'wouldn't be able to run that car if it wasn't for what we gave them'.[183] Cars could therefore represent both positive and negative changes to the community on both sides of the gender, age, and class divides, linked to social status and mobility.

But as much as the car was a symbol of status, and the invasion of newcomers, by the mid-1960s, it also enabled core residents the chance to 'pop over' to see relatives, or 'drop in' on friends in a way older social conventions did not allow.[184] Indeed, by the 1970s, core residents on rising incomes were less concerned with the newcomers in part due to their better material circumstances. Newcomers could, thanks to items like the car, have no immediate need to get involved in village life but also feel like they were treated as outsiders. Yet, it was this ability to move in and inhabit the village without needing to participate in its social life that drove the sense among some core residents that they were being cheated out of their birth right. Cars connected core residents with different jobs and people, but also

---

[180] M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core* (Cambridge, 1981), 76; 94; 189; 207.
[181] Ibid., 96.
[182] Ibid., 61; 70; 94-96; 185; 189; 204; S. Majima, 'Fashion and Frequency of Purchase', *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 12 (2008), 509-510; 513.
[183] M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core* (Cambridge, 1981), 94.
[184] Ibid., 186; 207; 293.

brought newcomers, buying up 'their' village.[185]

Ronald Frankenberg's 1957 study of community in the northern Welsh village of Glyn Ceiriog, near the English border, shows the importance of deindustrialisation in pushing people to travel further for work. This complicated the village's social bonds and self-containment. It also finds changing attitudes to consumer life, including the car, and that notions of class solidarity could be less prominent than religion, national identity, gender, and white collar or wage labour, causing conflicts between people. Practical negotiations were also key to social relations in the making of agreements, clubs, and organisations, but these often declined due to squabbles or new interests arising to take their place.[186] These new interests could be more individually-based, as men went to seek work in English towns. Of course, they needed transport to do so, and the area's roads, and to a lesser extent its railways, which had linked industries and raw materials to a local network of communities, were now being used to leave the area in the search for work.[187]

As a result, those old roads and railways that used to knit villages together, were now busier, dispersing people, and hindering the working class. Since 1953 the village had regular bus services, enabling men to gain new materialist interests from the English towns and their 'foreign' work colleagues. The five or six buses leaving the village daily also saw women 'dependent' on them as more men bought cars and motorcycles.[188] For some wage labouring locals in the study, England represented money, the control of labour, and a threat to Welsh identity, which found expression on the bus services taking them to England. It records valley locals who refused to pay a half-English bus conductor their fare until he had addressed them

---

[185] Ibid., 96; 108; 186; 201; 207; R. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure: The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire* (London, 1965), 45.
[186] R. Frankenberg, *Village on the Border: A Social Study of Religion, Politics and Football in a North Wales Community* (London, 1957), 4; 45; 55-56; 60; 96-98; 110; 129; 141-142; C. Bell and H. Newby, *Community Studies: An Introduction* (London, 1971), 65.
[187] R. Frankenberg, *Village on the Border* (London, 1957), 4-7; 9-10; 20-26; 33-35.
[188] Ibid., 10; 34; 23-35; 56.

in Welsh.[189] Indeed, this nationalist tension was seen in protests in Wales from the late 1960s, including by middle class professionals, who opposed the ubiquity of English language road signs as oppressive and managed to have bilingual road signs installed.[190]

Frankenberg did not find the community was as united as it believed, and it was the village's isolation that helped preserve better bonds, but this sense of isolation was also partially in the residents' minds.[191] The village roads could be symbolic of the complexity of local identities. Due to budget cuts and modern regulations, the desire to build a new school in the village proved difficult and would involve sending English and Welsh children to a school that had a playground straddling the village street. This road was now becoming dangerous with rising car ownership, and parents of different backgrounds objected to the communal use of the playground because it would lead to too much homogeneity. Thus, having been part of the village's proto-industrial lived space, the road had become 'busy' and an obstacle to it in the deindustrialised world, as well as symbolic of the complex tension between locals.[192] However, despite these conflicts, many younger villagers were frustrated with the bus services not efficiently taking them to new leisure and consumerist areas in English towns, and for routine errands.[193] The impact of increasing mobility on changes to class-based community was also central to Ray Pahl's social surveys in the 1960s.

---

[189] Ibid., 12-14; 30.
[190] P. Merriman and R. Jones, 'Symbols of Justice': the Welsh Language Society's Campaign for Bilingual Road Signs in Wales, 1967-1980', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 35 (2009), 359; 366; 369; 373.
[191] A. Cohen, '*Village on the Border*', Anthropology at the Crossroads: The Significance of a Class British Ethnography', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 605; 608-611.
[192] R. Frankenberg, *Village on the Border* (London, 1957), 29; 57; 65; 93-95; 128.
[193] Ibid., 23; 34; 56.

Community, Class, and Mobility

The field notes of social surveys in the 1960s could also show that the car could be perceived and used similarly across classes. Ray Pahl looked at how transport shaped social relations. These studies were carried out in the Hertfordshire villages between Stevenage, Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.[194] He argued that, when middle class people moved into villages on the metropolitan fringe, they brought cosmopolitan cultures with them, which were epitomised by their use of the private car. Indeed, mobility, the home, and social bonds were linked in contrasting ways for the middle and working class. Instead of neighbours being restricted from accessing the working class home, the middle class had neighbours and friends visit regularly, by car, which would also take them to towns and the city for work, cultural events, and shopping.[195] This polarised the villages they moved to spatially and socioeconomically, forming a new group and making the working class question their more fixed way of life and place in the locality.[196]

Again, Pahl's studies came with presumptions about how mobility and class were linked, particularly the limited mobility of the working class being central to their patterns of work and social bonds. Pahl thus framed the arrival of the urban, cosmopolitan culture of middle class newcomers, many of whom were seeking an idealised vision of village life, as weakening the old community as they did not have to share in their material struggle, and this changing social structure was made possible by the car.[197] But Pahl wrote forty years later, that, at the time, he had 'some inchoate ideas that physical, geographical distance would have

---

[194] Pahl did these studies when resident tutor for the Cambridge Board of Extra-Mural Studies in Hertfordshire: R. Pahl, 'Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: From Geography to Sociology', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11 (2008), 104; R. Pahl, 'Class and Community in English Commuter Villages', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965), 5-9; R. Pahl, 'Are All Communities, Communities in the Mind?', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 623.
[195] R. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure: The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire* (London, 1965), 56-59; 79; R. Pahl, 'Class and Community', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965), 10-12.
[196] Ibid., 18; R. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure: The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire* (London, 1965), 13; 72-79.
[197] R. Pahl, 'The Two Class Village', *New Society*, (1964), 7-9; R. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure: The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire* (London, 1965), 13; 32; R. Pahl, 'Class and Community in English Commuter Villages', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965), 9; 18.

some direct, causative influence on the patterns of social relationships' in these villages. This led to a deterministic view about how mobility was affecting working class people. It claimed that as villagers travelled to nearby towns, their sense of class, contingent on place, would deteriorate. But this did not emphasise enough their desire to commute to those towns by bus to earn higher wages and expand consumer choice with a car.[198]

Pahl shows that Hertfordshire was an area experiencing profuse residential and employment decentralisation. Since 1958, the outer reaches of Greater London had seen 75% of the new jobs created in the South East, and saw its population grow to over 4 million. Indeed, between 1951 and 1961, the population of Hertfordshire increased by 222,126, or 36.6%. With this came a vast local expansion in high-tech manufacturing and services sector jobs, which were higher paid than local agricultural work. Therefore, in villages such as Tewin, gaining better employment required transport to these towns, which the middle class had through the car, enabling them to move out there. But Pahl was taken aback by the working class villagers, many of them in the younger generations, who also used buses to commute to nearby towns in search of higher wages. This complicated Pahl's initial framing of new local council estates for the local people ensuring 'the continuity of kinship links'. At the same time middle class newcomers, with their 'urban and cosmopolitan' cultures of commuting by car, foreign holidays and inviting friends to dinner unsettled the working class when they invaded their village.[199]

Material and structural definitions of class were again central to Pahl's narrative, partly framed through transport use. As with other postwar social surveys, Pahl shows working class commuters were 'more dependent on the inadequate bus services' than the

---

[198] R. Pahl, 'Are All Communities, Communities in the Mind?', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 623-625.
[199] R. Pahl, 'Class and Community', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965), 10-11; 15; R. Pahl, 'Are All Communities, Communities in the Mind?', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 625; R. Pahl, 'Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: From Geography to Sociology', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11 (2008), 105-106; High employment turnover, including among women occurred over the long term: P. Scott, 'Women, Other "Fresh Workers', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (2000), 466-468.

middle class. However, the 'battered second-hand car' is described as 'becoming an increasingly common sight, parked on the verges of the local authority estate', which is presented as symbolising a rupture to the class structure. Pahl, however, under-emphasised the extent of working class automobility by the 1960s, only noting that as much as a third of working class people already commuted by car in the early 1960s, compared to a quarter by bus, increasing their links to 'the outside world'.[200]

Indeed, about half of the working class families he studied had either a car or a motorcycle, and the car was 'creating new social and spatial patterns' by mixing up the old concentric class-based structure of cities and their rural fringes. Moreover, part of Pahl's research was to analyse what urbanisation and class meant in these decentralised spaces, which he concluded was seeing spatial segregation according to class, helped by the car.[201] These presumptions led Pahl to reappraise in 2005, stating that community was not so bound by location or physical proximity, and was a psychological state of mind, more in line with mobilities sociology.[202]

Again, the field notes of some of these surveys reveal this heterogeneity in people's perspectives and experiences of transport, showing their incomes, gender, and individual situation to be as important as class. Respondents did not uniformly view the car as a class-specific item, but it could be associated with social status depending on the individual's situation. Pahl's study, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages*, in 1964 and 1965, looked at the experiences and perceptions of people on a private housing estate in Hertford. There, we see that too much diversity of perspective existed to

---

[200] R. Pahl, 'Class and Community', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965), 10; R. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure: The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire* (London, 1965), 56-58.
[201] Ibid., 8; 11-13; 18; 72; 78-79; R. Pahl, 'Class and Community', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965), 10; R. Pahl, 'Are All Communities, Communities in the Mind?', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 624; R. Pahl, 'The Two Class Village', *New Society*, (1964), 7-9; C. Bell and H. Newby, *Community Studies: An Introduction* (London, 1971), 51-52; 204.
[202] R. Pahl, 'Are All Communities, Communities in the Mind?', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 621-624; 634; 636; J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007), 47.

support any deterministic narrative that working class people's perceptions and uses of transport were fundamentally different to the middle class. Class was one factor embedded in the financial position of the family, but it did not shape perceptions of the car or community in a pre-determined way.[203]

This is not to argue that class was not a factor, but rather it was one within a larger range, of which education could also be important.[204] How a person perceived their educational level could affect their view of local people and produce classist observations. Kate Butler, a young housewife on the Mandeville Road estate near Hertford, set her household apart from others due to her and her husband's higher level of education. 'He's a graduate', she stated, and claimed that she had not found neighbours on their 'own intellectual level'. As a result, she differentiated her neighbour's behaviour in a classist way. Those with less education, she described, were in 'their first home. You know all white weddings, planned families, washing machine first – then baby'. Their habits, 'obsessed with cleaning, meeting during the day to chat', and sending their husbands 'out at the weekends to cut the lawns'. 'But we don't care about the garden', she stated. They preferred to go to the theatre and 'do things together'. 'I go out to lunch. I read', she said, associating less physical insularity and education with being open-minded. Butler's liberal identity, with its social openness and post-materialist conviction, contrasted with what she perceived as her working class neighbour's social conservatism of being 'fixed in life' and married couples who 'never undress in front of each other'.[205] When asked what makes her different to others on the

---

[203] R. Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages, Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey,* Essex University Special Collections Archive, [henceforth SN] SN 4863; R. Pahl, 'Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: From Geography to Sociology', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11 (2008), 106-107.

[204] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 134-135; 211; M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 174-181; Savage shows that despite rising affluence, the working class kept a strong sense of distinction from the upper class through identification with ordinariness, independence, and individuality: M. Savage, 'Working Class Identities in the 1960s: Revisiting the Affluent Worker Study', *Sociology*, 39 (2005), 939; 943.

[205] Interview with Kate Butler, 109 Mandeville Road, Hertford, 21 April 1965, 1-3, R. Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages*, PAHL: 15.1, SN 4863.

estate, she replied: 'I go out a lot but they don't'; whereas she was open, her neighbours 'keep personal affairs to themselves; keep respectable'.[206] Again, as with the sociological discourses at the time, the working class were perceived as depending on physical proximity and insularity.

However, testimony in this study also showed middle class women shared many life choices with working class women living on the same estate. Mrs Marsh, another young housewife in her late twenties, who had come to the estate when her husband's promotion forced them to move, also had a more middle class identity. She did not like how less educated wives 'shy away from politics', as 'they don't know enough about it', and worried here 'Freudian' answers were revealing too much about her. She also stated that she would not like to move to the North due to 'all the industries around – snobby reasons', and that her husband was aspiring to become County Treasurer.[207] However, unlike Butler, she and her husband had few friends and were 'very much home birds' and enjoyed the garden in the same way many working class households did, thus refuting the idea that certain classes were more insular or had set inclinations towards the home.[208]

Not only were the inclinations towards the home blurred between classes in the suburbs, they could use the car in similar ways. When Mrs Marsh was asked what people like to do at weekends, automobility was crucial. Not only did her household have a car, but her neighbours, she said: 'do their gardens and go out. Most have cars and so are pretty mobile'.[209] In fact, the move to the estate for Marsh had created a lot of anxiety as she had been forced to move away from her mother in Oxford. Being 'worried about mummy', then, could be a source of middle class anxiety as well as for the working class. When those

---

[206] Ibid.
[207] Interview with Mrs Marsh, 144 Mandeville Road, 28 May 1965, 1-4; Mr Marsh Interview, 1-11, R. Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, PAHL: 15.1, SN 4863.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.

worries continued in Hertfordshire, often Marsh was 'in [the] car and off to Oxford' the next day. Many times she had the 'car outside so that in an evening she could be in Oxford', if she wished, 'same with the telephone if there was any problem'. This was the kind of narrative found in Young and Willmott's study of isolated working class women fresh from Bethnal Green, but in a middle class household.[210]

Indeed, the car could be used to maintain the bonds of kinship, and distance from family was not uniquely disruptive to the working class. The car and telephone were described as a 'lifeline' for Marsh, which 'makes the break' from family 'much more gentle', so that they could 'make contact quickly if necessary' and 'without planning'. This shows that the extent to which the move away from kin could be difficult depended on individual circumstances and traits more than class alone. But it also shows, that, compared to some other women giving interviews in this study, Marsh had access to the household car, and thus it had become a coping mechanism to deal with the separation from her mother.[211] Thus, gender, as well as individual circumstances, could be as important in shaping perceptions of transport, and a change of daily life could be upsetting for anyone of any class.

For Mr Marsh, his connection to the household car came from almost the opposite but equally personal motivations, showing the importance of individual factors and gender. Unlike his wife, who described him as 'not very social', he 'wanted to get away from Oxford' and felt not settling was a 'deliberate policy on my part'. He stated he was 'against' the 'settled way of life'. For Mr Marsh, then, the car made 'life more tolerable' because it allowed time away from kin. It 'enables me to get away, get a different view and then be

[210] Ibid; M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 31-42; 187.
[211] Interview with Mrs Marsh, 144 Mandeville Road, 28 May 1965,1-4; Mr Marsh Interview, 1-11, R. Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, PAHL: 15.1, SN 4863; E. Bott, *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms* (London, 1957), 109.

grateful to get back'.[212] For him, the car was a way to exercise a sense not just of mobility, but transience, to rebel against feeling stuck in his work and home routine. This complicates the notion that the car was an extension of the home, as it could also be a means to take a break from it.[213]

For Mrs Marsh, however, the car was a way to connect back to Oxford and her family. But gender provides a further explanation for this contrast. Mr Marsh did not want his wife to work so that the home was peaceful for him at night. He saw the home as 'a resting place' where he could 'get a bit of peace' after work where his wife was a mother and home-maker. This, therefore, suggests Mrs Marsh's use of the car may have been partly to rebel against the confines of her life and of the tedium of being on the estate 'all day' through the act of visiting her mother.[214] Thus the uses and perceptions of the car could be multi-dimensional, based on gender but also the personal traits and experiences of individuals.

Other women on the estate had varying relationships with cars, but also felt they were a positive for providing greater choice due to the confines of their life. This varied depending on the individual woman, and how that choice shaped their relationship with neighbours rather than class being the only factor. One woman was described as feeling 'housebound' with her young baby as she was 'not…able to use the family car in the day-time'.[215] Another, who the interviewer described as 'certainly not affluent', in fact 'used her own small car to take several neighbours shopping'.[216] As some neighbours gave lifts in their car, other

---

[212] Interview with Mrs Marsh, 144 Mandeville Road, 28 May 1965,1-4; Mr Marsh Interview, 1-11, R. Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, PAHL: 15.1, SN 4863.
[213] S. Townsend, 'The 'miracle' of Car Ownership in Japan's 'Era of High Growth', *Business History*, 55 (2013), 513; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 231.
[214] Interview with Mrs Marsh, 144 Mandeville Road, 28 May 1965,1-4; Mr Marsh Interview, 1-11, R. Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, PAHL: 15.1, SN 4863.
[215] Comments by Interviewer, 99 Mandeville Road Terrace, R. Pahl: *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, PAHL: 15.2, SN 4863.
[216] Comments by Interviewer, 33 Wentworth Road, R. Pahl: *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, PAHL: 15.2, SN 4863; B. Ineichen and D. Hooper,

working class residents were not automatically inclined to socialising with neighbours. It depended on the individual. One woman whose husband was on a lower income was looking forward to buying a car because of 'the prospect of getting out more' to visit family, not to socialise with other residents, who she said were 'always [coming] in and out' of people's houses and 'could be a nuisance', similar to Mrs Marsh's situation but living with a lower income.[217]

Young and Willmott used this notion of the isolated wife on the estate to symbolise the wider remoteness of working class life compared to Bethnal Green, where their 'kindred are at hand every day of the week'.[218] However, beyond class perspectives, this could be an issue felt by women across the socioeconomic spectrum. Cars and other modes of transport could be part of a wider range of factors shaping how women felt about their life on an estate, and offered a way to go out, choose when to visit friends and family on their own terms, less bound by physical space. The rise of female driving licence holding and two car households from the 1970s also made women more mobile when incomes allowed it.[219] Indeed, the Marsh's ability to connect with family on the 'spur of [the] moment', showed community could be untied from physical space for spiralists like them, but their outlook, habits, and daily mobility patterns were also very similar to those considered working class.[220]

'Wives' Mental Health and Children's Behaviour in Contrasting Residential Estates', *Social Science and Medicine*, 8 (1974), 369; 373.

[217] Comments by Interviewer, 128 Mandeville Roads, R. Pahl: *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, PAHL: 15.2, SN 4863.

[218] M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1957), 36; 137.

[219] L. Pickup, *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981), 6; 9, TRL.

[220] Interview with Mrs Marsh, 144 Mandeville Road, 28 May 1965,1-4; Mr Marsh Interview, 1-11, R. Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, PAHL: 15.1, SN 4863; The Anglo-sphere genesis of the notion of mobile British middle class workers having different outlooks to the more locally fixed middle class in social theory came from Robert Merton's 'cosmopolitans' and 'locals', in, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, 1957), 393-415. This influenced William Watson's 'spiralists' and 'burgesses' framework that emphasised geographical mobility in furthering social mobility, in, M. Gluckman (ed.), *Closed Systems and Open Minds: The Limits of Naivety in Social Anthropology* (Oxford, 1964), 136-144; 149-151; Watson's paradigm was then used to emphasise how occupational and geographical mobility was reshaping neighbourhood and family, in: C. Bell, *Middle Class Families: Social and Geographical Mobility* (London, 2000), 14; 17; 24; 32; 87; 117; 123; M. Savage, 'The Missing Link? The Relationship between Spatial Mobility and Social Mobility', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 39 (1988), 559; 572.

Therefore, we see that numerous factors involving income, family, age, gender, and individual circumstances were all drivers of how people perceived transport and their daily patterns of movement. The theme in many contemporary social surveys that perceptions of the car and the bus were disruptive to ways of life and patterns of movement among the working class, was deterministic. The car or bus could change working class patterns of life significantly in suburban areas, but this did not trigger the desire to return to previous neighbourhoods, and these changes could be as affected by age and gender as much as class. A sense of community was less important than family, and less bound by physical distance, and their uses of transport were more individually-based, being shaped somewhat from the potential they had in their minds as well as their everyday uses.

As suburbanisation provided more road space for cars and choices increased for those on rising incomes by the late 1950s, the issue of car ownership became politically undeniable. When Hugh Gaitskell was interviewed by the *Daily Mail* in July 1959 as the general election approached, his perception of British social change was strikingly symbolised by the car. 'When a working-class family buys a motor car', he stated, 'I believe it may produce a feeling of a more individual and independent status. Its loyalty ceases to be the simple group loyalty'.[221] This captured the left's concern with consumerism and the belief that 'affluence', suburban life, and the car, were reshaping working-class identity towards individualism and threatening collectivised cultures.[222] However, this chapter shows that people's embrace of the car and the bus was not so directly shaped by ideology, their traditional patterns of movement, or the notions of working class cultures, but by the choices they offered to enhance their own lives in suburban space.

---

[221] *Daily Mail*, 30 July 1959.
[222] L. Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent* (Basingstoke, 2003), 118-121; J. Moran, 'Mass-Observation, Market Research, and the Birth of the Focus Group', *Journal of British Studies*, 47 (2008), 840-842; P. Gurney, 'The Battle of the Consumer in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Modern History*, 77 (2005), 958-959; 983-985.

The enjoyment coming from the prospect of automobility was clear in surveys that actually focused on that, which was not always the case. A survey of 2,000 motorists looking at drivers across the class spectrum in 1964 found that 80% derived pleasure from driving, compared to only 10% who did not.[223] People wanted them because of their consumer appeal, door-to-door convenience, but also to justify the initial cost, which then enabled faster and cheaper daily journeys than the bus could offer.[224] The consumerist desire for a car was strong, and congestion and other deterrents would have to be terribly high to stop people buying a car.[225] Indeed, the car was desirable to most British households, whether they could afford one or not, across different population densities and estates, which suggests people were open to new patterns of movement more than contemporary social surveys suggested.[226] Transport use and perceptions of the modes were not based as much on their public or private provision as their convenience to the individual.

If the car was spreading a 'me first' individualism, why then did the thousands of high earners commuting into central London not insist on using their car instead of the train? The answer is that the train was a fast, comfortable, and convenient mode to perform that journey, especially in London. Just 5% of manual workers in Surrey commuted by rail in 1971, compared to 24% of non-manual workers.[227] Higher income groups were the largest customers of the railways, accessing commercial areas of city centres from their more distant homes. Indeed, in 1972, the richest 20% in society accounted for 57.2% of rail season-ticket expenditure.[228] These professionals travelled on average over 50 kilometres a year by train

---

[223] *The Motorist Today* (1965), 9-17, AA, 73M94/G1/1/594, HA.
[224] Including integration between bus and car: R. Bentley, 'Sustainable Transport: The Role of the Bus', *Transport Reviews* 18 (1998), 205-6; 211-212; C. Sharp, 'The Choice between Cars and Buses', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1 (1967), 106-109; Simon Gunn has analysed this study in: S. Gunn, 'People and the Car', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 220-237; C. Atkins, *People and the Motor Car*, *Vol. I* (Birmingham, 1964), ii-iv.
[225] Ibid., 60.
[226] Ibid., 84; C. Atkins, *People and the Motor Car*, *Volume II* (Birmingham, 1964), 26-36; J. Hopkin, *The Role of an Understanding of Social Factors in Forecasting Car Ownership* (Crowthorne, 1981), 12-15, TRL.
[227] S. Jones and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979), 16-18, TRL.
[228] R. Pryke and J. Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem* (Oxford, 2019), 194-195.

compared to working class groups, who travelled less than 10.[229] Outside city centres, cars were more flexible and convenient than the bus for those on rising incomes and it became the major way to commute and perform most errands by the 1970s, across class, making it a routine part of life.[230]

The stance of the Labour mainstream by the early 1970s shows this, and that the car was not associated with any ideology by the public, long before the advent of Thatcherism. In the spring of 1971, an article by Anthony Crosland in *The Sunday Times* titled 'Where We Go Wrong', accepted affluence had not led to the embourgeoisement of the working class and had also not reached many of the poor. Yet the car was, for many, an everyday choice by then. 'I and others have had to defend the affluent society and the right of workers to own motor-cars and take package holidays', he stated.[231] Crosland, who saw the railways as 'the pastime of the rich', was warning that the metropolitan left's suspicion of consumerism risked 'estrangement' from the 'rougher provincial world where most Labour voters live', and that questioning car ownership was now 'incredible'.[232] Although the affluent society was viewed negatively by Labour by the 1970s, including Crosland – its inequalities legitimising the need for more socialist policies[233] – cars were a commonplace part of life among many of its voters. For them, the car was not linked to ideology, the ideas of public or private provision, or the traditions of class. The car, and public transport alternatives, were

---

[229] F. Webster, *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977), 11-12, TRL.
[230] C. Pooley, J. Turnbull, and M. Adams, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 117-119.
[231] Crosland did highlight Labour's opposition to environmental decline compared to the Tories: *Guardian*, 9 June 1970; *Sunday Times*, 4 April 1971; The Thatcherite notion that poverty was a culture more than a structural economic problem made the embourgeoisement thesis a means to reduce poverty. Thatcherites thus favoured Zweig's work as he supported that thesis: F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 'Neo-Liberalism and Morality in the Making', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 514-515; F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 1-8; 133-134; 206.
[232] S. Weighell, *On the Rails* (Bath, 1983), 52; *Sunday Times*, 4 April 1971.
[233] However, revisionists in Labour believed in redistribution, had varied ideas, and were diminished by progressive ideas by the 1970s: B. Jackson, 'Revisionism Reconsidered: 'Property-Owning Democracy and Egalitarian Strategy', *Twentieth Century British History*, 16 (2005), 416; 421; 437-438; S. Middleton, "Affluence', and the Left in Britain', *English Historical Review*, 129 (2014), 136-138; Crosland was conscious and supportive of progressive ideas and his intellectual decline is overstated: J. Nuttall, 'Tony Crosland and the Many Falls and Rises', Contemporary British History, 18 (2004), 58-61.

embraced as they added convenience to everyday life.[234]

Conclusion

The low demand for transport in industrial working class neighbourhoods typified a perception of many social surveys in the 1950s and 1960s. Working class solidarity had been nurtured by generations living in local urban districts, in close proximity, with shared experiences and hardships. Journeys to work and local amenities were thus short, gendered, and by foot, fixing people locally. But in suburban and rural areas too, postwar social surveys perceived the structure of a settlement and people's movements there as central to their class and community.[235] This chapter has not sought to argue community was irrelevant or died in the suburbs. Nor does it argue there were vast changes in city centres or older industrial areas, where incomes were lower. It has looked at expanding spaces in Britain with rising incomes. Although these studies argued that community was declining due to automobility and acquisitiveness,[236] I stress that the appeal of the car was felt across class and location, and the bus expanded people's choices and changed daily patterns of movement before mass car ownership.

Such was the concern over the decline of working class culture among middle class observers that the desire for consumer choice was often seen as the desire to become socially acceptable, copying the middle class, but also as a shallowness threatening the virtue of

---

[234] In city centres, however, more attention was being paid to inequality and the blight caused by the car in the 1970s: S. Gunn, 'Spatial Mobility in Later Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2021), 9-11.
[235] R. Pahl, 'Are all Communities, Communities in the Mind?', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 623-625; M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1962), 155-157; As cars spread, the pedestrian became subject to criticism: J. Moran, 'Crossing the Road in Britain, 1931-1976', *The Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), 478.
[236] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 6; 105-107.

solidarity.[237] The frameworks of the community studies were also given added impetus on the left by political and economic events. The drop in import prices from 1952 sparked rises in living standards and the political consequences were that the Conservatives were rewarded with a third successive general election victory by 1959.[238] Bus trips as well as car ownership could inform this development. In a normative observation from Hoggart, the bus had given rise to the 'hedonistic but passive barbarian who rides a fifty-horsepower bus for three pence to see a five million dollar film'.[239]

Contradicting this, however, were actual people's perceptions. The bus had a lower cultural status across class than the car or train,[240] but this chapter shows they were also used to expand consumer choice in new suburban areas. The individual's desire for greater choice and convenience straddled public and private provision. Indeed, the fact that many working people on new estates, removed from local amenities and jobs, were willing to travel further by bus or train to enjoy the perks of suburban life shows their desire for personal choice. But it also suggests that if a competitive public transport alternative to the car was available, they may have been open to using it for city travel rather than the car, challenging the notion that privatism defined the car and lessening the need for destructive urban motorways. One theme of the social surveys that can be said to be less deterministic was that, without use of the car, or their own wider freedoms, women were often isolated in new suburban homes, leading to alienation.[241]

This chapter has shown how intersectional transport and mobility history can be, bringing together aspects of gender, disability, age, national identity, consumerism, and

---

[237] S. Brooke, 'Slumming' in Swinging London? Class, Gender', *Cultural and Social History*, 9 (2012), 429-433; 435-437; S. Brooke, 'Gender and Working Class Identity', *Journal of Social History*, 34 (2001), 773; 787.
[238] D. Butler and R. Rose, *The British General Election of 1959* (London, 1960), 11-16; 38; 198.
[239] R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London, 1957), 205.
[240] J. Moran, *Reading the Everyday* (Oxford, 2005), 3-4.
[241] This suburban isolation, accepted for greater living standards, was expressed in America too, including the less social nature of car driving, but suburbia also provided friendlier play streets for children: D. Reisman, in W. Drobiner (ed.), *The Suburban Community* (New York, 1958), 387; 399.

sociology. The complex interplay of these factors with incomes, population density, the availability of public transport, and individual and family circumstances shaped people's uses and perceptions of transport in a complex web, rather than the structural factors of class and space alone.[242] Rather than embourgeoisement being as a characterisation of the spread of cars and the suburban consumer lifestyle, Goldthorpe and Lockwood favoured the notion of 'normative convergence', where increasing numbers across class who could afford it, chose a family-centred, consumer-driven life, with a more instrumentalist view of work.[243] Zweig also stresses individuals' tendency to compensate for a lack of individual choice with community, and vice versa, based on their individual needs.[244]

This chapter finds these framings instructive, but Goldthorpe and Lockwood placed too much emphasis on privatism rather than the reformation of community in new spaces, and these frameworks relied on structural understandings of class and voting intention.[245] But this was part of the intellectual milieu of the time. Goldthorpe saw the division of labour and the hierarchy of authority at work as central to class so that the 'class' and 'command' facets of social relations were inseparable. This meant the working class kept a distinct identity from the bourgeoisie, thus Goldthorpe's opposition to the embourgeoisement thesis.[246] Indeed, Pahl's studies of Hertfordshire were also structural in their class-centric outlook, and Savage states they had little impact on the social sciences because Pahl tried to focus on how spatial and physical factors brought social upheaval rather than analysing local social

---

[242] The modelling of modal choice in transport has now brought in many different factors, including individual personality attributes: E. Stern and H. Richardson, in K. Donaghy et al (eds), *Social Dimensions of Sustainable Transport* (Oxford, 2016), 151-157.
[243] J. Goldthorpe and D. Lockwood, 'Affluence and the British Class Structure', *The Sociological Review*, 11 (1963), 154-156.
[244] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 189-194.
[245] The car industry fostered a postwar peer-based, militant collectivism separate from traditional working class consciousness, and after the culture of affluence had declined: J. Saunders, 'The Untraditional Worker: Class Re-Formation in Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 16 (2015), 227; 241-242; 246-248.
[246] R. Pahl, 'Are all Communities', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 634; J. Scott, *Stratification and Power: Structures of Class, Status and Command* (Cambridge, 1996), 198; 228-245; J. Goldthorpe et al, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure* (Cambridge, 1969), 117-124; C. Bell and H. Newby, *Community Studies: An Introduction* (London, 1971), 219.

relations and divisions of labour removed from spatial locality, as Goldthorpe and Lockwood had. The development of anthropology in the 1960s was, however, more interested in the influence of these spatial factors in shaping society.[247] In Frankenberg's study, 'situational analysis' was used, but this, again, took a structural approach to class, trying to identify generalisable social processes rather than the manifold and specific circumstances stressed in this chapter.[248] Moran has also argued that the perceptions of the individuals carrying out these studies were crucial, as while Young perceived the street and community as a place of belonging for the working class, Townsend stressed the desire for privacy, seeing the street as a neutral, more formal space.[249]

This chapter has shown historically that people's perceptions and uses of transport were too varied to reduce to structural notions of class, divisions of labour, or urban versus rural spaces alone. The factors of gender, location, age, income, disability, and individual circumstances were all important. But a similar desire for choice existed among urban residents too. In 1975, the Greater Manchester Council carried out a survey of 1,962 locals as part of their Structure Plan, to gauge opinion of their urban redevelopments and transport policy since 1945. It found that people were attached to their local streets, not simply for community, but for the amenities and connection they provided the individual. Indeed, the survey found many 'talked more about the physical appearance of their neighbourhood than

---

[247] R. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure* (London, 1965), 32-47; 56-59; 72-79; M. Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain* (Oxford, 2010), 160-163; C. Bell and H. Newby, *Community Studies: An Introduction* (London, 1971), 51-52; R. Trainor, in M. Daunton (ed.), (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000), 673-674; Sociology remains relatively unmoved by mobilities frameworks, focusing on social rather than spatial mobility: M. Sheller, in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 45-48; N. Salazar, in P. Adey et al (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014), 55-57; C. Renwick, 'Movement, Space and Social Mobility in the Early and Mid', *Journal of the Social History Society*, 16 (2019), 13-14; 23-24.

[248] A. Cohen, '*Village on the Border*', Anthropology at the Crossroads: The Significance of a Class British Ethnography', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 608-612; Strathern tried to understand village community through the generalisable notions of belonging as part of wider society: M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core* (Cambridge, 1981), xxxi-xxxii; 198-208.

[249] J. Moran, 'Imagining the Street', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 170-172; And Jon Lawrence: J. Lawrence, 'Inventing the 'Traditional Working Class', *The Historical Journal*, 59 (2916), 575.

about the people living there'. Respondents were prepared to travel further to work if needed, used buses much more than railways, and wanted homes on the ground with more space.[250] This was why there was a strong rejection of high-rise flats, because people felt it took them away from their own individual connection with the local surroundings, not just its people, and wanted more space that came with a sense of personal control.[251]

This chapter finds the anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer's description of English feelings towards community in the early postwar years as important as the notions put forward by Young. English neighbourliness, Gorer described, was a 'distant cordiality', but also highly variable.[252] In an effort to maintain boundaries, local friends on an estate could often be made not with next door neighbours but with those living thirty yards away.[253] Zweig echoed this, using Schopenhauer's hedgehog analogy that people want to be close for warmth and community but not so close they prick each other.[254] The historiography should thus re-emphasise the importance of individually-based choice when considering people's motivations surrounding community, mobility, and transport, and the move to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s. People did not abandon working class values, but sought to expand the range of choices they could control as individuals when they became available.

---

[250] Greater Manchester Council, *County Structure Plan Supplementary Report of Survey: Public Attitudes Survey, May 1977*, 25-28; 47; 72-76, 1977, Q711.3Gr2, MA.
[251] A. Beach and N. Tiratsoo, in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2000), 547; D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain, Book One: Opening the Box* (London, 2013), 48.
[252] G. Gorer, *Exploring English Character* (London, 1955), 52.
[253] University of Liverpool, *Neighbourhood and Community* (Liverpool, 1954), 10; 106; 135; 146-148.
[254] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1962), 193-194.

Conclusion

In April 1963, the month after Beeching's report was published, Harold Wilson demonstrated the difference between rhetoric in opposition and action in government. 'I regard the battle on the future of the British transport system as political', he stated. The matter should be settled 'in the House and ultimately in the polling booths'. Railway closures amounted to 'vandalism', and the privatisation of haulage in 1953 the 'looting' of 'national assets'.[1] Yet, within months of taking office in 1964, the new government was being 'accused of breaking' its 'pre-election promises' on closures in the press.[2] Wilson oversaw the closure of over 2,000 route miles of railway, vast motorway building, and the restriction of road haulage was marginal during his years as Prime Minister.[3] The logistical complexities of transport meant fewer political and ideological policies were implemented compared to party rhetoric and the innumerable policy studies of this period.[4]

However, the Transport Act 1968 officially subsidised over 200 rail routes,[5] which was more than had been intended. This was due not just to government sensitivity to closures,

---

[1] H. Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 908-918, 30 April 1963; *Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1963; *The Guardian*, 9 July 1963; *Guardian*, 15 July 1963.
[2] *The Guardian*, 5 April 1965; *Daily Worker*, 25 March 1965; *Daily Worker*, 22 April 1965; *Daily Herald*, 24 June 1963; General opposition from unions: *Guardian*, 5 June 1963; *The Times*, 5 June 1963.
[3] G. Dudley and J. Richardson, *Why Does Policy Change?* (London, 2000), 66; T. Gourvish, *British Railways, 1948-73* (Cambridge, 1986), 393; 546; 642.
[4] C. Divall et al, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning* (Farnham, 2016), 6; BRF, British Road Federation Annual Report, 1959, 10, MSS. 234/S/3/2, MRC.
[5] 1972 Grant aided services in Britain List, TNA, AN 177/62; Unremunerative Railway Passenger Services (UPRS), June 1973, 2, TNA, T 319/2121.

but logistical problems and local resistance to them. Nor would it have been greatly different if Marples had stayed in office. He considered subsidy before 1964 and started the research into cost-benefit analyses and road safety that Barbara Castle later instituted.[6] The 1968 Transport Act had also intended rail debt in the conurbations to be taken over by their Passenger Transport Executives in 10% annual increments, but this proved unaffordable. Manchester's PTE warned in 1974 that existing services were 'in jeopardy' if further money was not provided and central government grants were issued through the Railways Act 1974.[7]

In the provincial conurbations, in part due to these financial limitations, it was 'not the aim' of local authorities 'to force a transfer of car travellers to bus' services, the main mode of public transport. Having been kept down for years before the early 1960s, bus and rail fares were raised to compensate for their losses and policy was aimed at 'retaining existing passengers' and cutting underused services.[8] However, the conurbations and New Towns also introduced pedestrian precincts, leading to the segregation of roads and people to enable the flow of both.[9] Rather than dirt-ridden, noisy urban roads being the only cause, the spaces left after unavoidable government dispersal and slum clearance schemes reduced inner urban densities further by the 1970s and made public transport even more uncompetitive than the

---

[6] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation* (London, 2006), 55-56; 94; 100; 111-113; 117; 120-128; B. Luckin, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons* (Farnham, 2016), 115; C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 288-289; 298; C. Loft, 'Reappraisal and Reshaping', *Contemporary British History,* 14 (2001), 81-83; 86-87; P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces* (Oxford, 2007), 153; 171; B. Lucking, 'Anti- Drink Driving Reform in Britain', *Addiction*, 105 (2010), 1538; 1541-1542; E. Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 736, 29 April 1963; Emphasising the pro-public transport credentials of Castle: R. Haywood, *Railways, Urban Development and Town Planning* (Farnham, 2009), 68-70; M. Hamer, *Wheels Within Wheels* (London, 1987), 3-5; 82; 93; 102-103; 108-109; 135.

[7] Manchester Central Area Tunnel and Associate Network: Investment Committee, 8 October 1974, TNA, AN 129/27; SELNEC, *A Summary of a Report on the Future of Public Transport for Greater Manchester* (1972), 1-2, F711.73So(063), MA.

[8] Ibid., 61-63; Meeting of the Working Group, 15 January 1963, 3-11, TNA, MT 124/930; West Midlands County Councils, *Transport Policies and Programme: Submission*, 1975, 14, WCB.

[9] O. Saumarez Smith, *Boom Cities* (Oxford, 2019), 22-24; 367-368; K. Morrison and J. Minnis, *Carscapes: The Motor Car* (London, 2012), 349; 367-368; A. Forsyth, 'The British New Towns: Lessons for the World', *Town Planning Review*, 90 (2019), 242; F. Webster, *Priority to Buses as Part of Traffic Management* (Crowthorne, 1972), 1-2; 10, TRL.

car.[10] The impact of all these policies was clear in the 1973 Birmingham Structure Plan: 'those who can afford to move, do so, and groups of the poorly paid tend' to be 'concentrated and isolated in certain districts'.[11]

Beeching's closures have often taken some blame in this process and political science has sought to explain how his policy came to be implemented. Using the concept of the 'hollow core', Dudley and Richardson argue rail policy was able to articulate an agenda of commercialism and closures because the industry was beset by inertia. Closures filled the void of ideas by framing the rail problem in a new, abruptly rational and distinctive way in contrast to the optimistic expectations surrounding road transport.[12] However, contrary to popular narratives, Beeching's arrival came after alternative policies of investment and administration had been tried.[13] He was also appointed because his rationalising aims offered a way for government to uncover the railways' real financial and administrative position as much as to provide any 'solution' to its complicated web of problems.[14]

Divall argues closures were rushed, but I have stressed the level of consideration and sensitivity given to them by successive governments, the lack of demand many services had, and the difficulty at the time of transferring passengers onto those services.[15] Loft has

---

[10] P. Hall and C. Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City?* (Aldershot, 1985), 41; S. Wetherell, *Foundations: How the Built Environment Made* (Woodstock, 2020), 78-84; S. Gunn, 'The Rise and Fall', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010); 854; 857-858; 860; 864; 868; Bomb damage had a similar effect in Germany: R. Buehler et al, 'Reducing Car Dependence in the Heart of Europe', *Transport Reviews*, 37 (2017), 22.
[11] City of Birmingham Structure Plan: Report on Options, 1973, WCB; Similar in Manchester: Greater Manchester Council, *Greater Manchester Structure Plan: Abstract of the Draft Written Statement*, 1978, Q711.3 Gr4, MA.
[12] G. Dudley and J. Richardson, *Why Does Policy Change?* (London, 2000), ix; 22-25; 31; 45; 53; 60-70; 80-84; Peter Hall's framework explaining policy change suggests the railways saw third order change and the roads second order change through widespread building projects: P. Hall, 'Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain', *Comparative Politics*, 25 (1993), 279; 287-288.
[13] P. Hennessy, *Having It So Good: Britain in the Fifties* (London, 2020), 122; C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation* (London, 2006), 139; 144; 153.
[14] T. Barker and C. Savage, *An Economic History of Transport in Britain* (London, 1974), 226-227; S. Glaister et al, *Transport Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, 1998), 19.
[15] C. Divall, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons* (Farnham, 2016), 109; Other framings of Beeching as a mistake: O. Saumarez Smith, 'Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment', *The Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), 223; S. Gunn, 'People and the Car', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 225; J. Moran, *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London, 2010), 41; 177; 246; J. Richards and J. MacKenzie, *The Railway Station* (Oxford, 1986), 7; C. Pooley, 'Landscapes without the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 270; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 18; 24-32.

provided the political perspective to Beeching's closures,[16] but I stress their local contingencies and social and gendered dimensions at the moment demand fragmented in historic ways.[17] I have also shown, from the historical perspective, that it is simplistic to hold up contemporary European transport systems as easily transferrable alternatives.[18]

Public transport's financial losses and the complexities of providing an alternative to the car in decentralising cities meant government was unable to define the aim of transport co-ordination.[19] In 1966, a transport planner in Leicester, investigating how transport co-ordination could achieved, concluded the government needed to 'be clear' about how this would work. Vital was 'some criterion for choosing' which areas should be left for cars and 'where a car to bus transfer is desirable'.[20] In hindsight, the arguments put by Mayer Hillman provided a prescient answer: the city centre. Instead of putting road accessibility at the top of the priority list in urban transport policy, Hillman prioritised human proximity in planning.[21] Indeed, the very thing that Young, Willmott, Hoggart and others had valued about the density of working class neighbourhoods is actually crucial for everyone trying to live in inner cities, across class, but this was a period when historic numbers would leave those areas and make lives in the suburbs.[22] In 2023, Hillman's emphasis on urban public transport is being rediscovered, but with it has come a historiographical assumption: that the railways could have been a vastly more useful passenger and freight alternative to road vehicles between the

---

[16] C. Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernisation* (London, 2006), 2.
[17] The messy complexity of public policy in the historical context: A. Green, *History, Policy and Public Purpose* (London, 2016), 7.
[18] An example of a comparative approach: M. Schiefelbusch, in M. Schiefelbusch and H. Dienel (eds), *Public Transport and Its Users* (Farnham, 2009), 59.
[19] Coordination and integration had been a central aim of the 1947 Transport Act: C. Mulley, 'The Nationalisation of the Bus Industry', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 123.
[20] C. Sharp, 'East Midlands Economic Planning Council: Passenger Transport in Leicester', Confidential Report to the Minister of Transport, January 1967, 65, LEI 3 G20 SHA, NMSC.
[21] M. Hillman, Irwin Henderson and Anne Whalley, *Personal Mobility and Transport Policy* (London, 1973), 100-103; M. Hillman, 'The Wrong Turning: Twenty Years on from Buchanan', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 105-107.
[22] D. Starkie, *The Motorway Age* (Oxford, 1982), 56; S. Gunn, 'Spatial Mobility in Later Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2021), 12.

1960s and 1990s.

Pooley has argued there could have been a public transport alternative to the car via trams and bicycles. But this would have needed policies to counter decentralisation and hit people's expectations about their mobility as the mass-produced combustion engine became widely available.[23] I have argued that the bus would have been the crucial alternative mode for commutes due to its logistical and financial flexibility across British cities. But the expansion of automobility as it was, led to the fragmentation of transport choice between location, class, age, and gender, making transport planning insoluble. This continued as driving licence holders rose from 9.9 million in 1970 to 14.6 million in 1980. By 1980, around 70% of men had a driving licence compared to 30% of women. In the United States, by contrast, 90% of men had a licence and so did 73% of women.[24] There has not been enough acceptance in the historiography of the social, logistical, political, and technological complexity of stopping this uneven mobility trend in Britain or how it was to be solved.

O'Connell states women continued to be subject to stereotypes after 1939.[25] This was true, but I have shown this period was also one of social disruption and flux in gendered narratives due to market logics and women's safer driving making them more socially palatable at a time of mass motorisation and rising road accidents. Pooley argues women were more independent, individual, and assertive in their mobility than older narratives. This was the case in this period, as women sought to defend their mobility from local rail closures as a form of popular individualism.[26] The car was also a prime new way to expand their

---

[23] C. Pooley, in C. Divall et al (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons* (Farnham, 2016), 58; C. Pooley, 'Landscapes Without the Car', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 273-274.
[24] J. Tanner, *Saturation Levels in Car Ownership Models* (Crowthorne, 1981), 5-6; 14, TRL; C. Pooley et al, *A Mobile Century?* (Aldershot, 2005), 21-22.
[25] S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 71; 221.
[26] C. Pooley and M. Pooley, 'Young Women on the Move', *Social Science History*, 45 (2021), 495-497; 511-514; C. Pooley and S. Pooley, 'Constructing a Suburban Identity: Youth, Femininity', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 402; 408; C. Pooley, 'Cities, Spaces and Movement: Everyday Experiences of Urban Travel in England', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 99; E. Robinson et al, 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism', *Twentieth Century History*, 28 (2017), 274; 289-290.

mobility and choice, but only if they had access to it, and most did not.

The continuities in working class urban movements with the advent of the car have been shown by Gunn.[27] But I would emphasise also the discontinuities in working class patterns of movement in the emerging location of the suburbs, enduring longer, difficult, and expensive journeys by bus to enjoy a more spacious, consumer-driven life even before mass car ownership. The fact that many working class people on new housing estates, removed from urban amenities and jobs were willing to travel further by any mode in order to enjoy the perks of suburban life, suggests three things. First, the move to the suburbs was desirable for most, and may have been the irresistible force some transport economists asserted.[28] Secondly, however, people's willingness to use expensive buses on longer journeys suggests that if a genuinely competitive public transport alternative to the car had been available they may have used it for trips into the city, lessening the need for destructive urban highways. Although polls can never be decisive on their own, some found in the 1960s that, despite support for subsidised public transport being below 40%, there were comfortable majorities for limiting car use in cities, restricting parking, and using the car at other times.[29] Thirdly, then, people did not view transport through the ideological prism of the public or private. They chose the most convenient mode for their individual circumstances. Indeed, a Gallup poll in 1959 found many more people thought the railways would be better off privatised than kept in public ownership and yet many viewed it as a public service.[30]

I have also shown how difficult it would have been to provide a public transport

---

[27] S. Gunn, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain', *Social History*, 38 (2013), 232-233; 235.
[28] M. Beesley and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership and Public Policy', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 185; 193; And historians: M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs* (Manchester, 1998), 1; 5-15; 62-65 66-67.
[29] Including by car owners: *Sunday Telegraph*, 15 December 1963; *The Times*, 29 December 1969; J. Thomson, *Some Characteristics of Motorists in Central London* (London, 1968), 45-47.
[30] 37% believed privatisation would work better compared to 16% who preferred nationalisation. 29% thought it would make no difference: G. Gallup, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975, Vol. I* (New York, 1976), 515-516; A Majority had favoured rail nationalisation in 1945: J. Singleton, in R. Millward and J. Singleton (eds), *The Political Economy of Nationalisation in Britain* (Cambridge, 1995), 22.

alternative given the structure of British cities, the relatively low demand for rail, and many technical complexities as car ownership became a mass-owned item. O'Connell and Divall have argued that we need to go beyond the rational economic actor model in understanding the diffusion of car ownership before 1939.[31] I do not disagree, but have shown, by studying the three mechanised modes together, that after 1945 not only did the economic and cultural factors shift even further in the car's favour, but an alternative also was far more technically difficult to provide. Prescient forecasts of the damaging effects of urban highways were plentiful at the time, but the alternatives offered were often unrealistic, such as town planner and sociologist Paul Ritter's argument that towns and their industries could be replanned around railways.[32] Kefford and Gunn have shown the pitfalls of urban planning and road building in disrupting existing industry and land use patterns in this period, and, despite Castle's promises, there was only rudimentary coordination between dispersal, land use and public transport planning.[33]

The literature's emphasis on how technology is culturally and socially constructed[34] can make people's historical embrace of the car seem too irrational. Cars and other modes become abstract notions tied to social relations.[35] This thesis has sought to mark the limits of this view, suggesting that an alternative to the car between 1959 and 1974 was more than a conceptual failure and came due to a complex web of cultural, financial, physical, technical,

---

[31] S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 38; 112; S. O'Connell, in D. Thoms et al, *The Motor Car and Popular Culture* (Abingdon, 1998), 177; 189; C. Divall and G. Revill, 'Cultures of Transport: Representation, Practice and Technology' *Journal of Transport History*, 26 (2005), 100-107; C. Divall and B. Schmucki, in C. Divall and W. Bond (eds), *Suburbanizing the Masses* (Oxford, 2017), 1-3; And wider notions of popular culture: J. Moran, 'Mass-Observation, Market', *Journal of British Studies*, 47 (2008), 829-830; 849.
[32] *Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch*, 20 February 1964.
[33] A. Kefford, 'Disruption, Destruction and the Creation of 'the Inner Cities', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 514-515; S. Gunn, 'The Rise and Fall of British Urban Modernism: Planning Bradford', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 868-869; City of Birmingham Structure Plan: Report on Options, 1973, WCB; East Anglian EPC Minutes, 4 March 1966, 2-5, TNA, EW 13/38; Passenger Railway Closures in East Anglia, 10 March 1966, TNA, EW 23/35; W. Cox to Mr Pugh letter, 26 March 1964, 10, TNA, HLG 131/184; *Guardian*, 27 December 1973; *Daily Telegraph*, 26 February 1966; *The Times*, 15 January 1963; Greater Manchester Council, *Greater Manchester Structure Plan: Alternative Strategies Report*, 1977, 38, Q711.3Gr1/a, MA.
[34] J. Beckmann, 'Automobility – A Social Problem', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 19 (2001), 596.
[35] S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society* (Manchester, 1998), 112.

and political problems.[36] As Lomasky states, automobility 'is not just something for which people in their ingenuity or idiosyncrasy might happen to hanker – as they have for Nehru jackets, disco music, hula hoops' or 'pink flamingo lawn ornaments'. Cars make everyday life easier for many men and women. Nor is road congestion an automatic sign that society opposes car ownership, or that there is an easy alternative to it.[37] Contemporary social surveys framed increasing mobility as endangering working class community through cheap bus fares and cars, but that was deterministic. I have instead stressed gender, age and location and that the car's appeal existed across these groups.[38] Thus, I have tried to re-emphasise the importance of contingencies, finance, and technology at the core of transport history in shaping policy as well as the perspectives of the histories of mobility, which reveal the importance and variety of individual choices in different locations.

In 2023, sixty years since the publication of the Buchanan and Beeching reports, and twenty years since the introduction of the London congestion charge, it is clear that road pricing in cities would have only worked if set at the punitive levels Buchanan opposed, or if car purchases were restricted.[39] From the perspective of 2023, it can be forgotten that the rise of mass car ownership also came long before the re-urbanisation of Britain's cities from the late 1980s, making public transport surge from the 1990s.[40] Consequently, much focus has been on the car as a disruptive urban force in the historiography since then. I have not sought to frame the car and its transformation of mobility as anything other than a threat to city centres,[41] but neither have I framed the car as solely harmful, or the central driver of social

---

[36] M. Fraser and J. Kerr, in P. Wollen and K. Kerr (eds), *Autopia: Cars and Culture* (London, 2002), 315-317; 325-326.
[37] L. Lomasky, 'Autonomy and Automobility', *The Independent Review*, 2 (1997), 5-27; The car is seen by people to offer the most speed and flexibility: M. Ibrahim and P. McGoldrick, *Shopping Choices with Public Transport Options* (Aldershot, 2003), 246-247.
[38] J. Lawrence, 'Inventing the 'Traditional Working Class', *The Historical Journal*, 59 (2916), 571; 592; T. Cresswell, in G. Benko and U. Strohmayer (eds), *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity* (Oxford, 1997), 361; 372-375.
[39] C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London, 1963), 13.
[40] C. Loft, *Last Trains* (London, 2013), 296.
[41] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991), 312-313; 359; 374.

change. It was part of a wider complex of forces that converged in the 1960s. Neither have I argued transport and mobility are purely 'associated with other satisfactions' such as consumerism, suburbanisation, finance, or commuting.[42] From a social perspective, I have sought to stress the contingencies between cultural and material factors, which is where the viewpoints of people and the struggles of governments are to be found.

However, by stressing the positive effects of the car, and how difficult it was for alternatives to compete with it in the past, the importance of building truly competitive and exciting urban public transport becomes clear.[43] It is only when it is understood how complex it is to minimise road use in cities that serious and long lasting alternatives can be invested in. London's advantages across the decades of having a dense underground rail network, avoiding the need to reorganise industry and homes above ground, and providing fast and convenient travel for the individual, are also clear.[44] Unfortunately, cost-benefit analyses and the political cycle work against the kind of long-term planning that would be needed to mimic London's successes.[45] But the economic and cultural resurgence of British provincial cities, which 'levelling-up' depends on, will need a timescale of thirty years and more to succeed. In this context, the fortunes of the provincial cities, or perhaps initially, one of those cities, may depend on the construction of an underground rail network instead of settling for a new tram line here, or more buses there.

---

[42] J. Hibbs, *The Bus and Coach Industry* (London, 1975), 59.
[43] More must be made of public transport's environmental and social capital for all in urban space: C. Divall, in M. Emmanuel et al (eds), *A U-Turn to the Future* (Oxford, 2020), 109.
[44] C. Pooley, 'Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion', *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), 106.
[45] C. Foster, 'Michael Beesley and Cost', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 35 (2001), 20.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

The National Archives, Kew:

Board of Trade:
BT 213 – Commodity and General Division.

British Railways Files:
AN 19 – British Railways Board: Reports and Accounts.

AN 82 – Traffic Censuses and Surveys.

AN 129 – Chief Civil Engineer's Department: Correspondence and Papers.

AN 155 – London Midland Regional General Manager's Closure of Lines Files.

AN 156 – Chief Executive Files.

AN 167 – Board and Committee Minutes and Papers.

AN 168 – Division Manager, Leeds, North Eastern Region.

AN 176 – Passenger Marketing Manager and Provincial Services Sector.

AN 177 – Southern Region: Line and Station Closure Records.

Cabinet Papers:
CAB 134 – Miscellaneous Committees: Minutes and Papers.

CAB 139 – Central Statistical Office.

Central Office of Information:
RG 40 – Social Survey Division.

RG 23 – Social Survey: Reports and Papers.

Department of Economic Affairs Files:
EW 7 – Regional Policy Files.

EW 10 – South East Regional Office.

EW 11 – North West and East Regional Office.

EW 13 – East Anglia Regional Office.

EW 14 – South East Economic Planning Board and South East Economic Planning Council.

EW 19 – West Midlands Regional Office.

EW 23 – South East and East Anglia Regional Offices.

Department of Environment:
AT 36 – Development Plans and Regional Policy Directorate.

AT 63 – Traffic and Transport Planning Division.

Ministry of Housing and Local Government:
HLG 71 – Ministry of Town and Country Planning.

HLG 115 – New Towns, Development Corporations.

HLG 116 – New Towns.

HLG 131 – Planning Divisions.

HLG 136 – Urban Planning Directorate.

HLG 145 – Planning Division F: Greater London and South Eastern Region.

HLG 156 – Regional Offices.

Ministry of Transport Files:
MT 39 – Highways: Correspondence and Papers.

MT 65 – Statistics Files.

MT 96 – General Division: Registered Files.

MT 97 – Road Transport: Registered Files.

MT 100 – Highways North Division.

MT 102 – Mechanical Engineering and Vehicle Engineering.

MT 106 – London Highways Division.

MT 120 – Highways General Planning.

MT 124 – Railways and Inland Waterways.

MT 128 – Highways B (South Division).

MT 136 – Traffic and Transport Planning.

MT 149 – Directorate General of Economic Planning.

MT 152 – Divisional Road Engineers.

MT 188 – Railways Grants and Closures.

National Bus Company:
FH 14 – Annual Reports.

Prime Minister's Office:
PREM 11 – Correspondence and Papers, 1951-1964.

Treasury Files:
T 267 – Historical Memoranda.

T 319 – Public Enterprises Division.

Welsh Office:
BD 4 – Private Collections: Ministers and Officials.

Local Archives:

Bedfordshire Archives, Bedford:
CS 1807/6/f8 – Closure of Railway Branch Lines in Bedfordshire, 1971-84.

CS 1807/6B – British Railways Board Information and Statistics, 1964.

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury:
DC 14/10/116 – Electrification of railway, proposed closure of Bletchley - Bedford railway line, local bus services, 1958-1972.

DC 14/10/117 – Proposed Closure of Bletchley to Bedford Railway Line: General, 1966-73.

DC 3/4/6 – Papers Concerning Inquiry into Proposed Closure of Oxford – Cambridge Railway Passenger Service, 1964.

DC 3/4/7 – Council's Opinion Concerning Inquiry into Proposed Closure of Bletchley Bedford Railway Passenger Service, 1971.

Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge:
ABMS 5/36 – The Papers of Mark Abrams: Roads and Town Planning, 1955-1969.

MPLS 1/3/4 – The Papers of Ernest Marples: Miscellaneous Papers, 1963-1964.

MPLS 1/3/2 – The Reshaping of British Railways, Annotated by EM, 1963.

MPLS 1/5/2 – The Papers of Ernest Marples: Pamphlets and Articles, 1951-1975.

YUNG 1/5/1/1 – The Papers of Michael Young: Debden Field Notes, 1951-1955.

YUNG 1/5/1/2 – The Papers of Michael Young: Debden Field Notes, 1953-1955.

YUNG 1/5/1/3 – The Papers of Michael Young: Debden Intensive Interviews, 1955.

YUNG 1/5/1/5 –The Papers of Michael Young: Bethnal Green Field Notes, 1951-1953.

YUNG 1/5/1/6 – The Papers of Michael Young: Bethnal Green Field Notes, 1951-1955.

Essex University Special Collections Archive, Colchester:
SN 4863 15.1 – Ray Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, 1965.

SN 4863 15.2 – Ray Pahl, *Lifestyles and Patterns of Mobility in Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: Brickendon Lane Estate Mobility Survey*, 1965.

SN 4877 13.1 – Ray Pahl, *Three Hertfordshire Villages Survey, Pilot: Weston,* 1961.

Hampshire Archives and Local Studies, Winchester:
73m94/G1/1/1053 – The Automobile Association Main Series – Women Drivers, 1930-1988.

73M94/G1/1/169 – The Automobile Association Main Series – Birmingham School of Traffic Engineering, 1959-1966.

73M94/H2/7 – The Automobile Association Annual Reports and Accounts, 1960-1969.

73m94/G1/1/595 – Motorway Manners Series, 1964-1965.

73M94/G1/1/594 – The Automobile Association Main Series – *The Motorist Today* (AA Survey), 1965.

73M94/H2/8 – The Automobile Association Annual Reports and Accounts, 1970-1979.

73M94/G1/1/742 – The Automobile Association Main Series – Railways, 1969-1983.

Leeds Collections, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Morley:
LLDI/2/847763 – Transport Planning Group, 1968-1973.

LMT/MO/TCF/Box12/2 – West Yorkshire Transportation Study: Technical Report, 1969.

LLD1/2/837078 – Future Transport Organisation for Leeds, 1969/1970.

LLDI.2/847676/1-2/2 – Transport and Planning Policy Matters, 1972-1974.

Manchester Archives and Local History, Central Library:
F711.73So4 – Greater Manchester Council, *Transportation Study – Sterling Committee Meeting, 8 October 1970*, 1970.

F711.73So(063) – South East Lancashire North East Cheshire Passenger Transport Authority and Passenger Transport Executive, *A Summary of a Report on the Future of Public Transport for Greater Manchester*, 1972.

Q711.3Gr1/a – Greater Manchester Council, *Greater Manchester Structure Plan: Alternative Strategies Report*, 1977.

Q711.3Gr2 – Greater Manchester Council, *Country Structure Plan Supplementary Report of Survey: Public Attitudes Survey, May 1977*, 1977.

<u>The Modern Records Centre, Warwick:</u>

MSS. 154/4/BR/4/1-165 – Transcriptions of Broadcasts on Radio and Television by Richard Crossman MP, 1934-1974.

MSS. 379/PC/4/5/1 – ASLEF, Papers of Percy Collick: Cuttings Relating to Rail Transport, Industry, the Labour Party, 1949-1963.

MSS. 292/654/8/1-2 – Trades Union Congress: Road Transport, 1953-60.

MSS. 234/S/3/2 – British Road Federation: Secretary's Department Files, 1959-65.

MSS. 55/3/BE/1/13 – International Union of Railways: General Outline of the Problems Facing the European Railways, March 1961, National Union of Railwaymen.

MSS. 55/3/BE/1/3 – TSSA File of Press Cuttings, Press releases and Notes, 1961-63.

MSS. 55/3/BE/1/17 – The Road and Rail Crisis: Memorandum to Prime Minister the RT. Hon. Harold Macmillan, 1962.

MSS. 200/F/1/1/107 – Minutes of Traders' Co-Ordinating Committee on Transport, February 1962-September 1964.

MSS. 292B/653.7/3 – Trades Union Congress: Beeching Report: British Railways, 1962-1963.

MSS. 55/3BR/1/20 – The Road and Rail Crisis: Correspondence between Ernest Marples and Lord Stonham, 1963.

MSS. 55/3/BE/1/1 – TSSA: Beeching Report Sub-Committee, 1963.

MSS. 154/4/BR/10/1-229 – Papers of Richard Crossman MP: International Transcripts of Broadcasts on Radio and Television, 1963-64.

MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/278A – Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Services: Cambridge – Bedford – Bletchley – Oxford, 1963 – 1967, National Union of Railwaymen.

MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/327 – Withdrawal of Passenger Services: East Suffolk Line, 1964 – 1966, National Union of Railwaymen.

MSS. 127/NU/MV8/3/258 – Proposed Withdrawal of Passenger Services: Manchester – Buxton, 1963 – 1971, National Union of Railwaymen.

MSS. 21/2114/1-9 – British Road Federation: Roads, 1971 Annual Report, 1972.

Collections at the Museum of English Rural Life, Reading:
SR CPRE C/1/199/5 – Council for the Protection of Rural England, Administrative Records: Railways.

Nottingham Record Office and Archives:
CC/CL/1/JR/06 – Highways Transportation, Volume II – Local/Rural Bus Services, 1972-1975.

CC/CL/1/JR/06.01 – Highways Transportation, Volume II – Local/Rural Bus Services, 1966-1975.

Nottingham University Manuscript and Special Collections Archive:
LEI 3 G20 SHA – Clifford Sharp and the East Midlands Economic Planning Council, *Passenger Transport in Leicester: Confidential Report to the Minister of Transport*, 1967.

The Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, Birmingham:
West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, *City of Birmingham Structure Plan: Report on Options*, 1973.

LP47.64 – West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, *Development of Bus Services: Birmingham City Centre*, 1974.

West Midlands County Councils, *Transport Policies and Programme: Submission*, 1975.

Road Research Laboratory Repository, Wokingham:
Bly, P., *The Effect of Fares on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1976).

Bly, P., and F. Webster and Susan Pounds, *Subsidisation of Urban Public Transport* (Berkshire, 1980).

Cooper, B., and R. Layfield, *Nottingham Zone and Collar Study Results of the 'After' Surveys* (Crowthorne, 1978).

Dasgupta, M., *Access to Employment Opportunities by Car and by Bus in Inner and Outer Areas of Manchester* (Crowthorne, 1982).

Dasgupta, M., *Manchester Travel-to-Work Survey: Survey and Preliminary Results* (Crowthorne, 1980).

Divey, S., *Regional and National Convergence to Common Car Ownership Levels* (Crowthorne, 1979).

Downes, J., *The Distribution of Household Car Ownership* (Crowthorne, 1976).

Downes, J., *Variation of Household and Person Travel Time Budgets in Reading* (Crowthorne, 1980).

Ellson, P., and R. Tebb, *Traffic Characteristics of a Network of Co-Ordinated Rural Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1978).

Emmerson, P., and J. Downes, *Travel Changes in Reading Between 1962, 1971 and 1976* (Crowthorne, 1982).

Fawcett, F., and J. Downes, *The Spatial Uniformity of Trip Rates in the Reading Area in 1971* (Crowthorne, 1977).

Grigg, A., and l. Huddart, *An Opinion Survey of the Yorkshire Dales Rail Service in 1977* (Crowthorne, 1979).

Hepburn, D., *Analysis of Changes in Rail Commuting to Central London, 1966-71* (Crowthorne, 1977).

Hickman, A., *Atmospheric Pollution Measurements in West London* (Crowthorne, 1973).

Hopkin, Jean, *The Ownership and Use of Cars by Elderly People* (Crowthorne, 1981).

Hopkin, Jean, *The Role of an Understanding of Social Factors in Forecasting Car Ownership* (Crowthorne, 1981).

Jones S., and J. Tanner, *Car Ownership and Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1979).

Lynam, D., and P. Everall, *Car Journey Times in London – 1970* (Crowthorne, 1971).

Martin, P., *Bus Services in Small Towns* (Crowthorne, 1978).

Martin, P., and R. Tunbridge, *The Optimisation of Public Transport in Small Towns* (Crowthorne, 1977).

Mitchell, C., *Some Social Aspects of Public Transport* (Crowthorne, 1977).

Mitchell, C., *The Use of Local Bus Services* (Crowthorne, 1980).

Oldfield, R., *The Effect of Car Ownership on Bus Patronage* (Crowthorne, 1979).

Oldfield, R., *The Effect of Income on Bus Travel* (Crowthorne, 1981).

Pickup, L., *Housewives' Mobility and Travel Patterns* (Crowthorne, 1981).

Storie, Valerie, *Male and Female Drivers: Differences Observed in Accidents* (Crowthorne, 1977).

Tanner, J., *Car Ownership Trends and Forecasts* (Crowthorne, 1977).

Tanner, J., *International Comparisons of Cars and Car Usage* (Crowthorne, 1983).

Tanner, J., *Saturation Levels in Car Ownership Models: Some Recent Data* (Crowthorne, 1981).

Tulpule, A., *Characteristics of Households with and without Cars in 1970* (Crowthorne, 1974).

Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive, *The Metro Report: The Impact of Metro and Public Transport Integration in Tyne and Wear* (Crowthorne, 1986).

Vincent, R., R. Layfield and M. Bardsley, *Runcorn Busway Study* (Crowthorne, 1976).

Webster, F., *Priority to Buses as Part of Traffic Management* (Crowthorne, 1972).

Webster, F., *Urban Passenger Transport: Some Trends and Prospects* (Crowthorne, 1977).

<u>Government Reports and Published Works</u>:

British Railways Board, *The Development of the Major Railway Trunk Routes* (London, 1965).

British Railways Board, *The Reshaping of British Railways: Part I* (London, 1963).

British Transport Commission, *Modernisation and Re-Equipment of British Railways* (London, 1955).

The Central Transport Consultative Committee, *Handbook on Transport Users Consultative Committees* (London, 1963).

Buchanan, Colin, *Traffic in Towns: A Study of the London Term Problems of Traffic in Urban Areas* (London, 1963).

Department of Environment, *Better Use of Town Roads: The Report of a Study of the Means of Restraint of Traffic on Urban Roads* (London, 1967).

Department of Environment, *New Roads in Towns: Report of the Urban Motorways Committee to the Secretary of State for the Environment* (London, 1972).

Guillebaud, C., E. Bishop and H. Clegg, *Report of Railway Pay Committee* (London, 1960).

Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1960 and 1961* (London, 1962).

Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1963* (London, 1965).

Ministry of Labour, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1965* (London, 1966).

Ministry of Environment and Productivity, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1967* (London, 1968).

Department of Employment, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1970* (London, 1971).

Department of Employment, *Family Expenditure Survey, Report for 1974* (London, 1975).

Ministry of Transport, *Cars for Cities: A Study of Trends in the Design of Vehicles with Particular Reference to Their Use in Towns* (London, 1967).

Ministry of Transport, *Rural Transport Surveys: Report of Preliminary Results* (London, 1963).

Royal Commission on Transport, *Final Report: The Co-ordination and Development of Transport* (London, 1931).

Royal Commission, *The Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population* (London, 1940).

Smeed, Reuben, *Road Pricing: The Economic and Technical Possibilities* (London, 1964).

Treasury, *The Financial and Economic Obligations of the Nationalised Industries* (London, 1961).

Contemporary Transport Studies:
Freeman Allen, Geoffrey, 'Dr Beeching Prescribes', *Modern Railways*, 17 (1963), 289-291.

Atkins, Colin, *People and the Motor Car: A Study of the Movement of People Related to their Residential Environment* (Birmingham, 1964).

Bain, A., 'The Growth of Television Ownership in the United Kingdom', *International Economic Review*, 3 (1962), 145-167.

Beesley, Michael, and J. Kain, 'Urban Form, Car Ownership and Public Policy: An Appraisal of *Traffic in Towns*', *Urban Studies*, 1 (1964), 174-203.

Beesley, Michael, and Gabriel Roth, 'Restraint of Traffic in Congested Areas', *Town Planning Review*, 33 (1962), 184-196.

The British Road Federation, *The Conurbations: A Study by Colin Buchanan and Partners* (London, 1969).

Button, K., 'The Geographical distribution of car ownership in Great Britain – Some Recent Trends', *The Annals of Regional Science*, 14 (1980), 23-38.

Button, K., A. Fowkes and A. Pearman, 'Disaggregate and Aggregate Car Ownership Forecasting in Great Britain', *Transportation Research*, 14 (1980), 263-273.

Daniels, P., 'Employment Decentralisation and the Journey to Work', *Area*, 2 (1970), 47-51.

Daniels, P., 'Some Changes in the Journey to Work of Decentralised Workers', *The Town Planning Review*, 44 (1973), 167-188.

Davies, W., and T. Musson, 'Spatial Patterns of Commuting in South Wales, 1951-1971: A Factor Analysis Definition', *Regional Studies,* 12 (1978), 353-366.

Department of Environment, *Transport Statistics: Great Britain, 1964-1974* (London, 1976).

European Conference of Ministers of Transport, *Sixth Annual Report* (Paris, 1960).

European Conference of Ministers of Transport, *Statistical Trends in Transport: 1965-1994* (Paris, 1998).

Fairhurst, M., 'The Influence of Public Transport on Car Ownership in London', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 9 (1975), 193-208.

Foster, Christopher, 'Some Notes on Railway Costs and Costings', *Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics* (1962), 73-203.

Gray, Peter, *Private Motoring in England and Wales* (London, 1969).

Green, F., 'Urban Hinterlands in England and Wales: An Analysis of Bus Services', *The Geographical Journal*, 116 (1950), 64-81.

Hillman, Mayer, Irwin Henderson and Anne Whalley, *Personal Mobility and Transport Policy* (London, 1973).

Hillman, Mayer, and Anne Whalley, *The Social Consequences of Rail Closures* (London, 1980).

Jones, Richard, 'Local Labour Markets, the Journey to Work and Government Location Policy', *The Town Planning Review*, 41 (1970), 168-178.

Joy, Stewart, 'British Railways' Track Costs', *Journal of Industrial Statistics,* 13 (1964), 74-89.

Law, C., and A. Warnes, 'The Changing Geography of the Elderly in England and Wales', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 1 (1976), 453-471.

Lawton, R., 'The Daily Journey to Work in England and Wales: An Analysis of the Report on Usual Residence and Workplace, Census of England and Wales, 1951', *The Town Planning Review*, 29 (1959), 241-57.

Lawton, R., 'The Journey to Work in Britain: Some Trends and Problems', *Regional Studies*, 2 (1968), 27-40.

Liepmann, Kate, *The Journey to Work: Its Significance for Industrial and Community Life* (London, 1944).

Maurice, E., Backett and A. Johnston, 'Social Patterns of Road Accidents to Children: Some Characteristics of Vulnerable Families', *British Medical Journal*, 1 (1959), 409-413.

Mogridge, M., 'Changing Spatial Patterns in the Journey to Work: A Comparison of the 1966 and 1971 Census Data in London', *Urban Studies*, 16 (1979), 179-190.

Mogridge, M., 'The Effect of the Oil Crisis on the Growth in the Ownership and Use of Cars', *Transportation*, 7 (1978), 45-67.

Munby, Denys, 'The Reshaping of British Railways', *The Journal of Industrial Economics,* 11 (1963), 161-182.

Nicholas, Rowland, *City of Manchester Plan: Prepared for the City Council* (Manchester, 1945).

Patmore, John, 'The British Railway Network in the Beeching Era', *Economic Geography,* 41 (1965), 71-81.

Patmore, John, 'The Changing Network of British Railways', *Geography,* 47 (1962), 401-405.

Patmore, John, 'The Contraction of the Network of Railway Passenger Services in England and Wales, 1836-1962', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (1966), 105-118.

Pearman, A., and K. Button, 'Regional Variations in Car Ownership', *Applied Economics*, 8 (1976), 231-233.

Political and Economic Planning, *Locomotives: A Report on the Organisation and Structure of the Industry, its Products and its Market Prospects at Home and Abroad* (London, 1951).

Gabriel Roth, *Paying for Roads: The Economics of Traffic Congestion* (Harmondsworth, 1967).

Sanghi, Ajay, 'The relationship between population density, automobile ownership and automobile use: Its role in transport and planning', *The Annals of regional Science*, 10 (1976), 118-127.

Sharp, Clifford, 'The Choice between Cars and Buses on Urban Roads', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1 (1967), 104-111.

Sharp, Clifford, *Problems of Urban Passenger Transport with Special Reference to Leicester* (Leicester, 1967).

Sleeman, John, 'A New Look at the Distribution of Private Cars in Britain', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1968), 306-318.

Smith, Edward, 'An Economic Comparison of Urban Railways and Express Bus Services', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 7 (1973), 20-31.

Smith, Edward, 'A Rejoinder', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 89-94.

Tanner, J., 'Car and Motorcycle Ownership in the Counties of Great Britain in 1960', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 126 (1963), 276-284.

Thomson, J. M., *Some Characteristics of Motorists in Central London: Results of a Parking Survey in April 1966* (London, 1966).

Todd, J., J. Baggs and Edward Smith, 'An Economic Comparison of Urban Railways and Express Bus Services', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 89-94.

Wabe, J. S., 'Dispersal of Employment and the Journey to Work: A Case Study', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 1(1967), 345-361.

Warnes, A., 'Commuting Towards City Centres: A Study of Population and Employment Density Gradients in Liverpool and Manchester', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, (1975), 77-96.

Warnes, A., 'Estimates of Journey to Work Distances from Census Statistics', *Regional Studies*, 6 (1972), 315-326.

Westergaard, John, 'Journeys to Work in the London Region', *The Town Planning Review*, 28 (1957), 37-62.

Walters, Alan, 'The Theory and Measurement of Private and Social Cost of Highway Congestion', *Econometrica*, 29 (1961), 676-699.

Wheeler, James, 'Occupational Status and Work-Trips: A Minimum Distance Approach', *Social Forces*, 45 (1967), 508-515.

White, Henry P., 'The Reshaping of British Railways: A Review', *Geography*, 48 (1963), 335-337.

White, Peter, 'Use of Public Transport in Towns and Cities of Britain and Ireland', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 8 (1974), 26-39.

Contemporary Literature:

Abrams, Mark, 'Sociology of the Motor Age', *Town and Country Planning*, 32 (1964), 230-234.

Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London, 1972).

Buchanan, Colin, *Mixed Blessing: The Motor in Britain* (London, 1958).

Burton, Lindy, *Vulnerable Children: Three Studies of Children in Conflict* (London, 1968).

Crosland, Anthony, *The Future of Socialism* (London, 1957).

Hans Eysenck, 'The Structure of Social Attitudes', *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 14 (1975), 323-331.

Gallup, George, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975 Volume I* (New York, 1976).

Gallup, George, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975 Volume II* (New York, 1976).

Hoggart, Richard, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life* (London, 1957).

Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Guildford, 1977).

Jacobs, Jane, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Harmondsworth, 1964).

Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960).

MacEwan, Malcom, 'Motropolis: A Study of the Traffic Problem', *The Architects' Journal*, 130 (1959), 254-275.

Mumford, Lewis, *The Highway and the City* (London, 1963).

Nairn, Ian, *Your England Revisited* (Oxford, 1964).

Contemporary Sociological and Anthropological Studies:

Abel-Smith, Brian, 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).

Bell, Colin, *Middle Class Families: Social and Geographical Mobility* (London, 1968).

Bott, Elizabeth, *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms, and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families* (London, 1957).

Coates, Ken, and Richard Silburn, *Poverty: The Forgotten Englishmen* (Harmondsworth, 1970).

Frankenberg, Ronald, *Village on the Border: A Social Study of Religion, Politics and Football in a North Wales Community* (London, 1957).

Galbraith, John, *The Affluent Society* (London, 1961).

Gluckman, Max, (ed.), *Closed Systems and Open Minds: The Limits of Naivety in Social Anthropology* (Oxford, 1964); William Watson, 'Social Mobility and Social Class in Industrial Communities', 129-157.

Goldthorpe John, and David Lockwood, 'Affluence and the British Class Structure', *The Sociological Review*, 11 (1963), 133-163.

Goldthorpe, John, and David Lockwood, Frank Bechhofer and Jennifer Platt, *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour* (Cambridge, 1968).

Goldthorpe, John, and David Lockwood, Frank Bechhofer and Jennifer Platt, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure* (Cambridge, 1969).

Gorer, Geoffrey, *Exploring English Character* (London, 1955). Klein, Viola, *Britain's Married Women Workers* (London, 1965).

University of Liverpool, *Neighbourhood and Community: An Enquiry into Social Relationships on Housing Estates in Liverpool and Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1954).

London School of Economics, *Woman, Wife and Worker* (London, 1960). Merton, Robert, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, 1957).

Pahl, Ray, 'Class and Community in English Commuter Villages', *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 5 (1965), 5-23.

Pahl, Ray, 'The Two Class Village', *New Society*, (1964), 7-9.

Pahl, Ray, *Urbs in Rure: The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire* (London, 1965).

Political and Economic Planning, *Motor Vehicles: A Report on the Organisation and Structure of the Industry, its Products, and its Market Prospects at Home and Abroad* (London, 1950).

Robin, Jean, *Elmdon: Continuity and Change in a North-West Essex Village, 1861-1964* (Cambridge, 1980).

Townsend, Peter, *The Family Life of Old People: An Enquiry in East London* (London, 1957).

Strathern, Marilyn, *Kinship at the Core: An Anthropology of Elmdon, a Village in North-West Essex in the Nineteen-Sixties* (Cambridge, 1981).

Young, Michael, and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1957). Zweig, Ferdynand, *Men in the Pits* (London, 1949).

Zweig, Ferdynand, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London, 1961).

Diaries and Autobiographies:
Castle, Barbara, *Fighting All the Way* (London, 1993).

Crossman, Richard, *Richard Crossman: The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Vol. I* (London, 1975).

Fiennes, Gerard, *I Tried to Run a Railway* (London, 2016).

Wilson, Harold, *The Labour Government, 1964-1970: A Personal Record* (London, 1971).

Parliamentary Debates:
Richard Butler, *HC Debs*, vol. 596, cc. 225, 25 November 1958.

Ernest Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 615, cc. 771, 10 December 1959.

Patrick Gordon-Walker, *HC Debs*, vol. 621, cc. 917, 11 April 1960.

Ernest Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 627, cc. 1887, 28 July 1960.

Ernes Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 627, cc. 2361, 26 October 1960.

Anthony Benn, *HC Debs*, vol. 627, cc. 2380, 26 October 1960

Richard Nugent, *HC Debs*, vol. 627, cc. 2393, 26 October 1960.

George Strauss, *HC Debs*, vol. 654, cc. 1373, 28 February 1962.

George Strauss, *HC Debs*, vol. 654, cc. 1374, 28 February 1962.

John Hay, *HC Debs*, vol. 668, cc. 682, 29 November 1962.

Ernest Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 674, cc. 1320, 27 March 1963

Ernest Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 736, 29 April 1963.

Ernest Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 741, 29 April 1963.

Arthur Harvey, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 944, 30 April 1963.

Harold Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 908-918, 30 April 1963.

Harold Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 919, 30 April 1963.

Harold Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 921, 30 April 1963.

Harold Wilson, *HC Debs*, vol. 676, cc. 944, 30 April 1963.

Frank Markham, *HC Debs*, vol. 686, cc. 1593, 19 December 1963.

Frank Markham, *HC Debs*, vol. 686, cc. 1596, 19 December 1963.

Ernest Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 686, cc. 1661, 20 December 1963.

Ernest Marples, *HC Debs*, vol. 699, cc. 479, 31 July 1964.

Hector Hughes, *HC Debs*, vol. 701, cc. 173-174, 3 November 1964.

Harwood Harrison, *HC Debs*, vol. 715, cc. 593, 30 June 1965.

Christopher Norwood, *HC Debs*, vol. 721, cc. 1595, 1 December 1965.

Harwood Harrison, *HC Debs*, vol. 721, cc. 1602, 1 December 1965.

Christopher Norwood, *HC Debs*, vol. 721, cc. 1597, 1 December 1965.

John Morris, *HC Debs*, vol. 725, cc. 202, 28 February 1966.

Barbara Castle, *HC Debs*, vol. 724, cc. 655, 10 February 1966.

Barbara Castle, *HC Debs*, vol. 725, cc. 471, 8 March 1966.

John Morris, *HC Debs*, col. 759, cc. 121, 21 February 1968.

Jim Prior, *HC Debs*, vol. 778, cc. 37, 17 February 1969.

Reginald Eyre, *HC Debs*, vol. 846, cc. 1740, 23 November 1972.

James Allason, *HC Debs*, vol. 859, cc. 1047, 9 July 1973.

John Peyton, *HC Debs*, vol. 865, cc. 397-399, 28 November 1973.

John Peyton, *HC Debs*, vol. 868, cc. 38-39, 28 January 1974.

Fred Mulley, *HC Debs*, vol. 878, cc. 293, 31 July 1974.

John Gilbert, *HC Debs*, vol. 897, cc. 120, 5 August 1975.

Newspapers and Publications:

National Newspapers and Publications:
The Daily Express (1968).

The Daily Herald (1963-1964).

The Daily Mail (1955-1980).

The Daily Telegraph (1960-1970).

The Daily Standard (1969).

The Daily Worker (1965).

The Economist (1958-1963).

The Evening News (1930-1969).

The Evening Standard (1964-1977).

The Financial Times (1962-1973).

The Guardian (1959-2016).

The Guardian Journal (1963).

Good Motoring (1951).

The Herald Express (1963).

The Highway Times (1963).

International Transport Workers' Journal (1963).

The Observer (1963-1976).

Railways Gazette International, 160 (2004).

The Railway Magazine, 160 (September 2014).

Railway Review (1965-1967). *Railway World* (February 1976). *The Times* (1955-1975).

The Scotsman (1960).

The Sunday Times (1963-1971).

Local Newspapers:
Aberdeen Evening Express (1960).

Basingstoke Gazette (1985).

Bedford Record and Circular (1964-1966).

Bedfordshire Times (1964-1973).

Biggleswade Chronicle (1966).

Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch (1964).

Birmingham Post (1966).

Brighton Argus (1973).

Cambridge Daily News (1963-1964).

Coventry Evening Telegraph (1970).

East Anglian Daily Times (1963-1966).

Eastern Daily Press (1966-1967).

Evening Argus (Brighton and Sussex) (1964).

Hants Chronicle (1975).

Hull Daily Mail (1967).

Ipswich Evening Star (1965).

Liverpool Daily Post (1966).

Liverpool Echo (1966).

Lowestoft Journal (1966).

North Beds Courier (1964).

Nottingham Evening Post (1963).

Nuneaton Evening Tribune (1969).

Oxford Times (1965).

Pontefract and Castleford Express (1963).

Western Daily Press (1965).

Western Mail (1965).

Western Morning News, Plymouth (1964).

Wolverton Express (1965).

Yorkshire Post (1967).

York Press (2018).

Secondary Sources:

Books:

Adley, Robert, *Out of Steam: The Beeching Years in Hindsight* (Hitchin, 1990).

Aldcroft, Derek, *British Railways in Transition: The Economic Problems of Britain's Railways Since 1914* (London, 1968).

Freeman Allen, Geoffrey, *British Rail After Beeching* (London, 1966).

Ashworth, William, *The State in Business, 1945 to the mid-1980s* (Basingstoke, 1991).

Austin, Chris and Richard Faulkner, *Disconnected! Broken Lines in Britain's Rail Policy* (Addlestone, 2015).

Bagwell, Philip, *The Railwaymen, Volume 2: The Beeching Era and After: The History of the National Union of Railwaymen* (London, 1982).

Bagwell, Philip, *The Transport Revolution, 1770-1985* (London, 1974).

Bagwell, Philip, *End of the Line? The Fate of Public Transport Under Thatcher* (London, 1984).

Banister, David, *Transport Planning: Transport, Development and Sustainability* (London, 2002).

Barker, Theodore and Christopher Savage, *An Economic History of Transport in Britain* (London, 1974).

Barnett, Correlli, *The Verdict of Peace: Britain Between Her Yesterday and the Future* (London, 2001).

Bayley, Stephen, *Sex, Drink and Fast Cars: The Creation and Consumption of Images* (London, 1986).

Bedale, Len, and C. Goode, *Station Master: My Lifetime's Railway Service in Yorkshire* (Sheffield, 1976).

Bell, Colin, and Howard Newby, *Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community* (London, 1971).

Bernstein, George, *The Myth of Decline: The Rise of Britain since 1945* (London, 2004).

Best, Robin, *The Major Land Uses of Great Britain: An Evaluation of the Conflicting Records and Estimates of Land Utilisation since 1900* (London, 1959).

Bingham, Adrian, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2004).

Black, Lawrence, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951-64: Old Labour, New Britain?* (Basingstoke, 2003).

Black, Lawrence, *Redefining British Politics: Culture, Consumerism and Participation, 1954-70* (Basingstoke, 2010).

Bonavia, Michael, *The Birth of British Rail* (London, 1979).

Bonavia, Michael, *The Organisation of British Railways* (Shepperton, 1971).

Boynton, John, *Rails Across the City: The Story of the Birmingham Cross City Line* (Kidderminster, 1993).

Bradley, Simon, *The Railways: Nation, Network and People* (London, 2015).

Butler, David and Anthony King, *The British General Elections, 1945-92: The British General Election of 1964* (Basingstoke, 1999).

Butler, David, and Anthony King, *The British General Elections, 1945-92: The British General Election of 1966* (Basingstoke, 1999).

Butler, David, and Richard Rose, *The British General Election of 1959* (London, 1960).

Cairncross, Francis, *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution is Changing Our Lives* (London, 1997).

Calvert, Roger, *The Future of Britain's Railways* (London, 1965).

Carter, Ian, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester, 2001).

De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (London, 2011).

Charlesworth, George, *A History of British Motorways* (London, 1984).

Charlesworth, George, *A History of the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, 1933-1983* (Aldershot, 1987).

Chick, Martin, *Industrial Policy in Britain, 1945-1951: Economic Planning, Nationalisation and the Labour Governments* (Cambridge, 1998).

Church, Roy, *The Rise and Decline of the British Motor Industry* (Cambridge, 1995).

Clapson, Mark, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Postwar England* (Manchester, 1998).

Clough, David, *Dr Beeching's Remedy: A Cure for a Century of the Railway's Ills* (Hersham, 2013).

Dennis, Richard, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (Cambridge, 1984).

Devine, Fiona, *Affluent Workers Revisited: Privatism and the Working Class* (Edinburgh, 1992).

Dudley, Geoffrey, and Jeremy Richardson, *Why Does Policy Change? Lessons From British Transport Policy, 1945-99* (London, 2000).

Dyos, Harold, and Derek Aldcroft, *British Transport: An Economic Survey from the Seventeenth Century to the Twentieth* (Leicester, 1969).

Engel, Matthew, *Eleven Minutes Late: A Train Journey to the Soul of Britain* (Oxford, 2009).

Eyre, Michael, and Chris Heaps, *Manchester and Salford: A Century of Municipal Transport* (Hersham, 2001).

Foster, Christopher, *The Transport Problem* (London, 1975).

Freeman, Michael, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (London, 1999).

Freeman, Michael, and Derek Aldcroft, *The Atlas of British Railway History* (London, 1985).

Garreau, Joel, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York, 1991).

Gibbins, Edward, *The Railway Closure Controversy* (Stoke, 2000).

Glaister, Stephen, June Burnham, Handley Stevens and Toney Tavers, *Transport Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, 1998).

Glaister, Stephen, *Fundamentals of Transport Economics* (Oxford, 1981).

Glover, John, *BR Diary: 1958-1967* (London, 1987).

Glover, John, *BR Diary: 1978-1985* (London, 1985).

Goodman, Geoffrey, *The Awkward Warrior, Frank Cousins: His Life and Times* (London, 1979).

Gourvish, Terry, *Britain's Railways, 1997-2005: Labour's Strategic Experiment* (Oxford, 2008).

Gourvish, Terry, *British Railways, 1948-73: A Business History* (Cambridge, 1986).

Gourvish, Terry, *British Rail, 1974-97: From Integration to Privatisation* (Oxford, 2002).

Le Grand, Julian, *Motivation, Agency, and Public Policy: Of Knights and Knaves, Pawns and Queens* (Oxford, 2003).

Grant, John, *The Politics of Urban Transport Planning: An Analysis of Transportation Policy Formation in Three UK County Boroughs between 1947 and 1974* (London, 1977).

Green, Alix, *History, Policy and Public Purpose: Historians and Historical Thinking in Government* (London, 2016).

Gunn, Simon, and Susan Townsend, *Automobility and the City in Twentieth-Century Britain and Japan* (London, 2019).

Gurney, Peter, *The Making of Consumer Culture in Modern Britain* (London, 2017). Hall, Peter, *Great Planning Disasters* (London, 1980).

Hall, Peter, and Carmen Hass-Klau, *Can Rail Save the City? The Impacts of Rail Rapid Transit and Pedestrianisation on British and German Cities* (Aldershot, 1985).

Hamer, Mick, *Wheels Within Wheels: A Study of the Road Lobby* (London, 1987).

Hanley, Nick, and Clive Splash, *Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Environment* (Aldershot, 1993).

Hardy, Richard, *Beeching: Champion of the Railways?* (London, 1989).

Harris, Sim, *The Railway Dilemma: The Perpetual Problems of Ownership, Costs and Control* (Addlestone, 2016).

Harwood, Elain, *Space, Hope and Brutalism: English Architecture, 1945-1975* (Yale, 2015).

Haywood, Russell, *Railways, Urban Development and Town Planning in Britain: 1948-2008* (Farnham, 2009).

Hennessy, Peter, *Having It So Good: Britain in the Fifties* (London, 2020).

Henshaw, David, *The Great Railway Conspiracy: The Fall and Rise of Britain's Railways Since the 1950s* (Hawes, 1991).

Hibbs, John, *The History of British Bus Services* (Newton Abbot, 1989).

Hibbs, John, *The Bus and Coach Industry: Its Economics and Organisation* (London, 1975).

Hibbs, John, *Regulation: An International Study of Bus and Coach Licensing* (Cardiff, 1985).

Hillman, Jordan J., *The Parliamentary Structuring of British Road-Rail Freight Coordination* (Evaston, 1973).

Hobsbawm, Eric, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life* (London, 2002).

Holland, Julian, *Dr Beeching's Axe 50 Years On: Illustrated Memories of Britain's Lost Railways* (Newton Abbot, 2013).

Ibrahim, Muhammed, and Peter McGoldrick, *Shopping Choices with Public Transport Options: An Agenda for the 21st Century* (Aldershot, 2003).

Jackson, Alan, *Semi-Detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport* (London, 1973).

Jones, Ben, *The Working Class in Mid-Twentieth-Century England: Community, Identity and Social Memory* (Manchester, 2012).

Joy, Stewart, *The Train That Ran Away: A Business History of British Railways, 1948-1968* (London, 1973).

Kalla-Bishop, P., *Railway Histories of the World: Italian Railways* (Newton Abbott, 1971).

Kaufmann, Vincent, *Re-Thinking Mobility: Contemporary Sociology* (Aldershot, 2002).

Kellet, John, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (London, 1969).

King, Laura, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, c.1914-1960* (Oxford, 2015).

Kynaston, David, *Austerity Britain, 1945-51* (London, 2007).

Kynaston, David, *Family Britain, 1951-57* (London, 2009).

Kynaston, David, *Modernity Britain, Book One: Opening the Box, 1957-59* (London, 2013).

Kynaston, David, *Modernity Britain, Book Two: A Shake of the Dice, 1959-62* (London, 2014).

Lamb, Richard, *The Macmillan Years, 1957-1963: The Emerging Truth* (London, 1995).

Lawrence, Jon, *Me, Me, Me? The Search for Community in Post-War England* (Oxford, 2019).

Laybourn, Keith, and David Taylor, *The Battle for the Roads of Britain: Police, Motorists and the Law, c. 1890s to 1970s* (Basingstoke, 2015).

Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991).

Loft, Charles, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain: Beeching's Last Trains* (London, 2006).

Loft, Charles, *Last Trains: Dr Beeching and the Death of Rural England* (London, 2013).

Marchant, Ian, *Parallel Lines: Or Journeys on the Railway of Dreams*, Or Every Girl's Big Book of Trains (London, 2003).

Marsh, Peter, and Peter Collett, *Driving Passion: The Psychology of the Car* (London, 1986).

McCarthy, Helen, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood* (London, 2020).

McCracken, Grant, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Indianapolis, 1990).

McKay, John, *Tramways and Trolleys: The Rise of Urban Mass Transport in Europe* (Princeton, 1976).

Merriman, Peter, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography of England's M1 Motorway* (Oxford, 2007).

Merriman, Peter, *Mobility, Space and Culture* (Oxford, 2012).

Middlemas, Keith, *Power, Competition and the State, Volume 2: Threats to the Postwar Settlement Britain, 1961-74* (Basingstoke, 1990).

Middleton, Roger, *The British Economy Since 1945: Engaging with the Debate* (Basingstoke, 2000).

Millward, Robert, *Private and Public Enterprise in Europe: Energy, Telecommunications and Transport, 1830-1990* (Cambridge, 2005).

Mitchell, Brian, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988).

Moran, Joe, *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London, 2010).

Moran, Joe, *Reading the Everyday* (Oxford, 2005).

Morrison, Kathryn, and John Minnis, *Carscapes: The Motor Car, Architecture and Landscape in England* (London, 2012).

Mort, Frank, *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth Century Britain* (Abingdon, 1996).

Munby, Denys, *Inland Transport Statistics Great Britain, 1900-1970: Volume 1: Railways, Public Toads Passenger Transport, London's Transport* (Oxford, 1978).

Nock, Oswald, *Railways of the World: 4 Railways of Western Europe* (London, 1977).

O'Connell, Sean, *The Car and British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester, 1998).

O'Hara, Glen, *From Dreams to Disillusionment: Economic and Social Planning in 1960s Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007).

Ortolano, Guy, *Thatcher's Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism through an English New Town* (Cambridge, 2019).

Peden, George, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (London, 1985).

Peden, George, *The Treasury and British Public Policy, 1906-1959* (Oxford, 2000).

Pendlebury, John, *Conservation in the Age of Consensus* (London, 2009).

Plowden, William, *The Motor Car and Politics, 1896-1970* (London, 1971).

Pooley, Colin, Jean Turnbull and Mags Adams, *A Mobile Century? Changes in Everyday Mobility in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot, 2005).

Pryke, Richard, and John Dodgson, *The British Rail Problem: A Case Study in Economic Disaster* (Oxford, 2019).

Pryke, Richard, *The Nationalised Industries: Policies and Performance since 1968* (Oxford, 1981).

Pryke, Richard, *Public Enterprise in Practice: The Experience of Nationalization over Two Decades* (London, 1971).

Radice, Giles, *Southern Discomfort* (London, 1994).

Railway Correspondence and Travel Society, *A Traveller's Guide to the Robin Hood Line* (Bulwell, 1998).

Ramsden, Stefan, *Working Class Community in the Age of Affluence* (Abingdon, 2017).

Richards, Jeffrey, and John MacKenzie, *The Railway Station: A Social History* (Oxford, 1986).

Rhodes, Roderick, *Everyday Life in British Government* (Oxford, 2011).

Rooney, David, *Spaces of Congestion and Traffic: Politics and Technologies in Twentieth-Century London* (Abingdon, 2019).

Rosa, Hartmut, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, trans. Jonathan Trejo-Mathys (New York, 2013).

Salveson, Paul, *Beeching in Reverse: The Case for a Programme of Line and Station Re-openings* (Huddersfield, 2001).

Saumarez Smith, Otto, *Boom Cities: Architect Planners and the Politics of Radical Urban Renewal in 1960s Britain* (Oxford, 2019).

Savage, Christopher, *An Economic History of Transport* (London, 1959).

Savage, Mike, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford, 2010).

Scharff, Virginia, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York, 1991).

