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## Introduction

- 1 Public space is increasingly viewed as the domain of the consumer rather than the citizen. This article will argue that the boundaries of public space are increasingly blurred, as privatisation driven by capitalism advances upon them (Hannigan, 1998; Klein, 2001; Zukin, 1995). The appearance of larger corporations in «public» space<sup>1</sup>, is a cause for concern, as public/private partnerships are commonplace and allow little room for the small entrepreneur<sup>2</sup> (Hannigan, 1998; Klein, 2001; Monbiot, 2001; Zukin, 1995). The role of development companies and involvement of the finance industry in the production of the built environment should not be underestimated in the privatisation of public space (Mandanipour, 1998). Consumption sites in cities are also increasingly designed to appeal to the affluent, which leads to a gentrification of the consumption experience (Hackworth, 2002; Hackworth and Smith, 2001), thus excluding a significant portion of the population. Much of the existing debate regarding the corporatisation and gentrification of public space deal with the experience of American cities (Smith, 1996; Zukin, 1995). The experience of the UK city of Manchester will be explored here, in order to highlight how processes such as gentrification are understood in the West European context. This experience will be evidenced via interview data from those who have sound knowledge of a particular part of Manchester - the Millennium Quarter. This knowledge has been gained from everyday experience of the Millennium Quarter as a place of work. Before turning to these issues though it is important to define what exactly is meant by the term «public» in the context of public space.

## Unpacking Public

- 2 The apparently clear cut historical divide between public and private has long become problematised. Two contradictory issues are important here:- 1) the taken for granted assumption of a unified definition of public<sup>3</sup> and 2) the complexity of this unexplained definition. In fact there appear to at least be two different categories of public space - «pure» public space (space which is owned by a public body, open 24 hours and has no access restrictions e.g. some public parks and streets) and semi-public space (space which is owned by a private body, may have some restrictions on opening hours and has some conditions of access e.g. shopping malls, nightclubs, restaurants).<sup>4</sup> Shopping malls are also often privately policed by security guards who have the right to eject anyone from the premises. The shopping mall is also increasingly the domain of the «consumer» rather than the «citizen». Young (1999) states that there is less focus on the universal rights of the citizen as society shifts from an inclusive to exclusive model, meaning that those on the margins are increasingly excluded and little effort is made towards integration. It is arguable that gentrification continues at the expense of rejecting the poor (Abaza, 2001), therefore such areas are far from inclusive. Private corporations and investors are important players in the re-imaging of public space, as the physical design of an area, when combined with limited economic, cultural and political choices, can strengthen the fabric of social exclusion. The semi-public space of the shopping mall is subject to increased control and surveillance as the following argues:
- 3 «Everyone has, in one form or another witnessed the odd double vision of vast consumer choice coupled with Orwellian new restrictions on cultural production in public space [...] It is there on the trendy downtown main street as yet another favourite café, hardware store, independent bookstore or art video house is cleared away and replaced by one of the Pac-Man chains: Starbucks, Home Depot, The Gap, Chapters, Borders, Blockbuster [...] It is there again when protestors are thrown out of shopping malls for handing out political leaflets, told by security guards that although the edifice may have replaced the public square in their town, it is, in fact, private property» (Klein, 2001, p. 130).

## Contemporary Consumption

- 4 In modern times the experience of the consumer has become increasingly privatised and sanitised (Hannigan, 1998) partly evidenced by the rise in the number of privately owned shopping malls on the cityscape, which are a physical manifestation of the privatisation process. There has been much debate (Davis, 1992; Klein, 2001; Mitchell, 2000; Sibley, 1995; Zukin, 1995) about whether the shopping mall is in fact a public space, as Shields comments
- «shopping malls [...] have been developed as privately owned ‘public’ spaces for retailing» (1992, 1).
- 5 However, whether this space is public or private in terms of legal ownership may be of little consequence to everyday users who perceive it as a «public» space, designed for their use. It is arguable that they are perceived as public spaces as there is no entrance fee and few restrictions on conditions of entry during opening hours. It is important that nothing critical of consumption happens within the space of the mall, such as

environmentalists protesting about the methods of production employed by a store located there (Klein, 2001). This type of behaviour is simply not acceptable, those not consuming, or challenging the environment within the mall are removed (e.g. groups of teenagers) (Hannigan, 1998; Shields, 1992). In fact it is only when there is a breach of (the often unspoken) rules, that the complexities of everyday life become apparent in «public» space (Garfinkel, 1984).

- 6 The shopping mall is a far cry from the disease and danger filled, overcrowded streets of the nineteenth century city. Shopping malls are increasingly sanitised and surveilled by security patrols and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). Hannigan (1998) argues that themed environments create an atmosphere of «riskless risk», where the visitor encounters simulacrum of the real urban experience. This simulation ensures that the setting is much more controlled and predictable (Ritzer, 1996, 1998). Hannigan states that:

«shopping malls [...] exert considerable control over both their customers and their retail tenants. Shopkeepers are subject to innumerable rules and regulations including the approval of their location, design and even name [...] Shoppers especially young ones, are tightly regulated in terms of what they may or may not do. Included in the latter is anything which is judged by the management to be «disruptive» behaviour, for example, loitering, picketing or protesting» (1998, p. 82).

- 7 Areas such as shopping malls may offer a hassle free, safe and clean consumption experience but it is arguable (Hannigan, 1998) that they also offer standardised goods, produced in appalling working conditions (Klein, 2001) and have led to the erosion of the small independent retailer. They are also replicated the world over; it would be difficult not to find the same stores in America, Britain or any European city (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000).

## The Gentrification of Consumption?

- 8 Gentrification can be broadly defined as the rejuvenation of deteriorated or neglected urban property by the middle and upper classes, especially in working class neighbourhoods. However, the physical and visual results of such a process are underpinned by more complex issues as:

«underlying all these changes in the urban landscape are specific economic, social and political forces that are responsible for a major reshaping of advanced capitalist societies: there is a restructured industrial base, a shift to service employment and a consequent transformation of the working class and indeed the class structure in general [...] Gentrification is a visible spatial component of this social transformation» (Smith and Williams, 1986, p. 3).

- 9 Traditionally initial gentrifiers of an area have been the middle classes, but now corporate developers also play an important role (Hackworth, 2002). This can have serious repercussions for the cultural landscape of cities as:

«handing such spaces over to corporate executives and private investors means giving them carte blanche to remake public culture. It marks the erosion of public space in terms of its two basic principles: public stewardship and open access» (Zukin, 1995, p. 32).

- 10 The state sees fit to intervene in the creation of gentrified areas, as redevelopment is a way of generating tax revenues (Hackworth and Smith, 2001). Gentrification is not

always welcomed by everyone as Smith's (1996) account of the anti-gentrification protests and riots surrounding the Tompkins Square Park area in New York illustrates.

- 11 In terms of consumption one of the ways in which gentrification physically manifests itself is via the appearance of exclusive designer boutiques and stores selling expensive goods. The inclusion of such retail outlets on the cityscape immediately excludes a large portion of the urban population as those with limited income cannot afford to shop there. In this way the working classes are designed out of such areas which often don't appeal to them anyway<sup>5</sup>. For example, it would be unusual to see a group of elderly people in a trendy city centre bar as they would simply identify the bar as «not for them» and not frequent it.

## Manchester: A Case Study

- 12 What can the experience of a city such as Manchester offer to the debate about the privatisation of public space? It is an interesting and unique example of how «public» urban spaces of consumption are increasingly privatised and gentrified when an area is suddenly available for redevelopment. The bomb also gave the council a chance to re-plan a huge section of the core of the city. The bombing of a central retail space in 1996 meant that the processes typically associated with the gentrification of an area such as protests (Betancur, 2002; Smith, 1996) were eliminated and the displacement of local traders was seen as unavoidable. There was no significant residential population which inevitably meant less resistance to the transformation of the area. The bomb essentially acted as a catalyst for gentrification, meaning that what may have taken ten or more years to establish under normal circumstances, was actually achieved in four years. In fact the area would not have needed such intense redevelopment if it had not been bombed and would not have attracted as much private funding, thus the area would have been redeveloped much more slowly as that part of the city changed organically. Before elaborating on how the area affected by the bomb (now known as the Millennium Quarter) is used and by whom, it is useful to look more closely at the role of public space and rise of consumption as a leisure activity in earlier years. This analysis helps to highlight the differences in public space use and consumption today.

### Early Sites of Working Class Consumption and Leisure in Manchester (1900 - 1970)

- 13 Much has been written about Nineteenth Century Manchester being the first industrial city. It has been described as a «shock» city whose population swelled uncontrollably, resulting in a state of urban dystopia characterised by social disorder, overcrowding, disease and squalor (Briggs, 1990; Engels, 1958; Kidd, 1996; Read, 1973). Engels (1958) noted that the working classes were systematically barred from the main streets, however, the working classes of the early twentieth century made good use of public spaces such as streets, markets and fairs. Typically they would spend their spare time sitting out on the street, listening to street musicians, dancing, watching parades, visiting markets or sitting in parks. Annual Whit Week Walks were an important part of the working class social calendar attracting thousands (Davies, 1992; Kidd, 1996). Poverty was not a barrier to participation in such pastimes as:

«these activities were all free, and considered alongside the wider range of street culture, constitute a communal, or informal, sector» (Davies, 1992, p. 109).

- 14 The streets were places of community but also conflict as fights were a common occurrence (particularly outside public houses at closing time) and always attracted a crowd (Davies, 1992). Parks would be heavily used by families and young people on weekends and during public holidays, though those seeking peace and quiet such as courting couples and married women frequented the park during quieter periods. By 1915 Manchester had 70 parks covering 1480 acres which meant that many neighbourhoods had a local park<sup>6</sup>.
- 15 Early consumption for the working classes took place at street markets where small scale entrepreneurs would display and sell their goods. The traders were also entertainers which contributed to the boisterous and vibrant atmosphere of the market. Shudehill market in central Manchester attracted up to 20,000 people on a Saturday night as it
- «held a dual appeal, as a source of cheap food and free entertainment, which ensured that the Saturday night trip to «town» was a central fixture in the social life of working-class families» (Davies, 1992, p. 130).
- 16 The market was a place that excluded no-one as the whole family would attend and it was not exclusively about buying goods, as opinions were also traded at such events which attracted preachers and political activists (Davies, 1992). The majority of these activities concentrated on the consumption of free culture in contrast to the consumption of products which come at a price. There were few economic barriers to participation in such events during the early Twentieth Century.
- 17 Concurrent with the popularity of the market place (and indeed the park and street) shopping areas were evolving in Manchester, as warehouses served as a precursor to the department store displaying and selling goods (Kidd, 1996). Initially shopping in fashionable city centres was a pastime of the wealthy upper classes, however the advent of mass consumption had two major effects. First it reduced the small scale production of goods sold at regular markets in mercantile centres (such as Manchester) as the department store centralised larger scale production and consumption in urban locations. Second it widened participation in the consumption experience as mass production meant mass consumption which involved pricing goods more competitively (Nava, 1996). In Manchester the beginning of more affordable mass consumption occurred when Lewis's department store opened its doors in 1880. Kendal Milne department store in Manchester was longer established and was the antidote to cheapness, catering for the consumer needs of the elite in society (Kidd, 1996). Whilst window shopping provided an activity which required little or no capital, changes were occurring in leisure and entertainment practices as the music hall, professional football and the cinema became popular. There was an admission fee for such activities no doubt influenced by increased disposable income amongst the working classes (Kidd, 1996). Thus the boundaries of public and private began to blur, as consumers were charged an entrance fee for certain activities which were open to the public at a price. «Public» no longer meant unconditional access to all but tended to refer to collective activity and consumption.
- 18 There were still traditional cultural activities such as Whitweek Wakes and the Manchester Races which were free, but there was a definite shift towards paying for leisure activities which intensified as the years advanced, particularly in the 1920s and

1930s - the age of the popular picture house. By the 1950s land use in the city had changed quite significantly as the number of warehouses declined and independent stores grew. Department store such as Affleck and Brown on Oldham Street and Marshall and Snellgrove on Deansgate were popular at this time. Supermarkets also appeared in the 1960s and the busiest streets were Oldham Street and Market Street (Kidd, 1996). These shopping patterns were to be irreversibly altered in the 1970s when a huge purpose built shopping mall, the Arndale Centre appeared, maintaining the popularity of Market Street but leading to the desolation of Oldham Street for some considerable time.

### Current Sites of Consumption (1970-2002)

- 19 Manchester has evidently evolved considerably over the past one hundred and fifty years, transforming itself from an area which provided the back drop for the Industrial Revolution to a glitzy cosmopolitan city. It has made the shift from industrial to post-industrial city with reasonable success (Taylor et al., 1996; Wynne and O'Connor, 1996) the peak of which was hosting a major sporting event, the Commonwealth Games in 2002. One reason for its success may well lie in its ability to commodify culture and appeal to the consumers (both locals and visitors) of culture. For example, Castlefield Urban Heritage Park boasts two million visitors per annum to a site central to the Industrial Revolution which transformed the world economy. A similar attraction is the Urbis Centre, a new visitor centre based around the experience of the modern city, which opened in the Millennium Quarter in 2002. In short there is no doubt that the consumption of culture has played a central role in the transformation of the city (Bianchini and Schwengel, 1991; Hannigan, 1998; Wynne and O'Connor, 1996 (Eds.), 1998; Zukin, 1995, 1998) though this is not peculiar to Manchester, indeed, it is a global phenomenon. An important question to ask here though is «whose culture?» (Zukin, 1995). Increasingly it could be argued it is the culture of the middle class, affluent gentrifying population (Ward, 2000; Zukin, 1995) that dominates.

### The Political Economy of Gentrification

- 20 It is important to question the politics behind the construction of consumption areas that appeal to a predominantly middle class population. What do local governments in the UK stand to gain from creating such areas? In short they stand to gain revenues from residents and businesses in the region (Hackworth, 2002; Hackworth and Smith, 2001). In this way smaller cities such as Manchester can establish themselves as headquarters cities (Taylor et al., 1996)<sup>7</sup>. It is no surprise then that local economic developments are increasingly «business- led» in urban areas. This involves the building of partnerships between local and national government and the private sector, though Peck and Tickell argue that these partnerships are quite selective and unbalanced (1995, p. 55). In other words these partnerships are careful to include certain groups whilst excluding others, in fact,

«ironically, given their democratic origins and their effective exclusion of women, the unemployed, black people, community groups and other marginalized interests, a defining feature of these new 'partnerships' is their claim to 'speak for the city', and sometimes also for local people» (Peck and Tickell, 1995, p. 56).

- 21 These partnerships may essentially mean that local democracy becomes overtaken by private development interests.
- 22 The political shifts in Manchester were reflected in a new logo for the city «Making it Happen» (1990) in contrast to «Defending Jobs Improving Services (1985) (Williams, 2000, p. 489). There was a move towards enhancing Manchester's «liveability» based around three assumptions: that Manchester was evolving along a post-industrial trajectory, that it must compete in a global market and therefore create its own unique brand image and, finally, class based divisions in the city must be overcome and a local «team effort» made to ensure success (Williams, 2000, p. 489). Part of this approach was to centralise culture and leisure industries as tools for improving economic growth and quality of life in the region.
- 23 In 1996 central Manchester suffered immense physical, social and economic damage when a 3,300 lb bomb exploded on Cross Street. This resulted in the loss of around 49,000 square metres of prime retail space. An International Urban Design competition was launched to facilitate a planning response along with the establishment of a Task Force - Manchester Millennium Limited (MML, which disbanded in 2000) to co-ordinate the entire rebuilding process (Williams, 2000, p. 492). The brief for rebuilding the area included
- «the restoration and enhancement of the retail core and adding new cultural, entertainment and leisure destinations; ensuring accessibility, safety and security whilst creating an inviting pedestrian environment; building on historical strengths whilst delivering new urban development quality and a greener environment; and facilitating increasing residential population» (Williams, 2000, p. 493).
- 24 EDAW construction won the competition due to their design making visual linkages in the city whilst maintaining key existing landmarks, linking streets and squares to ensure a pedestrian route and proposing an integrated transport system. They also showed the most potential for enhancing the quality and potential for investment into the area, rather than merely redistributing previously existing activity (Williams, 2000, p. 494-495). It is important to note that given much of this investment would be private it would make sense to such investors to appeal to those who would bring them the biggest financial gain i.e. the affluent. The funding infrastructure consisted of an injection of public funds (£83 Million<sup>8</sup>) which attracted £380 million of private sector investment. The contribution from the public sector reduced the risk for private investors who viewed the area as a relatively safe bet, given that the Government were investing so confidently in it (Hackworth and Smith, 2001). The public funding was earmarked for five specific elements: public realm improvements, transport infrastructure, the Urbis centre (a project to mark the millennium and chart the development and experience of the city), meeting new developments affected by deficit funding and management and promotion of the master plan programme (Williams, 2000, p. 496).

## The Millennium Quarter

- 25 The Millennium Quarter has undergone renewal as a consequence of the IRA terrorist group bombing in June 1996 which completely devastated the area<sup>9</sup>. The area houses the new Marks and Spencer flagship store (one of the largest in Europe), a designer shopping mall (the Triangle) and the Printworks (a themed area reminiscent of Ye Olde



England, which mostly houses eating and drinking establishments along with a multiplex cinema). The area also includes a number of public spaces which are not primarily concerned with consumption such as Exchange Square, Cathedral Gardens and Cathedral Walks. Whilst such spaces within the Millennium Quarter serve to facilitate pedestrian flow through the area, the majority of space in the setting is occupied by retail outlets.

Figure 1. Exchange Square in the Millennium Quarter, Manchester, England.



