

Decent Homes and Tenant Empowerment

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Executive Summary

Management theorists tend to view the British industrial revolution through the lens of scientific management whereas economists view the period as a very ardent albeit constrained growth process. Whether your position is to agree with the industrial revolution's sentiment in academic literature or to disagree, it seems as though the literature's incessant obsession with economic growth has paid its first real-world dividend. Less than 150 years since the original industrial revolution which took place in steel factories across Britain and the United States, there has emerged a new contestant for the prize of economic growth's model of innovation-based efficiency – AI data centres.

As a blogger in the infrastructure industry, I have had the privilege of speaking with many communication directors and investor relations representatives in regard to investment in European based data centre assets on more or less a daily basis, which has caused a proverbial ring tone to sound. However, the signals are seemingly contradictory. On the one hand investors are said to be bailing into these assets at a time when property valuations are beginning to show signs of stress, in terms of yield, and on the other hand data centre assets are said to (by one source) account for 0% of GDP in the United States in 2025.

Are data centres the futuristic innovation AI enablers the world economy has been awaiting since the mid-1850's? Where will the resources and land come from to build on and of course to energise these infrastructure assets? Will, as the famous Chief Executive of Alphabet and Google, tech giants be positioned to compete with one another on the basis of locational distributions in the outermost regions of our planetary orbit? How does Tesla's CEO Elon Musk view the phenomenon as unfolding? These are all questions we must consider and confront with an ounce of pessimism.

What I find strikingly nuanced, isn't just the debate concerning how we will invest in data centres to sustain tech-based businesses and economic growth potential, but it's also the debate on commercial sector infrastructure supply and how business tenancies in Great Britain are slowly becoming depreciated by the stress of population growth. Successive Conservative Prime Ministers (David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and most recently Rt. Hon Rishi Sunak) have all had very public-school oriented concepts of economic growth and infrastructure demand. Recently elected British Prime Minister, **Sir Keir Starmer**, is now consequently faced with a convergence of reality that pressures him to secure investment in AI data centres as commercial real estate is becoming more and more difficult for private place-makers to engage with profitably (because of diminishing margins which deems the pursuit unfeasible as a business model) – according to various sources.