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialisation of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland, 1986).

Schram, Albert, *Railways and the Formation of the Italian State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1997).

Scott, John, *Stratification and Power: Structures of Class, Status and Command* (Cambridge, 1996).

Scott, Peter, *The Market Makers: Creating Mass Markets for Consumer Durables in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2017).

Seiler, Cotton, *Republic of Drivers: A Cultural History of Automobility in America* (Chicago, 2008).

Setright, Leonard, *Drive On! A Social History of the Motor Car* (London, 2002).

Shapely, Peter, *The Politics of Housing: Power, Consumers and Urban Culture* (Manchester, 2007).

Shaw Jon, and Iain Docherty, *The Transport Debate* (Bristol, 2014).

Simmons, Jack, and Gordon Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History: From 1603 to the 1990s* (Oxford, 1997).

Norman Smith, David, *The Railway and its Passengers: A Social History* (London, 1988).

Starkie, David, *The Motorway Age: Road and Traffic Policies in Post-war Britain* (Oxford, 1982).

Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, Florence, *Class, Politics, and the Decline of Deference in England, 1968-2000* (Oxford, 2018).

Taylor, Sheila, *The Moving Metropolis: A History of London's Transport since 1800* (London, 2001).

Thomas, John, *Forgotten Railways: Scotland* (Newton Abbot, 1976).

Tiratsoo, Nick, and Jim Tomlinson, *The Conservatives and Industrial Efficiency, 1951-64: Thirteen Wasted Years?* (London, 1998).

Tomlinson, Jim, *The Politics of Decline: Understanding Post-War Britain* (Harlow, 2000).

Tyme, John, *Motorways Versus Democracy: Public Inquiries into Road Proposals and their Political Significance* (London, 1978).

Urry, John, *Mobilities* (Cambridge, 2007).

Urry, John, *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century* (London, 2000).

Vigar, Geoff, *The Politics of Mobility: Transport Planning, the Environment and Public Policy* (London, 2002).

Walker, Peter, *The Ascent of Britain* (London, 1977).

Waller, Peter, *Rail Atlas: The Beeching Era: Proposed – Closed – Survived* (Hersham, 2013).

Wajcman, Judy, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Cambridge, 1991).

Weighell, Sidney, *On the Rails* (Bath, 1983).

Wetherell, Sam, *Foundations: How the Built Environment Made Twentieth Century Britain* (Woodstock, 2020).

Timothy Whistler, *The British Motor Industry, 1945-1999: A Case Study in Industrial Decline* (Oxford, 1999).

White, Henry, *Forgotten Railways* (Warley, 1986).

White, Peter, *Public Transport: Its Planning, Management and Operation* (London, 1995).

Wickham, James, *Unequal Europe: Social Divisions and Social Cohesion in an Old Continent* (Oxford, 2016).

Kate Williams, *Young Elizabeth: The Making of Our Queen* (London, 2012).

Christian Wolmar, *British Rail: A New History* (Shepperton, 2022).

Christian Wolmar, *The Great British Railway Disaster* (Shepperton, 1996).

Edited Volumes:

Adey, Peter, David Bissell, Kevin Hannam, Peter Merriman and Mimi Sheller (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Abingdon, 2014); Jon Shaw and Iain Docherty, 'Geography and Transport', 25-35; Colin Divall, 'Mobilities and Transport History', 36-44; Mimi Sheller, 'Sociology after the Mobilities Turn', 45-54; Noel Salazar, 'Anthropology', 55-63; Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Migration Studies', 64-73; Peter Thomas, 'Railways', 214-224; George Revill, 'Histories', 506-516.

Agar, Jon, and Jacob Ward (eds), *Histories of Technology, the Environment and Modern Britain* (London, 2018); Tim Cole, 'About Britain: Driving the Landscape of Britain (At Speed?)', 123-141.

Beaumont, Matthew, and Michael Freeman (eds), *The Railway and Modernity: Time, Space, and the Machine Ensemble* (Oxford, 2007); Matthew Beaumont and Michael Freeman, 'Introduction: Tracks to Modernity', 13-43; Adrian Gregory, 'To the Jerusalem Express: Wartime Commuters and Anti-Semitism', 177-189.

Benko, Georges, and Ulf Strohmayer (eds), *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity* (Oxford, 1997); Tim Cresswell, 'Imagining the Nomad: Mobility and the Postmodern Primitive', 360-379.

Black, Lawrence, and Hugh Pemberton (eds), *An Affluent Society? Britain's Post-War 'Golden Age' Revisited* (Oxford, 2004); Catherine Ellis, 'Total Abstinence and a Good Filing-System? Anthony Crosland and the Affluent Society', 69-84; Lawrence Black, 'The Impression of Affluence: Political Culture in the 1950s and 1960s', 85- 106.

Black, Lawrence, Hugh Pemberton and Pat Thane (eds), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013); Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, 'Introduction', 1-24; Pat Thane, 'Women and the 1970s: Towards Liberation?', 167-186.

Broughton, Trev, and Helen Rogers (eds), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2007); Terri Sabatos, 'Father as Mother: The Image of the Widower with Children in Victorian Art', 71-84; Andrew Walker, 'Father's Pride? Fatherhood in Industrializing Communities', 113-125; Helen Rogers, 'First in the House': Daughters on Working-Class Fathers and Fatherhood', 126-137.

Burden, Robert, and Stephan Kohl (eds), *Landscape and Englishness, Spatial Practices: An Interdisciplinary Series in Cultural History, Geography, Literature* (New York, 2006); Ben Knights, 'In Search of England: Travelogue and National Between the Wars',

165-184; Stephan Kohl, 'Rural England: An Invention of the Motor Industries?', 185-206.

Button, Kenneth, and D. Pitfield (eds), *International Railway Economics: Studies in Management and Efficiency* (Aldershot, 1985); C. Nash, 'European Railway Comparisons – What Can We Learn?', 237-269.

Carnevali, Francesca, Julie-Marie Strange and Paul Johnson (eds), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (London, 2007); Sean O'Connell, 'Motoring and Modernity', 111-126.

Conekin, Becky, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds), *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain, 1945-1964* (London, 1999); Peter Mandler, 'New Towns for Old: The Fate of the Town Centre', 208-227.

Cresswell, Tim, and Tanu Uteng (eds), *Gendered Mobilities* (New York, 2008); T. Cresswell and T. Uteng, 'Gendered Mobilities: Towards a Holistic Understanding', 1-14; David Kronlid, 'Mobility as Capability', 15-3; Randi Hjorthol, 'Daily Mobility of Men and Women – A Barometer of Gender Equality?', 193-210.

Crewe, Ivor, Neil Day and Anthony Fox (eds), *The British Electorate, 1963-1987: A Compendium of Data from the British Election Studies* (Cambridge, 1991).

Crook, Tim, and Mike Esbester (eds), *Governing Risks in Modern Britain: Danger, Safety and Accidents, c.1800-2000* (London, 2016); Chris Williams, 'Risk on the Roads: Police, Motor Traffic and the Management of Space, c.1900-50', 195-219; Glen O'Hara, 'Maximum Supervision': Risk, Danger and Public Water in Post-War Britain', 221-246.

Crook, Tim, and Glen O'Hara (eds), *Statistics and the Public Sphere: Numbers and the People in Modern Britain, c. 1800-2000* (New York, 2011); Tom Crook and Glen O'Hara, 'The Torrent of Numbers': Statistics and the Public Sphere in Britain, c. 1800-2000', 1-31; Stefan Schwarzkopf, 'The Statisticalisation of the Consumer in British Market Research, c. 1920-1960: Profiling a Good Society', 144-162; Tom Crook and Glen O'Hara, 'Towards New Histories of an Enumerated People', 264-269.

Daunton, Martin, (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain: Volume III, 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2001); David Feldman, 'Migration', 185-206; John Armstrong, 'From Shillibeer to Buchanan: Transport and the Urban Environment', 229-257; Colin Pooley, 'Patterns on the Ground: Urban Form, Residential Structure and the Social Construction of Space', 427-466; James Yelling, 'Land, Property and Planning', 467-493; Peter Scott, 'The Evolution of Britain's Urban Built Environment', 495-523; Abigail Beach and Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Planners and the Public' 525-550; Richard

Trainor, 'The Middle Class', 673-714; John Walton, 'Towns and Consumerism', 715-744.

Diefendorf, Jeffry, (ed.), *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities* (Basingstoke, 1990); Jeffry Diefendorf, 'Introduction: New Perspectives on a Rebuilt Europe', 1-15.

Divall, Colin, (ed.), *Cultural Histories of Sociabilities, Spaces and Mobilities* (London, 2015); Colin Divall, 'Introduction: Cultural Histories of Sociabilities, Spaces and Mobilities', 3-15; Virginia Scharff, 'Homelands: How Women on the Move made the West', 17-28; Margaret Walsh, 'Gender and American Mobility: Cars, Women and the Issue of Equality', 29-37; Gordon Pirie, 'Colours, Compartments and Corridors: Racialised Spaces, Mobility and Sociability in South Africa', 39-51.

Divall, Colin, and Winstan Bond (eds), *Suburbanizing the Masses: Public Transport and Urban Development in Historical Perspective* (Oxford, 2017); Colin Divall and Barbara Schmucki, 'Introduction: (Sub)urban Development and the Social Construction of Urban Transport', 1-22; Paolo Capuzzo, 'Between Politics and Technology: Transport as a Factor of Mass Suburbanization in Europe, 1890-1939', 23-48; Tony Carr, 'Changing Patterns of Travel, Transport and Land Ownership in Victorian New Town: Middlesbrough to 1939', 123-148; Lesley Whitworth, 'Accounting for the Customers? A Tale of Public Transport in 1930 Coventry', 211-231; Ralph Harrington, 'Civic Pride, Urban Identity and Public Transport in Britain, 1880-1980', 251-268.

Divall, Colin, Colin Pooley and Julian Hine (eds), *Transport Policy: Learning Lessons from History* (Farnham, 2016); Colin Divall, Colin Pooley and Julian Hine, 'Introduction: Why Does the Past Matter?', 1-13; Francis Hodgson, 'Structures of Disadvantage and Acts of Resistance Remembering, Skilling, History and Gender', 13-46; Colin Pooley, 'Balancing Social Justice and Environmental Justice: Mobility Inequalities in Britain Since circa 1900', 47-64; Aofie Ahern and Julian Hine, 'Mobility in Rural Ireland: A Study of Older People and the Challenges They Face', 65-75; Hikori Shin, 'Have Consumer Movements Enhanced Transport Justice? Passenger Representation on Britain's Railways before 1947', 77-95; Colin Divall, 'High Speed 2 Where? A Historical Perspective on the 'Strategic Case' for HS2', 97-114; Bill Luckin, 'Interminably Delaying What Needs to Be Done': Drink-Driving Control in Britain, 1970-1985', 115-132; Nicola Forsdike, 'Marketing and Branding for Modal Shift in Urban Transport', 135-152.

Donaghy, Kieran, Stefan Poppelreuter and Georg Rudinger (eds), *Social Dimensions of Sustainable Transport: Transatlantic Perspectives* (Oxford, 2016); Wojciech Suchorzewski, 'Society, Behaviour, and Private/Public Transport: Trends and Prospects in Transition Economies of Central and Eastern Europe', 14-28; Laurie Pickup and Genevieve Giuliano, 'Transport and Social Exclusion in Europe and the

USA', 38-4; Eliahu Stern and Harry Richardson, 'A New Research Agenda for Modelling Travel Choice and Behaviour', 144-163.

Drobiner, William (ed.), *The Suburban Community* (New York, 1958); David Reisman, 'The Suburban Sadness', 375-408.

Emmanuel, Martin, Ruth Oldenzeil and Frank Schipper (eds), *A U-Turn to the Future: Sustainable Urban Mobility Since 1850* (Oxford, 2020); Colin Divall, 'Railway Modernism Losing Out: Lessons from an English Conurbation, 1955-1975', 91-120.

Feldman, David, and Jon Lawrence (eds), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011); David Feldman, 'Why the English Like Turbans: Multicultural Politics in British History', 281-302.

Finger, Matthias, and Pierre Messulam (eds), *Rail Economics, Policy and Regulation in Europe* (Cheltenham, 2015); Matthias Finger and Pierre Messulam, 'Introduction', ix-xi.

Matthias Finger and Torben Holvad (eds), *Regulating Transport in Europe* (Cheltenham, 2013); Rosáio Macário, 'Urban Public Transport', 140-168.

Floud, Roderick, and Paul Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain Volume III: Structural Change and Growth, 1939-2000* (Cambridge, 2008); Jim Tomlinson, 'Economic Policy', 189-212; Robert Millward, 'The Rise of the Service Economy', 238-266; Peter Scott, 'Regional Development and Policy', 332-367.

Foreman-Peck, James, and Giovanni Federico (eds), *European Industrial Policy: The Twentieth-Century Experience* (Oxford, 1999); James Foreman-Peck and Giovanni Federico, 'European Industrial Policy: An Overview', 426-460.

Gilbert, David, David Matless and Brian Short (eds), *Geographies of British Modernity: Space and Society in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2003); Colin Pooley, 'Mobility in the Twentieth Century: Substituting Commuting for Migration?', 80-96.

Gilroy, Paul, Lawrence Grossberg, Angela McRobbie (eds), *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall* (London, 2000); Doreen Massey, 'Travelling Thoughts', 225-232.

Gordon, George (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK, 1890-1980* (London, 1986); Richard Lawton and Colin Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', 59-82.

Taylor-Gooby, Peter (ed.), *Welfare States Under Pressure* (London, 2001); Peter Taylor-Gooby, 'The Politics of Welfare in Europe', 1-28.

Goodin, Robert, and Julian Le Grand (eds), *Not Only the Poor: The Middle Classes and the Welfare State* (London, 1987); Julian Le Grand, 'The Middle-Class Use of the British Social Services', 91-107.

Gourvish, Terry, and Alan O'Day (eds), *Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900* (London, 1988); Martin, Daunton, 'Urban Britain', 37-67.

Grieco, Margaret, Laurie Pickup, and Richard Whipp (eds), *Gender, Transport and Employment: The Impact of Travel Constraints* (Aldershot, 1989): Phil Goodwin, 'Problems of Women's Mobility and Employment in the One Person Operation of Buses, 127-149; Laurie Pickup, 'Women's Travel Requirements: Employment, with Domestic Constraints', 199-221.

Grieco, Margaret, and John Urry (eds), *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society* (Farnham, 2011); Julian Hine, 'Mobility and Transport Disadvantage', 21-39; Colin Divall, 'Transport History, the Usable Past and the Future of Mobility', 305-319.

Halsey, Albert, and Josephine Webb (eds), *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends* (Basingstoke, 2000); Amanda Root, 'Transport and Communications', 437-468.

Harbers, Hans, (ed.), *Inside the Politics of Technology: Agency and Normativity in the Co-Production of Technology and Society* (Amsterdam, 2005); Boelie Elzen, 'Taking the Socio-Technical Seriously: Exploring the Margins for Change in the Traffic and Transport Domain', 171-197.

Harris, Jose (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2003); John Davis, 'Simple Solutions to Complex Problems': The Greater London Council and the Greater London Development Plan, 1965-1973', 249-274.

Hewitt, Martin (ed.), *The Victorian World* (Oxford, 2012); Richard Dennis, 'Urbanising Experiences', 241-258.

Layard, Richard, and Stephen Glaister (eds), *Cost-Benefit Analysis* (Cambridge, 1994); Stephen Glaister, 'The Allocation of Urban Public Transport Subsidy', 418-427.

Millward, Robert, and John Singleton (eds), *The Political Economy of Nationalisation in Britain, 1920-1950* (Cambridge, 1995); Robert Millward, 'Industrial Organisation and Economic Factors in Nationalisation', 3-12; John Singleton, 'Labour, the Conservatives and Nationalisation', 13-33; Gerald Crompton, 'The Railway Companies and the Nationalisation Issue, 1920-50', 116-143.

Mom, Gijs, Gordon Pirie, and Laurent Tissot (eds), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art in the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility* (Neuchatel, 2009); Gijs Mom, Colin

Divall and Peter Lyth, 'Towards a Paradigm Shift? A Decade of Transport and Mobility History', 13-40; Vincent Kaufmann, 'Mobility: Trajectory of a Concept in the Social Sciences', 41-60; David Gartman, 'The History and Future of Automotive Fetishism', 83-107; Peter Norton, 'Urban Mobility Without Wheels: A Historiographical Review of Pedestrianism', 111-115; Georgine Clarsen, 'Gender and Mobility: Historicising the Terms', 235-241; Cotten Seiler, 'Mobilizing Race, Racializing Mobility: Writing Race into Mobility Studies', 229-233.

Rietveld, Piet, and Roger Stough (eds), *Institutions and Sustainable Transport: Regulatory Reform in Advances Economies* (Cheltenham, 2007); Jeroen van den Bergh, Eveline van Leeuwen, Frans Oosterhuis, Piet Rietveld and Erik Verhoef, 'Successes and Failure in Innovations toward Sustainable Transport', 70-95.

Roth, Ralf, and Colin Divall (eds), *From Rail to Road and Back Again? A Century of Transport Competition and Interdependency* (Farnham, 2015); Peter Merriman, 'Motorways and the Modernisation of Britain's Road Network, 1937-70', 91-108; Terry Gourvish, 'The Sea Container Revolution and Road-Rail Competition in Britain: A Preliminary Assessment of Freightliner', 133-152; Reiner Ruppman, 'The Development of the European Highway Network: A Literature Survey of Studies on Highway in European Countries', 275-313.

Roth, Ralf, and Henry Jacolin (eds), *Eastern European Railways in Transition: Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries* (Farnham, 2013); Jan Musekamp, 'The Royal Prussian Eastern Railway (Ostbahn) and its Importance for East-West Transportation', 117-127; R. Roth, 'The Unification of East and West German Railways into the Deutsche Bahn', 287-298.

Roth, Ralf, and Marie-Noëlle Polino (eds), *The City and the Railway in Europe* (Aldershot, 2003); Ralf Roth and Marie-Noëlle Polino, 'Introduction: The City and the Railway in Europe', xvii-xxxvi; Ralf Roth and Marie-Noelle Polino (eds), *The City and the Railway in Europe (Aldershot, 2003); Diane Drummond, 'The Impact of the Railway on the Lives of Women in the Nineteenth Century City',* 237-255.

Schiefelbusch, Martin, and Hans-Liudger Dienel (eds), *Public Transport and Its Users: The Passenger's Perspective in Planning and Customer Care* (Farnham, 2009); Hans-Liudger Dienel, 'Introduction', 1-4; Martin Schiefelbusch, 'Neutral Alternative Dispute Settlement – Concepts for Ombudspersons and Arbitration Boards', 52-71; Martin Schiefelbusch, 'Italy', 237-247; Anthony Smale and Martin Schiefelbusch, 'United Kingdom', 248-260; Martin Schiefelbusch, 'Germany', 260-272.

Thane, Pat (ed.), *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain Since 1945* (London, 2010); Helen McCarthy, 'Gender and Equality', 105-123; Nick Kimber, 'Race and Equality', 29-51.

Thoms, David, Len Holden and Tim Claydon (eds), *The Motor Car and Popular Culture in the 20th Century* (Abingdon, 1998); David Thoms, 'Motor Car Ownership in Twentieth Century Britain', 41-49; Steve Koerner, 'Four Wheels Good; Two Wheels Bad': The Motorcycle Versus the Light Motor Car, 1919-1939', 151-176; Sean O'Connell, 'Taste, Status and Middle-Class Motoring in Interwar Britain', 177-191; Jenny Rice and Carol Saunders, 'Mini Loves Dressing Up': Selling Cars to Women', 275-286.

Thompson, Francis (ed.), *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982); Francis Thompson, 'Introduction: The Rise of Suburbia', 1-26.

Tivey, Leonard (ed.), *The Nationalized Industries since 1960: A Book of Readings* (London, 1973); Leonard Tivey, 'Policies in the Major Nationalised Industries', 127-160.