- 26 Before the bomb this part of Manchester was cut off from the main retail core of the city as a busy road (Cannon Street) ran through it, directly into the Arndale Centre Bus Station. The pedestrian route to the area involved negotiating lots of steps and walking through a covered bridge from Shambles Square (an area popular with beggars and alcoholics). In other words no effort was made to encourage visitors and the main users of the area were teenagers. The attraction for them was the Corn Exchange (on the left in photograph one), which housed numerous stalls selling everything from knives and bootleg goods to second hand records and crystals. The rest of the area was dominated by a large open air car park (where Urbis now stands) and Maxwell House (now The Printworks (on the right in photograph one) the Manchester Headquarters of tabloid newspaper The Mirror.

## Memories of the Area

- 27 Former everyday users of the Millennium Quarter (such as traders from the Corn Exchange and those that had used the area during their youth) were interviewed in order to ascertain how they viewed the area before and after the bomb<sup>10</sup>. The majority of the sample felt that the area had changed significantly both in terms of the built environment, retail outlets on the landscape and consumers there. The accessibility of

the area to pedestrians before the bomb meant that it appealed to a different type of person as the following quote shows:

«Before the bomb it was a little square where punks, hippies and kids used to sit round a fountain that they filled with bubbles every day and just young people hung out basically. It was a bit out of the way from the main city, it wasn't near the main shopping areas it was coming out [...] and the Corn Exchange was a very sort of bohemian hippy place so that's where all the hippy kids shopped and they all hung out outside, so it was a square but it was a bit scruffier shall we say, it was a bit more it just sort of happened and emerged organically.»

Respondent 1 (Currently working in Millennium Quarter) talking about Exchange Square

- 28 The main attraction was the Corn Exchange (now The Triangle). The difference between the two retail areas is quite apparent when considering people's descriptions of the building before and after. How the built environment had changed was not a major concern for most people, although they did refer to the Corn Exchange as «scruffier» and «more run down» than the sanitised atmosphere of the Triangle, but those interviewed did talk about the shops and stalls inside the Corn Exchange.

«It certainly sold things that you couldn't get elsewhere in Manchester whereas now it's selling the same as you can get everywhere else in Manchester which is basically high fashion, expensive cafes you know, whereas before it had specialist shops that sold weird and wonderful things so yeah it did serve a purpose in that way [...] you know all those weird little shops that you find interesting stuff in so yeah that's gone, so a piece of making Manchester interesting has gone if you like [...] you know it had quirky shop owners, you know little wizard type guys, you know selling weird things and you know in that way it was something that was original and out of the ordinary whereas now it's just mass produced rubbish.»

Respondent 2 (Former trader in the Corn Exchange)

«Quite unique really because of the way it was with these little odd shops, it was quite unusual in that respect [...] how it was back then it was quite appealing in that way, this place had been there forever.»

Respondent 3 (Former trader in Corn Exchange)

- 29 The appeal of the area then, lay in the uniqueness and authenticity brought by the independent traders who were displaced by the bomb, after which the area underwent a process of gentrification. Such memories indicate that although there is a shift towards a more privatised, sanitised, controlled and standardised model of consumption (Davis, 1992; Hannigan, 1998; Klein, 2001; Shields, 1992; Zukin, 1995, 1998) this does not suit everyone. It is of course important to remember that it makes no sense to corporate investors and Local Governments to (Hackworth, 2002; Hackworth and Smith, 2001) to have a prime city centre retail site which appeals to the few, not the many.

## The Triangle

- 30 One of the reasons for looking so closely at shopping malls is because the redevelopment of the Millennium Quarter area has involved the inclusion of a small, designer shopping mall. The original exterior architecture has been preserved and the building itself is quite stunning, fashioned from sandstone with a glass domed ceiling. Whilst the outside has remained the same (presumably to fit in with the original specification of preserving existing landmarks and heritage) the interior is very different. Where wooden floors and oak panelled walls once accommodated a flea

market where traders sold lava lamps, specialist and alternative goods now mass expanses of marble, chrome and glass display goods for stores such as Jigsaw, Muji, Henri Lloyd and Calvin Klein. In short, larger corporations have taken the place of smaller independent traders and has a significant impact on the who uses the Triangle (Klein, 2001). The building also has a new name the Triangle, which promotes itself as an area in which to «eat, shop and live». Undoubtedly the Triangle is designed to appeal to the affluent middle classes resulting in a gentrification of consumption. The area is exclusive not only in terms of consumption but also production as the bombing displaced many independent traders who enjoyed reasonably low rents. Many of these traders relocated to other areas of Manchester such as the Coliseum shopping emporium, but went out of business as they simply did not have the funds to advertise to their customers where they had moved to or were unable to make insurance claims. The new owners of the Corn Exchange (Frogmore Estates) building were less than sympathetic to their needs, as they had been looking for a way to vacate the building for future developments which they knew would bring higher revenues. For them the bomb proved to be highly profitable solution ridding the building of all the traders who had long term leases in one fell swoop.