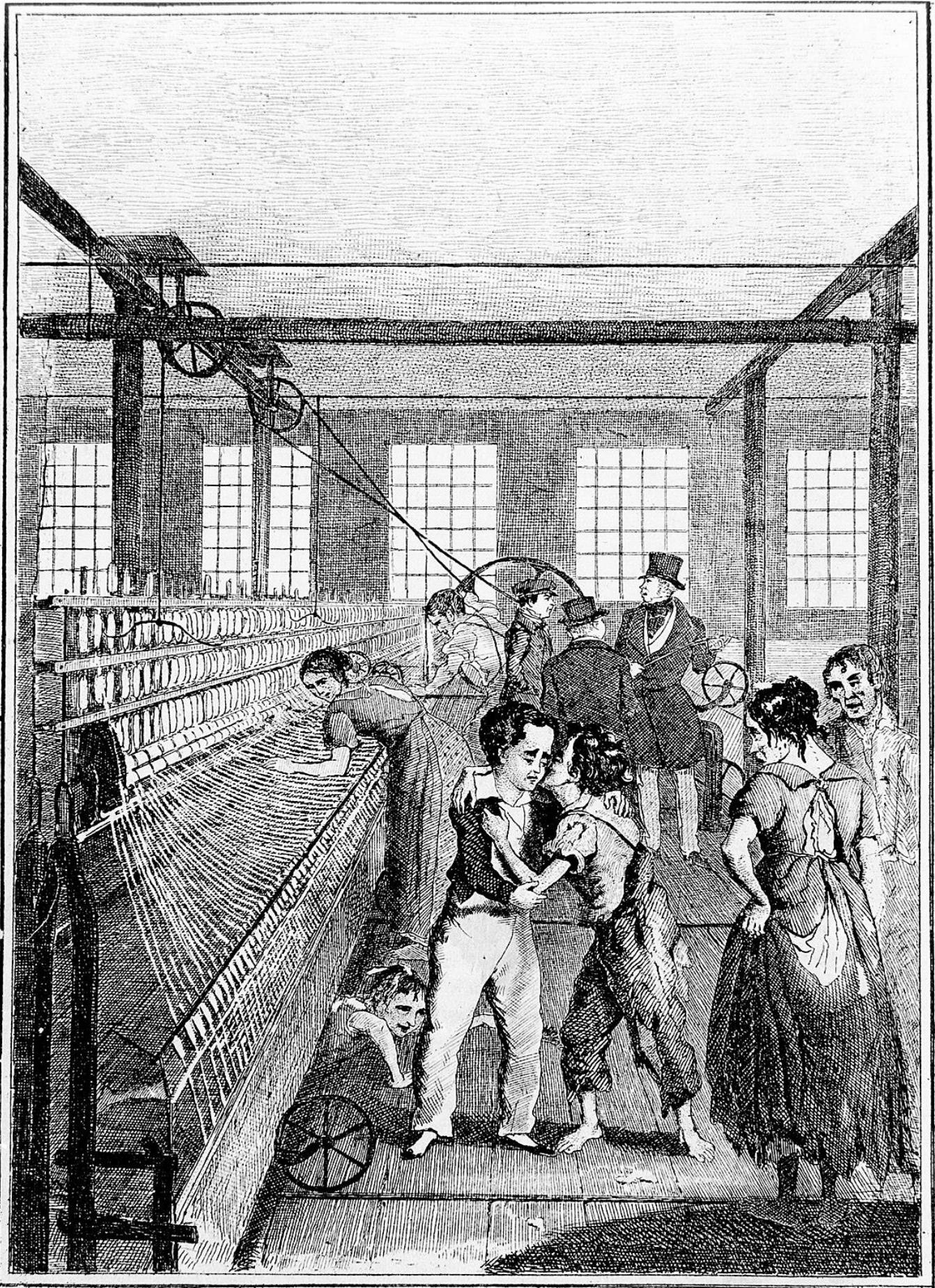
So, what therefore is the synthesis to a game theoretic problem of fair and equitable re-allocation of resources to those involved in the model of economic development found here in a constitutional democracy and open market economy that has survived every attempt to thwart and frustrate its meteoric rise from Victorian era factories through to Elizabethan era enterprise all the way to the current Monarch's stamp on this country's infrastructural development? I will argue in this 2026 article for the Labour Housing Group's **Red Brick Blog** that tenant empowerment is at the crux of any synthesis which can be derived.



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Where to Invest? Data Centres or CRE? The Role of Community Empowerment



Framing ‘Empowerment’ as Foucauldian

Does anyone but me happen to remember the first Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer of African descent, Mr. Kwasi Kwarteng? His front-page exposition in the Mail concerning what he contested was the “Naked Class War” of the new first-female (and Labour) Chancellor Rachel Reeves in her inaugural Autumn Budget of 2024 was a remarkable moment in that the front-page headline and article relied on criticism which completely obliterated any legitimacy his record and performance had in the same exact position Chancellor Reeves is now in. It seems appropriate therefore that, like all types of Marxism, a naked class war occupies a much more stable scenario than the inherent contradiction of Kwarteng’s theoretical and applicable experiences. The reason I am calling for this to be framed as a Tenant vs Council dilemma and by extension a class struggle as well as a front bench vs party of opposition dilemma is because of the complex nature in which homebuilders and councils operate. As a popular blogger, I realised this morning that the contrast between two of these collaborative parties is discussed extensively by McKee and Cooper (2008). They see Foucault as being of *significant* ideation to the struggle of ‘*Governmentality, Technologies of Citizenship and the ‘Will to Empower*’. Those who McKee and Cooper cite as authority in their article such as Thomas Lemke (2001) and Michael Foucault (2003) himself are not only conflating ