

the ramifications of this are now being realized in developments such as the collapse of the Assembly.

Overall, this book offers a highly useful insight into the link between international relations theory and the Northern Ireland peace process. Some connections between the two are more tenuous than others, with many being framed within the context of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and others making a wider international link. Ultimately, this volume fills a gap in a field that has been largely neglected and will be of interest to scholars and students of the Northern Ireland conflict, divided societies, and theories of International Relations.

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CHARLOTTE WILDMAN. *Urban Redevelopment and Modernity in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918–1939*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016. Pp. 287. \$122 (cloth).  
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Liverpool and Manchester came to prominence during the first industrial revolution. Liverpool was the point of importation for slave-produced American cotton, and Manchester was where most of the world's trade in cotton cloth was conducted. Much has been written about the economic, social, cultural, and political history that flowed from this preeminence. However, the later history of these two cities, especially during the first half of the twentieth century, has been less well served. Many assume that stagnation and squalor accompanied the underlying economic decline of these once-powerful commercial and industrial centers. Charlotte Wildman's *Urban Redevelopment and Modernity in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918–1939* offers a welcome corrective to this common perception. It makes a notable contribution to a growing literature that highlights civic “boosterism” and planned urban renewal during the interwar years rather than focusing exclusively on a story of post-1945 “reconstruction.” Moreover, Wildman extends the territory covered by this insight through the imaginative connection of housing and infrastructural improvements with the gendered cultures of consumerism and religion.

Wildman organizes the book into three parts. The first, “Civic Culture,” demonstrates how the two cities attempted to deal diversely but imaginatively with an inheritance of decaying housing stock. Between them they rehoused large numbers in publicly financed, purpose-built estates of suburban houses, of which Wythenshawe Garden City, outside Manchester, is the most notable, and nationally significant, example. With regard to Liverpool, Wildman gives due credit to the influence of the University of Liverpool School of Architecture and the dominating figure of Sir Charles Reilly in the development of urban modernism, as well as to Liverpool's long-serving city architect, Sir Lancelot Key. Surprisingly, however, Wildman makes no mention of the intriguing fact that Liverpool, unlike most other English cities, also built several modernist high-rise blocks between the wars (see Matthew Whitfield, “Lancelot Key and Liverpool's Multi-Storey Housing of the 1930s,” in E. Harwood and A. Powers, eds., *Housing the Twentieth Century Nation* [2009]).

Wildman rightly emphasizes how civic authorities understood the need for transport improvements to cope with the automobile age (including the opening of the Mersey Tunnel) and the extent of investment in public transport as the corporation motorbus gradually replaced the corporation electric tram. Equally, she recounts how both cities' concern for planning involved prestige architectural projects such as Manchester Central Library and Town Hall Extension. Such buildings represented the desire for an impressive civic center at the

heart of the city. All this was in an era before regional and local planning became subject to central state prescription of such responsibilities, exemplified in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. Between the wars the local state enjoyed a control over development that was to be curtailed in the post-1945 world of centrally regulated planning.

Wildman charts how, starting with Liverpool in 1924, both cities devised Civic Week celebrations in an attempt both to boost trade and revive civic identity and citizenship. The very notion of the Civic Week attacked the prevalent perception, encouraged by fictional representations, of Liverpool and Manchester as locales of stagnation, poverty, and slum living. In truth, neither of these cities was as economically depressed as smaller centers dependent on single trades, and neither was granted “distressed area status” under the Special Areas Act (1934)—indeed, nowhere in Lancashire was to be thus classified. Manchester’s industrial diversity meant it fared better than many cities, and in the Trafford Park Industrial Estate and the Manchester Ship Canal it possessed a vital lifeline. The “Ship Canal Zone” was an industrial magnet even during the Depression.

In parts two and three, Wildman moves beyond the topics of planning and urban renewal and into what she argues are the related cultures of shopping and religion. In both, gendered notions of selfhood play a significant role. Shops and consumer culture came to characterize the city centers of Manchester and Liverpool. Led by the department stores, city center streets became theaters of display and the city itself a site of “glamor.” This continued pre-1914 developments, but between the wars the gendered appeal of shopping provides evidence of working-class women joining their middle-class counterparts in the construction of fashionable identities that offered to mask class differences. What is striking is how the city planners welcomed and celebrated women’s engagement in shopping culture. This was both economic stimulant and a means of facilitating an urban transformation that valued self-identity and consumer choice.

Part three is the most original, focusing as it does on the cultures of religion, especially of Catholicism (important in both cities but most particularly in Liverpool). The public culture of the city involved much religious display—especially processions, Anglican as well as Catholic—that has now passed largely away but which reached its heyday in the 1930s. Such display may seem resonant of a vanishing past, but for Wildman it is possible to reconcile recast religious identities with the self-identities of modernity. She devotes a final chapter to the Roman Catholic cathedral that was planned for Liverpool and would have been the largest church north of the Alps, second only to St. Peter’s in Rome. This was a prestige project to beat all other prestige projects, but it was not to be. Nonetheless, for Wildman it represents a flourishing urban culture of Catholicism and the remarkable ambition and dynamism of church leaders that at least matched that of their civic contemporaries.

This is an ambitious reevaluation of interwar urban cultures, innovative for its focus on gender identities. It moves along at quite a pace, and at times the coverage could have been fuller. Certainly more space could have been given to the rich civic culture Wildman too swiftly deals with in part one. However, this insightful study is to be strongly recommended to anyone interested in the neglected history of the British northern city between the wars.

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