- 31 Whilst the transformation of the Corn Exchange into the Triangle has taken Manchester one step closer to being a city designed to appeal to the affluent and has eroded some of the individuality and authenticity of the city the majority of those interviewed felt that in terms of the actual physical design and appearance of the building an improvement had been made. Many expressed relief that the exterior had remained the same and felt that the glass, chrome and marble inside the building were tasteful. However, there was resounding agreement that the Triangle lacked atmosphere or character, it had become a sanitised (Hannigan, 1998) and characterless building:

«Just seems very I don't know there's no kind of feeling to it it's just very clinical or I don't know what word you'd use, but very nicely done up but not that appealing really, well not to me anyway.»

Respondent 3 (Former Trader in Corn Exchange)

- 32 Everyone commented that the Triangle was much more upmarket than its predecessor, using words such as «posh», «designer», «shopping mall» and «expensive» to describe it in contrast to «alternative», «bohemian», «flea market» and «cheap» which were used to describe the Corn Exchange. One trader who grew up in California and moved to Manchester almost two decades ago commented that the Triangle was

«well obviously quite upmarket and also quite Americanised in a way as well in that business kind of way everything's really done up properly and it had a very different element about it you know obviously because [before] the kind of people it was a looser environment, you know it wasn't so as you know as I say chains and it is very Calvin Klein.»

Respondent 3 (Former trader in Corn Exchange)

- 33 There is a definite indication here that the sense of place that once existed in this area of Manchester has been eroded as the Triangle is viewed as somewhere that lacks atmosphere or indeed Englishness. The appearance of chain stores within the building meant that the goods on offer were bland and less authentic (Klein, 2001; Zukin, 1995). The transformation of space here has significantly impacted on the type of place created. However, given that the majority of those interviewed here were displaced by the bomb it would be expected that disdain would be expressed about The Triangle. The

views were much more nuanced though indicating that whilst gentrification is usually greeted by more polarised responses (Smith, 1996; Zukin, 1995) the picture in Manchester was much more complex.

## Opinions on the Millennium Quarter

- 34 The respondents were asked for their views on the Millennium Quarter as a whole and opinion varied from one respondent to another. The majority of people did feel that the area is much more well used now by lots of different types of people. Many talked about how the area had been designed to appeal to workers in the area<sup>(11)</sup>, families, tourists during the Commonwealth Games and a more affluent middle class population, though teenagers still use the area as well<sup>12</sup>. Although the Millennium Quarter is nearing completion there is one final piece to be added - a Harvey Nichols store which will complement the recently opened Selfridges. The inclusion of such a prestigious and up market store in the setting was viewed as certain to have an impact on the area. One person interviewed commented that

«to open it up as a space for more people to use it's better now, it is better now and I wouldn't really like to say about the people that use it and the tone of the area until Harvey Nicks and Selfridges is finished because that's going to change quite a lot of it but I think kids will still hang out there «cos they always have and it's where that's going to come to further blows with all their no skateboarding signs and their no doing this signs, no doing that signs, but I think it was probably better before because I don't think you're gonna get away from that really but they've decided to turn it into somewhere much posher than it was, like they're trying to do everywhere and there's no room for people to just hang out like they did.»

Respondent 1 (Currently employed in Millennium Quarter)

- 35 There are indications here then that as more prestigious retail outlets open in the area certain populations, such as skateboarders, will be subject to further restrictions on their behaviour, thus public spaces such as Exchange Square and Cathedral Gardens may become more privatised and controlled (Davis, 1992; Flusty, 2000; Hannigan, 1998). There is also evidence here that teenagers are now not only acceptable in shopping malls (Shields, 1992) but also in public spaces. Thus groups such as teenage skateboarders are increasingly marginalized in newly gentrified areas. Harvey Nichols was also seen as one of the drivers for the gentrification of the area indicating that investment of private corporations is part of this process (Hackworth, 2002):

«I think they did because they've always had this idea like Harvey Nichols has been planned for ages now and they always knew that piece of land was going to be used for that and I think obviously when they regenerated this they thought that's going to be there. I don't think Selfridges was an option at one point because Marks and Spencers<sup>13</sup> the whole thing they're not doing so well so maybe that's why they've sold it on I mean maybe you never know what's gone on with that sort of stuff but I think they've always wanted to regenerate this area and try and make it more of an upmarket sort of thing by having the Printworks and some of the restaurants they've got in there so they want to try and make it so that people can come into town, know that everywhere is going to be open until 7 o'clock here and then go straight out and stay in the area, as you get towards the end you've just got bars and restaurants, it just sort of pans out evenly.»