Walsh, Margaret (ed.), *Motor Transport* (Aldershot, 1997); Corinne Mulley, 'The Background to Bus Regulation in the 1930 Road Traffic Act: Economic, Political and Personal Influences in the 1920s', 123-140.

Whitelegg, John, and Gary Haq (eds), *The Earthscan Reader on World Transport Policy and Practice* (London, 2003); Mayer Hillman, 'The Future of Public Transport: The Dangers of Viewing Policy through Rose-tinted Spectacles', 139-145.

Wollen, Peter, and Joe Kerr (eds), *Autopia: Cars and Culture* (London, 2002); Peter Wollen, 'Introduction: Cars and Culture', 10-20; Murray Fraser and Joe Kerr, 'Motopia: Cities, Cars and Architecture', 315-236; Patrick Keiller, 'Sexual Ambiguity and Automotive Design', 342-353; Grace Lees-Maffei, 'Men, Motors, Markets and Women', 363-370.

Articles:

Appleton, Jay, 'The Communications of Watford Gap, Northamptonshire', *Transactions and Papers*, 28 (1960), 215-224.

Andrews, Aaron, 'Multiple Deprivation, the Inner City, and the Fracturing of the Welfare State: Glasgow, c. 1968-78', *Twentieth Century British History*, 29 (2018), 605-624.

Armstrong, John, 'Transport History, 1945-95: The Rise of a Topic to Maturity', *The Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 103-121.

Assmann, Carla, 'The Emergence of the Car-Oriented City: Entanglements and Transfer Agents in West-Berlin, East-Berlin and Lyon, 1945-75', *The Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 328-352.

Barker, Theo, 'Slow Progress: Forty Years of Motoring Research', *The Journal of Transport History*, 14 (1993), 142-165.

Bayliss, David, 'Traffic in Towns Twenty Years On: The London Perspective', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 122-126.

Beckmann, Jörg, 'Automobility – A Social Problem and Theoretical Concept', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 19 (2001), 593-607.

De Bellaigue, Christina, Helena Mills and Eve Worth, ''Rags to Riches?' New Histories of Social Mobility in Modern Britain – Introduction', *Cultural and Social History*, 16 (2019), 1-11.

Bentley, Ray, 'Sustainable Transport: The Role of the Bus in the Post-Competitive Market', *Transport Reviews*, 18 (1998), 199-213.

Berger, Michael, 'Women Drivers! The Emergence of Folklore and Stereotypic Opinions Concerning Feminine Automotive Behaviour', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 9 (1986), 257-263.

Best, Robin, 'Extent of Urban Growth and Agricultural Displacement in Post-War Britain', *Urban Studies*, 5 (1968), 1-23.

Bianconi, Marco, and Mark Tewdwr-Jones, 'The Form and Organisation of Urban Areas: Colin Buchanan and Traffic in Towns 50 Years On', *Town Planning Review*, 84 (2013), 313-336.

Bieri, Sabin, and Natalia Gerodetti, 'Falling Women' – 'Saving Angels': Spaces of Contested Mobility and the Production of Gender and Sexualities within Early Twentieth-Century Train Stations', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 8 (2007), 217-234.

Bingham, Adrian, 'An Era of Domesticity? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004), 225-233.

Black, Amy, and Stephen Brooke, 'The Labour Party, Women, and the Problem of Gender, 1951-1966', *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (1997), 419-452.

Black, Lawrence, 'Social Democracy as a Way of Life: Fellowship and the Socialist Union, 1951-9', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 499-539.

Bonavia, Michael, 'Stamp and Beeching: Parallels and Contrasts', *Journal of Railway and Canal Historical Society*, 30 (1991), 219-225.

Bowden, Sue, and Paul Turner, 'The Demand for Consumer Durables in the United Kingdom in the Interwar Period', *Journal of Economic History*, 53 (1993), 244-258.

Bowden, Sue, and Paul Turner, 'Some Cross-Section Evidence on the Determinants of the Diffusion of Car Ownership in the Inter-War UK Economy', *Business History*, 35 (1993), 55-69.

Brooke, Stephen, 'Gender and Working Class Identity in Britain during the 1950s', *Journal of Social History*, 34 (2001), 773-795.

Brooke, Stephen, 'Living in 'New Times': Historicising 1980s Britain', *History Compass*, 12 (2014), 20-32.

Brooke, Stephen, 'Revisiting Southam Street: Class, Generation, Gender, and Race in the Photography of Roger Mayne', *Journal of British Studies,* 53 (2014), 453-496.

Brooke, Stephen, 'Slumming' in Swinging London? Class, Gender and the Post-War City in Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction (1963)*', *Cultural and Social History*, 9 (2012), 429-449.

Buchanan, Colin, 'Traffic in Towns: An Assessment after Twenty Years', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 93-98.

Buehler, Ralph, and John Pucher, 'Demand for Public Transport in Germany and the USA: An Analysis of Rider Characteristics', *Transport Reviews*, 32 (2012), 541-567.

Buehler, Ralph, John Pucher, Regine Gerike, and Thomas Götschi, 'Reducing Car Dependence in the Heart of Europe: Lessons from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland', *Transport Reviews*, 37 (2017), 4-28.

Butler, Lise, 'Michael Young, the Institute of Community Studies, and the Politics of Kinship', *Twentieth Century British History*, 26 (2015), 203-224.

Campsie, Alexandre, 'Mass-Observation, Left Intellectuals and the Politics of Everyday Life', *English Historical Review*, 131 (2016), 92-121.

Campsie, Alexandre, 'Socialism Will Never Be the Same Again'. Re-imaging British Left-Wing Ideas for the 'New Times', *Contemporary British History*, 31 (2017), 166-188.

Chatzis, Konstantinos, 'Managing Traffic Complexity. Canadian Transport Planning Software Package Emme, 1970s-2010s', *Journal of Transport History*, 42 (2021), 444-466.

Cherry, Gordon, 'Town Planning and the Motor Car in Twentieth-Century Britain', *Journal of High Speed Ground Transportation*, 4 (1970), 72-79.

Chick, Martin, 'Listing Potential Candidates for Nationalisation: Britain, 1948', *Enterprises and History*, 37 (2004), 167-171.

Clapson, Mark, 'The Suburban Aspiration in England since 1919', *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), 151-174.

Clapson, Mark, 'Working-Class Women's Experiences of Moving to New Housing Estates in England since 1919', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 345-365.

Clark, William, Youqin Huang and Suzanne Withers, 'Does Commuting Distance Matter? Commuting Tolerance and Residential Change', *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 33 (2001), 199-221.

Cohen, Anthony, '*Village on the Border*, Anthropology at the Crossroads: The Significance of a Classic British Ethnography', *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 603-620.

Coombes, Mike, Remo Longa and Simon Raybould, 'Counterurbanisation in Britain and Italy: A Comparative Critique of the Concept, Causation and Evidence', *Progress in Planning*, 32 (1989), 1-70.

Cooper, Howard, 'Lorries and Lorry Driving in Britain, 1948-1968: The End of an Era', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 19 (1996), 69-81.

Cowman, Krista, 'Play Streets: Women, Children and the Problem of Urban Traffic, 1930-1970', *Social History*, 42 (2017), 233-256.

Crafts, Nicholas, and Nikolaus Wolf, 'The Location of the UK Cotton Textiles Industry in 1838: A Quantitative Analysis', *The Journal of Economic History*, 74 (2014), 1103-1139.

Cresswell, Tim, 'The Right to Mobility: The Production of Mobility in the Courtroom', *Antipode*, 38 (2006), 735-754.

Cresswell, Tim, 'Towards a Politics of Mobility', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28 (2010), 17-31.

Darley, Gillian, 'Ian Nairn and Jane Jacobs, the Lessons from Britain and America', *The Journal of Architecture*, 17 (2012), 733-746.

Davies, Aled, James Freeman and Hugh Pemberton, 'Everyman a Capitalist' or 'Free to Choose'? Exploring the Tensions within Thatcherite Individualism', *The Historical Journal,* 55 (2012), 477-501.

Davis, Donald, 'North American Urban Mass Transit, 1890-1950: What If We Thought About It as a Type of Technology', *History and Technology*, 12 (1995), 309-326.

De Greiff, Alex, and Mikael Hard, "The Historical Ironies of Roads', *The Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 3-5.

Desjardins, Xavier, Juliette Maulat and Olivier Sykes, 'Linking Rail and Urban Development: Reflections on French and British Experience', *Town Planning Review*, 85 (2014), 143-153.

Divall, Colin, and George Revill, 'Cultures of Transport: Representation, Practice and Technology', *Journal of Transport History*, 26 (2005), 99-111.

Divall, Colin, and George Revill, 'No Turn Needed: A reply to Michael Freeman', *Journal of Transport History*, 27 (2006), 144-149.

Doan, Laura, 'Primum Mobile: Women and Auto-Mobility in the Era of the Great war', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 17 (2006), 26-41.

Dodgson, John, 'Railway Costs and Closures', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 18 (1984), 219-235.

Edgerton, David, 'The Decline of Declinism', *The Business History Review,* 72 (1997), 201-206.

Else, P., and M. Howe, 'Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Withdrawal of Railway Services', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 3 (1969), 178-194.

Emsley, Clive, 'Mother, What *Did* Policeman Do When There Weren't Any Motors?' The Law, the Police, and the Regulation of Motor Traffic in England, 1900-1939', *The Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 357-381.

Engler, Harald, 'Social Movement and the Failure of Car-Friendly City Projects: East and West Berlin (1970s and 1980s)', *The Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 353-380.

Esbester, Mike, 'Editorial: A Fundamental Threat to Our Field', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 351-353.

Fagin, Henry, 'The Evolving Philosophy of Urban Planning', *Urban Research and Policy Planning*, 1 (1967), 309-328.

Farrington, John, and Conor Farrington, 'Rural Accessibility, Social Inclusion and Social Justice', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 13 (2005), 1-12.

Quiroz Flores, Alejandro, and Paul Whiteley, 'The "Beeching Axe" and Electoral Support in Britain', *European Review of Economic History,* 22 (2018), 361-379.

Föllmer, Moritz, 'Cities of Choice: Elective Affinities and the Transformation of Western European Urbanity from the Mid-1950s to the Early 1980s', *Contemporary European History*, 24 (2015), 577-596.

Forsyth, Ann, 'The British New Towns: Lessons for the World from the New-Town Experiment', *The Town Planning Review*, 90 (2019), 239-246.

Foster, Christopher, 'Michael Beesley and Cost Benefit Analysis', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 35 (2001), 3-30.

Fowler, James, 'Historical Institutionalism, Hybridity and Institutional Logics in Public Transport History', *Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 296-311.

Franch-Auladell, Xavier, Mateu Morillas-Torne and Jordi Marti-Henneberg, 'The Railway Network and the Process of Population Concentration in Spain, 1900-2001', *Current History Journal*, 32 (2014), 351-379.

Fraser, Duncan, 'The Postwar Consensus: A Debate Not Long Enough?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 53 (2000), 347-362.

Freeman, Michael, 'The Railway as Cultural Metaphor: 'What Kind of Railway History?' Revisited', *Journal of Transport History*, 20 (1999), 160-67.

Freeman, Michael, 'Turn If You Want To: A Comment on the 'Cultural Turn' in Divall and Revill's 'Cultures of Transport', *Journal of Transport History*, 27 (2006), 138-143.

Giles, Judy, 'A Home of One's Own: Women and Domesticity in England, 1918-1950', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 16 (1993), 239-253.

Giles, Judy, 'Help for Housewives: Domestic Service and the Reconstruction of Domesticity in Britain, 1940-50', *Women's History Review*, 10 (2001), 299-324.

Di Giulio, Marco, 'Reshaping State Structure and Strategy: The Reform of Railway Policy in Germany and Italy', *International Journal of Public Administration*, 39 (2016), 226-237.

Glaister, Stephen, 'The Smeed Report at Fifty: Will Road Pricing Always Be Ten Years Away?', Smeed Memorial Lecture', (2014), 1-48.

Glaister, Stephen, 'Some Characteristics of Rail Commuter Demand', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 17 (1983), 115-132.

Goodwin, P., 'Car Ownership and Public Transport Use: Revisiting the Interaction', *Transportation*, 27 (1993), 21-33.

Gordon, Peter, Ajay Kumar and Harry Richardson, 'The Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis: Some New Evidence', *Urban Studies*, 26 (2016), 315-326.

Gourvish, Terry, 'British Rail's "Business-Led" Organization, 1977-1990: Government-Industry Relations in Britain's Public Sector', *Business History Review,* 64 (1990), 109-149.

Gourvish, Terry, 'What Kind of Railway History Did We Get? Forty Years of Research', *The Journal of Transport History*, 14 (1993), 111-125.

Graham, Julie, and Katherine Gibson, 'An Ethics of the Local', *Rethinking Marxism*, 15 (2003), 49-74.

Greenhalgh, James, 'Consuming Communities: The Neighbourhood Unit and the Role of Retain Spaces on British Housing Estates, 1944-1958', *Urban History*, 43 (2016), 158-174.

Gunn, Simon, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problem of Traffic in 1960s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History,* 22 (2011), 521-542.

Gunn, Simon, 'European Urbanities since 1945: A Commentary', *Contemporary European History*, 24 (2015), 617-622.

Gunn, Simon, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain, c.1955-70', *Social History,* 38 (2013), 220-237.

Gunn, Simon, 'Ring Road: Birmingham and the Collapse of the Motor City Ideal in 1970s Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 61 (2018), 227-248.

Gunn, Simon, 'The Rise and Fall of British Urban Modernism: Planning Bradford, c. 1945-1970', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 849-869.

Gunn, Simon, 'Spatial Mobility in Later Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2021), 1-22.

Gray, David, Jon Shaw and John Farrington, 'Community Transport, Social Capital and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas', *Area*, 38 (2006), 89-98.

Gurney, Peter, 'The Battle of the Consumer in Postwar Britain', *The Journal of Modern History*, 77 (2005), 956-987.

Hall, Peter, 'The Buchanan Report: 40 Years On', *Transport*, 157 (2004), 7-14.

Hatton, Timothy, and Roy Bailey, 'Seebohm Rowntree and the Postwar Poverty Puzzle', *Economic History Review*, 53 (2000), 517-543.

Hall, Peter, 'Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain', *Comparative Politics*, 25 (1993), 275-296.

Haywood, Russell, 'Britain's National Railway Network: Fit for Purpose in the 21st Century?', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 15 (2007), 198-216.

Haywood, Russell, 'Mind the gap: Town Planning and Manchester's Local Railway Network: 1947-1996', *European Planning Studies*, 6 (1998), 187-210.

Haywood, Russell, 'Railways, Urban Form and Town Planning in London, 1900-1947', *Planning Perspectives*, 12 (1997), 37-69.

Hillman, Mayer, 'The Wrong Turning: Twenty Years on from Buchanan', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 104-112.

Hilton, Matthew, 'Politics is Ordinary: Non-governmental Organizations and Political Participation in Contemporary Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), 230-268.

Hilton, Matthew, Chris Moores and Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 'New Times Revisited: Britain in the 1980s', *Contemporary British History*, 31 (2017), 145-165.

Hollow, Matthew, 'The Age of Affluence Revisited: Council Estates and Consumer Society in Britain, 1950-1970', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 16 (2016), 279-296.

Houlbrook, Matt, ''A Pin to See the Peepshow': Culture, Fiction and Selfhood in Edith Thompson's Letters, 1921-1922', *Past and Present*, 207 (2010), 215-249.

Howe, Michael, 'The Transport Act, 1962, and the Consumers' Consultative Committees', *Public Administration,* 42 (1964), 45-56.

Ineichen, Bernard, and Douglas Hooper, 'Wives' Mental Health and Children's Behaviour in Contrasting Residential Estates', *Social Science and Medicine*, 8 (1974), 360-373.

Jackson, Ben, 'Revisionism Reconsidered: 'Property-Owning Democracy' and Egalitarian Strategy in Post-War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 16 (2005), 416-440.

Jackson, Louise, and Angela Bartie, 'Children of the City': Juvenile Justice, Property, and Place in England and Scotland, 1945-60', *Economic History Review*, 64 (2011), 88-113.

Jeremiah, David, 'Motoring and the British Countryside', *Rural History*, 21 (2010), 233-250.

Jobson, Richard, 'A New Hope for an Old Britain? Nostalgia and the British Labour Party's Alternative Economic Strategy, 1970-1983', *The Journal of Policy History*, 27 (2015), 670-694.

Jones, C., 'The Performance of British Railways, 1962 to 1968', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 4 (1970), 162-170.

Jones, Ben, 'Slum Clearance, Privatization and Residualization: The Practices and Politics of Council Housing in Mid-Twentieth-Century England', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21 (2010), 510-539.

De Jong, Gordon, 'The Impact of Regional Population Redistribution Policies on Internal Migration: What We Learn from The Netherlands and Great Britain', *Social Science Quarterly*, 62 (1981), 313-322.

Judge, Eamonn, 'Leeds Since Buchanan, 1963-1983', *Built Environment*, 9 (1983), 113-121.

Jupp, Eleanor, 'Rethinking Local Activism: 'Cultivating the Capacities' of Neighbourhood Organising', *Urban Studies*, 49 (2012), 3027-3044.

Kalyvas, Stathis, 'Hegemony Breakdown: The Collapse of Nationalisation in Britain and France', *Politics and Society*, 22 (1994), 316-348.

Kaufmann, Vincent, 'On Transport History and Contemporary Social Theory', *The Journal of Transport History*, 28 (2007), 302-6.

Kefford, Alistair, 'Actually Existing Managerialism: Planning, Politics and Property Development in Post-1945 Britain', *Urban Studies*, 58 (2021), 2441-2455.

Kefford, Alistair, 'Disruption, Destruction and the Creation of 'the Inner Cities': The Impact of Urban Renewal on Industry, 1945-1980', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 492-515.

Kefford, Alistair, 'Housing the Citizen-Consumer: The Parker Morris Report, Affluence and the Even Briefer Life of Social Democracy', *Twentieth Century British History*, 29 (2018), 225-258.

Koshar, Rudy, 'On the History of the Automobile in Everyday Life', *Contemporary European History*, 10 (2001), 143-154.

Laite, Julia, 'Immoral Traffic: Mobility, Health, Labour, and the "Lorry Girl" in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 52 (2013), 693-721.

Langhamer, Claire, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40 (2005), 341-362.

Law, Michael, 'The Car Indispensable': The Hidden Influence of the Car in Inter-War Suburban London', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 38 (2012), 424-433.

Law, Michael, 'Speed and Blood on the Bypass: The New Automobiles of Inter-War London', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 490-509.

Law, Robin, 'Beyond 'Women and Transport': Towards New Geographies of Gender and Daily Mobility', *Progress in Human Geography*, 23 (1999), 567-588.

Lawrence, Jon, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c. 1930-64', *Cultural and Social History*, 10 (2013), 273-299.

Lawrence, Jon, 'Inventing the 'Traditional Working Class': A Re-Analysis of Interview Notes from Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London*', *The Historical Journal*, 59 (2016), 567-593.

Leape, Jonathan, 'The London Congestion Charge', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20 (2006), 157-176.

Levine, Philippa, 'Is Comparative History Possible?', *History and Theory,* 53 (2014), 331-347.

Levinson, David, 'The Orderliness Hypothesis: The Correlation of Rail and Housing Development in London', *The Journal of Transport History*, 29 (2008), 98-114.

Li, Muyang, and Zhifan Luo, 'The 'Bad Women Drivers' Myth: The Overrepresentation of Female Drivers and Gender Bias in China's Media', *Information, Communication & Society*, 23 (2020), 776-793.

Lomasky, Loren, 'Autonomy and Automobility', *The Independent Review*, 2 (1997), 5-28.

Loft, Charles, 'The Beeching Myth: Forty Years On', *History Today*, 53 (2003), 38-40.

Loft, Charles, 'Reappraisal and Reshaping: Government and the Railway Problem, 1951-64', *Contemporary British History*, 15 (2001), 71-92.

Luckin, Bill, 'A Kind of Consensus on the Roads? Drink Driving Policy in Britain, 1956-1970', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21 (2010), 350-374.