Respondent 4 (Currently employed in Millennium Quarter)

- 36 The impending inclusion of a store such as Harvey Nichols into the Millennium Quarter indicates that will eventually be a truly exclusive area, as in terms of consumption, at least this type of retail outlet truly rejects the poor (Abaza, 2001).
- 37 On the whole the regeneration of the area was seen as a positive thing and although some described the architecture as «without feeling» it was felt that the Millennium Quarter provided a «focal point» for the city of Manchester. However, those who had been in the city for a considerable time and seen various developments rise and fall were slightly more cynical, especially with regard to the Urbis centre.
- «What you get annoyed about is the Urbis it may be a failure it may not but the thought of all these people who come in and just suck all the money out of it and win, lose or draw they get the bloody money and it's the poor bastards like us, like them next door, the people in the Corn Exchange it's either win or lose whatever but those people they just do the job, whoever designed this Arndale Centre will be sat on a big pile of money, where is he now? Why don't they bring him back and say justify that or we'll take your money off you? Why don't they say that to the council as well?»
- Respondent 5 (Trader in Shudehill)
- 38 There is evidence here of a backlash against state intervention led gentrification (Smith, 1996; Hackworth and Smith, 2001) as resentment is expressed at the expenditure of public money on such buildings.
- 39 For those interviewed things had certainly changed in the Millennium Quarter and whilst many of them thought that these changes were an improvement in the sense that more people were using the area due to pedestrianised access and regeneration, there were obvious concerns about who the area was aimed at (all those interviewed do not use the Millennium Quarter in their spare time), the erosion of spaces for small businesses and the gentrification of the area. Whilst the evidence here may be somewhat biased (50 per cent of those interviewed suffered economic loss due to the bomb) it is important to note that this is a purposive sample. The purpose of the sample was to tell a particular story, their account of what happened, their version of events as people who had first hand experience of what took place. This «real» account of what happened is interesting because it has been hidden in the «official» account of the consequences of the bombing of Manchester. The bomb is largely seen as having a positive effect on Manchester, both by the council and local media, as the experience of those displaced is played down.

## Conclusion

- 40 It is evident then that sites of consumption in Manchester are becoming more exclusive and leave little room for the independent trader. This process is replicated in many cities (Zukin, 1995) and is in no way peculiar to Manchester. It is clear that public space is the domain of the consumer rather than the citizen as those public spaces surrounding the Triangle tend to cater for the consumer whilst positively excluding members of the public who are young and skateboard<sup>14</sup>. Increasingly, whilst local, democratically nominated leaders do have significant influence, this is matched by the interests of developers and private entrepreneurs who have their own commercial interests and business agendas (Peck and Tickell, 1995) - which does rather call into question who cities are designed for and who they choose to include and exclude. It has also been argued that «public» spaces such as shopping malls aren't truly public as they

are owned privately. This brings into question who are the agenda setters or gatekeepers in such spaces and what are their rules? It is arguable that they are private entrepreneurs or corporations who remove anyone implicitly or explicitly deviating from the norm (not spending money) in a site of consumption.

«The result is a subtle privatisation of public space as commercial imperatives define acceptable behaviour, excluding those who detract from the consumption experience.» (Fyfe and Bannister, 1998, p. 263)

- 41 Another important question is why do planners continue to gentrify cities that already have consumption sites which cater for the affluent? The short answer to this is because such processes generate larger profits, but at what price? Ultimately this leads to the erosion of distinctive areas in the city (Klein, 2001; Zukin, 1995). This has certainly been the case in Manchester's Millennium Quarter as a unique part of Manchester's history (the Corn Exchange) has disappeared forever, forced out by the forces of commerce and privatisation. The bomb has undoubtedly played a major role in the transformation of the city centre, creating an ideal opportunity for huge redevelopment. It is unlikely that without the bomb the redevelopment of the area would have attracted such a large amount of public funding, which in turn meant that millions could be leveraged in private funding. The case of Manchester is unique and unusual in one respect, as few UK cities experience terrorist attacks of this size. However, the response to the attack is not so unusual as the attraction of private funds was viewed as key to the successful regeneration of the city, a standard model for regeneration in the west as the popularity of public private partnerships increases. This means that cities have less opportunity to develop organically, squeezing out the small independent businesses and alternative cultures as injections of cash from profit hungry private investors shape how the city evolves.

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## NOTES

1. In extreme cases this can result in the «branding» of areas such as Sony plaza in New York (see Zukin, 1995).
2. A particularly good example of this is Klein's (2001) account of how Starbucks have taken over American cities.
3. General definitions of public tend to define public as anywhere which is not private (i.e. the home). Another misconception is that because such spaces are used in a loose sense by the general public they are public. These definitions are problematic because they do not pay attention to legal ownership of such spaces and whether they are actually accessible to all.
4. This article will draw heavily on qualitative data gained from interviewing a sample of those working in the Millennium Quarter, Manchester and its surrounding environs. The data indicates that the Millennium Quarter has been designed with certain consumers (the affluent middle classes) and producers (upmarket retail outlets) of culture in mind. This process has led to the gentrification of the area.
5. The Millennium Quarter in Manchester is dominated by such exclusive retailers as Selfridges and a range of expensive boutiques in the Triangle (formerly the Corn Exchange). The exclusive retail image of the area will be increased when Harvey Nichols opens its doors in 2003.
6. With the exception of the central districts of Hulme and Ancoats who were poorly served (Davies, 1992).
7. Manchester's top ten companies include Airtours Leisure Travel, Great Universal Stores Home Shopping and Sharp Electronics (UK) all of whom have chosen to base their largest office spaces or headquarters in Manchester.
8. Economic Regional Development Fund £20 million, Department of Environment Transport and Regions £43 million and Millennium Commission £20 million
9. The bomb which exploded on June 15, 1996 damaged approximately 49,000 square metres of prime retail space including the Corn Exchange, Marks and Spencers, part of the Arndale Centre (Cross Street and Cannon Street) and the Royal Exchange (theatre and shopping area).
10. The sample consisted of 4 individuals who had businesses in the Millennium Quarter before 1996, 3 individuals who currently work in the Millennium Quarter and one person who has been in an area bordering the Millennium Quarter for the past 20 years (8 interviewees in total). The respondents were selected using various techniques; one was personally known by the researcher, others were recommended to the researcher by gatekeepers and snowballing was employed especially with the former traders in the area as one trader directed the researcher to the next. All respondents were chosen because they had detailed everyday experience of the Millennium Quarter. They were asked a series of open questions which concentrated on how they viewed and used the area both prior to and after the bomb. All interviews were conducted anonymously as the researcher felt that this would lead to interviewees being more honest and vocal about their true feelings.
11. Exchange Square and Cathedral Gardens are regularly used, during fair weather, at lunchtime by those employed in the area.
12. The area is home to a large teenage population some of whom use the area for skateboarding, though this is forbidden in the area. The majority of young people tend to just use it as a place to



meet and hang out on a Saturday though. The use of the area by this group warrants further investigation and could form another journal article in itself.

13. Marks and Spencer used to occupy the whole of their building in the Millennium Quarter but falling sales forced them to lease half of their store space to Selfridges.

14. Manchester City Council now has a bylaw which means that anyone skateboarding will be fined £500. This legislation is only enforced for those who are repeat offenders or who cause significant damage to the built environment.

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## ABSTRACTS

This paper aims to trace the historical development of consumption activities in the city. The example of Manchester, England will be used to provide a retrospective view on the shift from industrial to post-industrial city. It will be argued that consumption has always played a role in the way that urban space is ordered, though this has not always been as significant as in the post-industrial era. This paper will also give evidence of the way in which consumption sites are increasingly “privatised” or “commercialised” in the sense that those using that space have to negotiate access (usually via economic capital). In this way they become exclusive areas, designed with a particular group in mind, usually young, affluent professionals. How such processes of exclusivity are shaped by and relate to local politics will also be explored, in order to establish who the powerful groups are and how they construct the city.

Cet article vise à retracer le développement historique des activités de consommation dans la ville. Manchester nous servira d'exemple pour présenter une vue rétrospective du passage de l'état de ville industrielle à celui de ville post-industrielle, partant du fait que la consommation a toujours joué un rôle dans l'agencement de l'espace urbain, même si ce fut davantage le cas durant l'ère post-industrielle. Cet article démontrera également comment les lieux de consommation se “privatisent” ou se “commercialisent” de plus en plus, au sens où les utilisateurs de ces espaces doivent en négocier l'accès (le plus souvent par le biais d'un capital économique). C'est ainsi que ces espaces deviennent des lieux huppés, réservés à un groupe spécifique d'individus, jeunes privilégiés issus la plupart du temps de la bourgeoisie. Nous examinerons également la façon dont de tels processus d'exclusivité sont façonnés par les politiques municipales et comment ils s'y rattachent, afin d'établir quels sont les groupes influents et comment ils façonnent la ville.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** privatisation, espace public, consommation, gentrification

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