Luckin, Bill, 'Anti-Drink Driving Reform in Britain, c. 1920-90', *Addiction*, 105 (2010), 1538-1544.

Luckin, Bill, and David Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility: The Road Traffic Accident Crisis in Manchester, 1939-45', *Cultural and Social History*, 6 (2009), 211-230.

Lyth, Peter, 'The *JTH* at Fifty and the Shape of Things to Come', *Journal of Transport History*, 24 (2003), 5-6.

Majima, Shinobu, 'Affluence and the Dynamics of Spending in Britain, 1961-2004', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 573-597.

Majima, Shinobu, 'Fashion and Frequency of Purchase: Womenswear Consumption in Britain, 1961-2001', *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 12 (2008), 502-517.

Majima, Shinobu, and Mike Savage, 'Contesting Affluence: An Introduction', *Contemporary British History,* 22 (2008), 445-455.

Majima, Shinobu, and Alan Warde, 'Elite Consumption in Britain, 1961-2004: Results of a Preliminary Investigation', *The Sociological Review*, 56 (2008), 210-239.

Majima, Shinobu, and Mike Savage, 'Have There Been Cultural Shifts in Britain? A Critical Encounter with Ronald Inglehart', *Cultural Sociology*, 1 (2007), 293-315.

Männistö-Funk, Tina, 'The Gender of Walking: Female Pedestrians in Street Photographs', *Urban History*, 48 (2021), 227-247.

Marti-Henneberg, Jordi, 'European Integration and National Models for Railway Networks (1840-2010)', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 26 (2013), 126-138.

Marti-Henneberg, Jordi, 'From State-Building to European Integration: The Role of the Railway Network in the Territorial Integration of Europe, 1850-2020', *Social Science History*, 45 (2021), 221-231.

McCarthy, Helen, 'Social Science and Married Women's Employment in Post-War Britain', *Past & Present*, 233 (2016), 269-305.

McCarthy, Helen, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work in Post-War Britain', *Women's History Review*, 26 (2017), 46-61.

Meadowcroft, John, 'The Re-Nationalisation of Britain', *Economic Affairs*, 16 (2006), 74-74.

Merriman, Peter, 'Automobility and the Geographies of the Car', *Geography Compass*, 3 (2009), 586-599.

Merriman, Peter, 'Britain and "the Motorway Club": The Effect of European and North American Motorway Construction on Attitudes in Britain, 1930-1960', *Transfers*, 2 (2012), 106-33.

Merriman, Peter, 'Driving Places: Marc Augé, Non-Places, and the Geographies of England's M1 Motorway', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21 (2004), 145-167.

Merriman, Peter, 'Materiality, Subjectification, and Government: The Geographies of Britain's Motorway Code', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23 (2005), 235-250.

Merriman, Peter, 'Mirror Signal, Manoeuvre': Assembling and Governing the Motorway Driver in Late 1950s Britain', *The Sociological Review*, 54 (2006), 75-92.

Merriman, Peter, 'Mobilities III: Arrivals', *Progress in Human Geography*, 41 (2017), 375-381.

Merriman, Peter, 'A New Look at the English Landscape': Landscape, Architecture, Movement and the Aesthetics of Motorways in Early Postwar Britain', *Cultural Geographies*, 13 (2006), 78-105.

Merriman, Peter, 'Operation Motorway: Landscapes of Construction on England's M1 Motorway', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31 (2005), 113-133.

Merriman, Peter, and Rhys Jones, 'Symbols of Justice': the Welsh Language Society's Campaign for Bilingual Road Signs in Wales, 1967-1980', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 35 (2009), 350-375.

Middleton, Stuart, 'Affluence' and the Left in Britain, c.1958-1974', *English Historical Review*, 129 (2014), 107-138.

Mom, Gijs, 'The Crisis of Transport History: A Critique, and a Vista', *Mobility in History*, 6 (2015), 7-19.

Mom, Gijs, 'What Kind of Transport History Did We Get? Half a Century of *JTH* and the Future of the Field', *The Journal of Transport History*, 24 (2003), 121-138.

Mom, Gijs, and Peter Norton, 'Mobility Studies at a Crossroads', *Mobility in History*, 5 (2014), 1-6.

Moraglio, Massimo, 'Transport History Methodology: New Trends and Perspectives', *The Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 169-171.

Moraglio, Massimo, 'Seeking a (New) Ontology for Transport History', *The Journal of Transport History*, 38 (2017), 3-10.

Moran, Joe, 'Crossing the Road in Britain, 1931-1976', *The Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), 477-496.

Moran, Joe, 'Imagining the Street in Post-War Britain', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 166-186.

Moran, Joe, 'Mass-Observation, Market Research, and the Birth of the Focus Group, 1937-1997', *Journal of British Studies*, 47 (2008), 827-851.

Moran, Joe, ''Stand up and Be Counted': Hughie Green, the 1970s and Popular Memory', *History Workshop Journal*, 70 (2010), 172-198.

Mort, Frank, 'Cityscapes: Consumption, Masculinities and the Mapping of London since 1950', *Urban Studies*, 35 (1998), 889-907.

Mulley, Corinne, 'The Nationalisation of the Bus Industry: The Transport Act, 1947: Its Underlying Philosophy and Initial Progress', *The Journal of Transport History,* 19 (1998), 122-136.

Mulley, Corinne, 'Passenger Transport in the UK, 1920-1950: The Drive for 'Co-ordination' of Transport Modes', Business and Labour History Group, University of Sydney, 2009, 1-14.

Nash, Chris, 'Road Pricing in Britain', *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, 41 (2007), 135-147.

Nickson, J., and P. Batey, 'The Analysis of Transport within a Metropolitan County Structure Plan: The Greater Manchester Experience', *The Town Planning Review*, 49 (1978), 285-295.

Nixon, Sean, 'Understanding Ordinary Women: Advertising, Consumer Research and Mass Consumption in Britain, 1948-67', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 2 (2009), 301-323.

Normark, Daniel, 'Ontologies on Collision Course: Collaborative Mobility v. Managerial Transport in the Contemporary History of Intelligent Transport Systems', *The Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 277-295.

Nuttall, Jeremy, 'Tony Crosland and the Many Falls and Rises of British Social Democracy', *Contemporary British History*, 18 (2004), p. 52-79.

Offer, Avner, 'British Manual Workers: From Producers to Consumers, c. 1950-2000', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 537-571.

O'Hara, Glen, 'Dynamic, Exciting, Thrilling Change': The Wilson Government's Economic Policies, 1964-70', *British Contemporary History*, 20 (2006), 383-402.

O'Hara, Glen, 'Temporal Governance, Time, Exhortation and Planning in British Government, c. 1959-1979', *Journal of Modern European History*, 13 (2015), 338-354.

O'Hara, Glen, 'Towards a New Bradshaw? Economic Statistics and the British State in the 1950s and 1960s', *Economic History Review*, 60 (2007), 1-34.

O'Hara, Glen, 'We are Faced Everywhere with a Growing Population': Demographic Change and the British State, 1955-64', *Twentieth Century British History*, 15 (2004), 243-266.

O'Hara, Glen, 'What the Electorate Can Be Expected to Swallow': Nationalisation, Transnationalism, and the Shifting Boundaries of the State in Post-War Britain', *Business History*, 51 (2009), 501-528.

Ortolano, Guy, 'Planning the Urban Future in 1960s Britain', *The Historical Journal,* 54 (2011), 477-507.

Owens, Susan, 'From 'Predict and Provide' to 'Predict and Prevent'? Pricing and Planning in Transport Policy', *Transport Policy*, 2 (1995), 43-49.

Pahl, Ray, 'Are All Communities, Communities in the Mind?' *The Sociological Review*, 53 (2005), 621-640.

Pahl, Ray, 'Hertfordshire Commuter Villages: From Geography to Sociology', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11 (2008), 103-107.

Parkinson, Michael, 'The Thatcher Government's Urban Policy, 1979-1989: A Review', *Town Planning Review*, 60 (1989), 421-440.

Pemberton, Hugh, 'The Failure of 'Nationalisation by Attraction': Britain's Cross-Class Alliance Against Earnings-Related Pensions in the 1950s', *Economic History Review*, 65 (2012), 1428-1449.

Pendlebury, John, 'Alas Smith and Burns? Conservation in Newcastle upon Tyne City Centre, 1959-68', *Planning Perspective,* 16 (2001), 115-141.

Tim Petersen, 'Watching the Swiss: A Network Approach to rural and Exurban Public Transport', *Elsevier*, 52 (2016), 175-185.

Pooley, Colin, ‘Cities, Spaces and Movement: Everyday Experiences of Urban Travel in England c.1840-1940’, *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 91-109.

Pooley, Colin, ‘Connecting Historical Studies of Transport, Mobility and Migration’, *Journal of Transport History*, 38 (2017), 251-159.

Pooley, Colin, ‘Mobility, Transport and Social Inclusion: Lessons from History’, *Social Inclusion*, 4 (2016), 100-109.

Pooley, Colin, ‘Landscapes without the Car: A Counterfactual Historical Geography of Twentieth-Century Britain’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 266-275.

Pooley, Colin, ‘Spotlight on the Traveller: Individual Experiences of Routine Journeys’, *The Journal of Transport History*, 43 (2022), 214-231.

Pooley, Colin, ‘Walking Spaces: Changing Pedestrian Practices in Britain since c.1850’, *Journal of Transport History*, 42 (2021), 227-246.

Pooley, Colin, Martin Emmanuel, Tina Männistö-Funk, Peter Norton, ‘Introduction: Historical Perspectives on Pedestrians and the City’, *Urban History*, 48 (2021), 204-210.

Pooley, Colin, and Sian Pooley, ‘Constructing a Suburban Identity: Youth, Femininity and Modernity in Late-Victorian Merseyside’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36 (2010), 402-410.

Pooley, Colin, and Marilyn Pooley, ‘Young Women on the Move: Britain, circa 1880-1950’, *Social Science History*, 45 (2021), 495-517.

Pooley, Colin, and Jean Turnbull, ‘Commuting, Transport and Urban Form: Manchester and Glasgow in the Mid-Twentieth Century’, *Urban History*, 27 (2000), 360-383.

Pooley, Colin, and Jean Turnbull, ‘Coping with Congestion: Responses to Urban Traffic Problems in British Cities, c. 1920-1960’, *Journal of Historical Geography,* 31 (2005), 78-93.

Pooley, Colin, and Jean Turnbull, ‘The Journey to Work: A Century of Change’, *Area*, 31 (1999), 281-292.

Pooley, Colin, and Jean Turnbull, ‘Modal Choice and Modal Change: The Journey to Work in Britain since 1890’, *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 11-24.

Powers, Alan, ‘The Heroic Period of Conservation’, *Twentieth Century Architecture*, 7 (2004), 8-18.

Prosser, Tony, 'The Privatisation of British Railways: Regulatory Failure or Legal Failure?' *Current Legal Problems*, 57 (2004), 213-238.

Quigley, John, and Daniel Weinberg, 'Intra-Urban Residential Mobility: A Review and Synthesis', *International Regional Science Review,* 2 (1977), 41-66.

Ramsden, Stefan, 'Remaking Working-Class Community: Sociability, Belonging and 'Affluence' in a Small Town, 1930-80', *Contemporary British History*, 29 (2015), 1-26.

Reeves, Hannah, 'The Place of Peripheral "Railway Towns" in Transport History', *The Journal of Transport History*, 41 (2020), 458-468.

Renwick, Chris, 'Movement, Space and Social Mobility in Early and Mid-Twentieth Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 16 (2019), 13-28.

Richardson, Jeremy, 'The Administration of Denationalization: The Case of Road Haulage', *Public Administration,* 49 (1971), 385-402.

Rietveld, Piet, and Roger Stough, 'Institutions, Regulations and Sustainable Transport: A Cross-National Perspective', *Transport Reviews*, 24 (2004), 707-719.

Riley, Charlotte, 'Must Labour Lose? The 1959 Election and the Politics of the People', *Historical Reflections*, 47 (2021), 65-77.

Robbins, Michael, 'The Progress of Transport History', *The Journal of Transport History*, 12 (1992), 74-87.

Robertson, Susan, 'Visions of Urban Mobility: The Westway, London, England, *Cultural Geographies*, 14 (2007), 74-91.

Robinson, Emily, Camilla Schofield, Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, Natalie Thomlinson, 'Telling Stories about Post-war Britain: Popular Individualism and the 'Crisis' of the 1970s', *Twentieth Century History,* 28 (2017), 268-304.

Rooney, David, 'The Political Economy of Congestion: Road Pricing and the Neoliberal Project, 1952-2003', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (2014), 628-650.

Roth, Ralf, 'German State Action and Railway Policy During the 20th Century', *Current History Journal*, 5 (2007), 15-28.

Santos, Georgina, and Jaswinder Bhakar, 'The Impact of the London Congestion Charging Scheme on the Generalised Cost of Car Commuters to the City of London from a Value of Travel Time Savings Perspective', *Transport Policy*, 13 (2006), 22-33.

Saumarez Smith, Otto, 'Central Government and Town-Centre Redevelopment in Britain', 1959-1966, *The Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), 217-244.

Saumarez Smith, Otto, 'Inner City Crisis and the End of Urban Modernism in 1970s Britain', *Twentieth Century History*, 27 (2016), 578-598.

Saunders, Jack, 'The Untraditional Worker: Class Re-Formation in Britain, 1945-65', *Twentieth Century British History*, 26 (2015), 225-248.

Savage, Mike, 'The Missing Link? The Relationship between Spatial Mobility and Social Mobility', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 39 (1988), 554-577.

Savage, Mike, 'Working Class Identities in the 1960s: Revisiting the Affluent Worker Study', *Sociology*, 39 (2005), 929-946.

Schmucki, Barbara, 'Against "the Eviction of the Pedestrian": The Pedestrians' Association and Walking Practices in Urban Britain after World War II', *Radical History Review*, 11 (2012), 113-138.

Schmucki, Barbara, "If I Walked on my Own at Night I Stuck to Well Lit Areas." Gendered Spaces and Urban Transport in 20th Century Britain', *Research in Transportation Economics*, 34 (2012), 74-85.

Scholler-Schwedes, Oliver, 'The Failure of Integrated Transport Policy in German', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 18 (2010), 85-96.

Wallach Scott, Joan, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), 1053-1075.

Scott, Peter, 'British Railways and the Challenge from Road Haulage: 1919-39', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13 (2002), 101-120.

Scott, Peter, 'Dispersion Versus Decentralisation: British Location of Industry and Regional Development, 1945-60', *Economy and Society*, 26 (1997), 579-598.

Scott, Peter, 'The Growth of Road Haulage, 1021-58: An Estimate', *Journal of Transport History*, 19 (1998), 138-155.

Scott, Peter, 'Industrial Estates and British Industrial Development, 1897-1939', *Business History*, 43 (2001), 73-98.

Scott, Peter, 'Marketing Mass Home Ownership and the Creation of the Modern Working Class Consumer in Inter-War Britain', *Business History*, 50 (2008), 4-25.

Scott, Peter, 'Mr Drage, Mr Everyman, and the Creation of a Mass Market for Domestic Furniture in Interwar Britain', *Economic History Review*, 62 (2009), 802-827.

Scott, Peter, 'Women, Other "Fresh" Workers, and the New Manufacturing Workforce of Interwar Britain', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (2000), 449-474.

Seiler, Cotten, 'The Significance of Race to Transport History', *Journal of Transport History*, 28 (2007), 307-311.

Sheller, Mimi, 'Automotive Emotions: Feeling the Car', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21 (2004), 221-242.

Sheller, Mimi, and John Urry, 'The City and the Car', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (2000), 737-757.

Sheller, Mimi, and John Urry, 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 38 (2006), 207-226.

Shergold, Ian, and Graham Parkhurst, 'Transport-Related Social Exclusion Amongst Older People in Rural Southwest England and Wales', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 28 (2012), 412-412.

Sjöblom, Gustav, 'The Shift from Railways to Roads: Four Propositions About the Interwar Period in Britain and Germany', *Economic History Yearbook*, 48 (2007), 55-66.

Skelsey, Geoffrey, '"People Travelling on Business Seem Seldom to Travel by Train", Oxford and Cambridge Object to Closure', *BackTrack,* 31 (2017), 332-339.

Spencer, Stephanie, 'Schoolgirl to Career Girl. The City as Educative Space', *International Journal of the History of Education*, 39 (2003), 121-133.

Smith, Roger, 'Post-War Birmingham: Planning and Development', *The Town Planning Review*, 45 (1974), 189-206.

Starkie, David, 'Investment and Growth: The Impact of Britain's Post-War Trunk Roads Programme', *Economic Affairs*, 35 (2015), 60-74.

Summerfield, Penny, 'Mass-Observation: Social Research or Social Movement?', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 20 (1985), 439-452.

Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, Florence, 'The Decline of Deference and the Left: An Egalitarian Moment for Localism', *Juncture*, 23 (2016), 132-137.

Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, Florence, 'Neo-Liberalism and Morality in the Making of Thatcherite Social Policy', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 497-520.

Thrift, Nigel, 'The Aesthetic Experience of Traffic in the Modern City', *Urban Studies*, 40 (2003), 1609-1625.

Thrift, Nigel, 'Driving in the City', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21 (2004), 41-59.

Tinkler, Penny, and Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, 'Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain and North America: Corsets, Cars, and Cigarettes', *Journal of Women's History*, 20 (2008), 113-143.

Tinkler, Penny, 'Going Places or Out of Place? Representations of Mobile Girls and Young Women in Late-1959s and 1960s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 32 (2021), 1-26.

Todd, Selina, 'Affluence, Class and Crown Street: Reinvestigating the Post-War Working Class', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), 501-518.

Todd, Selina, 'Phoenix Rising: Working Class Life and Urban Reconstruction, c.1945-1967', *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), 679-702.

Townsend, Susan, 'The 'miracle' of car ownership in Japan's 'Era of High Growth', 1955-73', *Business History*, 55 (2013), 498-523.

Trentmann, Frank, 'Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39 (2004), 373-401.

Urry, John, 'The System of Automobility', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21 (2004), 25-39.

Van Vugt, Mark, and Paul Van Lange, 'Commuting by Car or Public Transportation? A Social Dilemma Analysis of Travel Mode Judgements', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 26 (1996), 373-395.

Walsh, Margaret, 'Gendering Transport History: Retrospect and Prospect', *Journal of Transport History*, 23 (2002), 1-8.

Walsh, Margaret, 'Gender in the History of Transportation Services: A Historiographical Perspective', *Business History Review*, 81 (2007), 545-562.

Ward, Stephen, 'Colin Buchanan's American Journey', *Town Planning Review*, 88 (2017), 201-231.

Webster, F., and P. By, 'The Demand for Public Transport: Part I. The Changing Environment in which Public Transport Operates', *Transport Reviews*, 1 (1981), 323-351.

White, Henry, 'Beeching – Benefactor or Bogeyman? A Review', *Journal of the Railway and Canal Historical Society*, 30 (1990), 2-5.

Whitehand, J., and Christine Carr, 'England's Interwar Suburban Landscape and Reality', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25 (1999), 483-501.

Williams, T., 'Informal Discussion: Traffic in Relation to Town Planning', *Institution of Civil Engineers*, 24 (1963), 12-13.

Smith Wilson, Dolly, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 206-229.

Worth, Eve, 'Women, Education and Social Mobility in Britain During the Long 1970s', *Cultural and Social History*, 16 (2019), 67-83.

Online Resources

BBC, 'Portishead to Bristol Rail Line Gets Final Approval', 15 November 2022, [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-63633295, accessed December 2022].

Department of Transport, 'Transport Statistics Great Britain', online edition, 2021, [http://maps.dft.gov.uk/tsgb-table-catalogue, accessed November 2021].

Gunn, Simon, 'Future of Mobility: The History of Transport Systems in the UK', Government Office for Science, 5 December 2018, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/761929/Historyoftransport.pdf, accessed April 2020].

Unpublished Material

Colin Divall, ''Do you Really Call that Progress, Mr Marples?' The Politics of Railway Closures in East Dorset', Unpublished Manuscript of a Paper First delivered at the Priest's House Museum, Dorset, 2 May 2014.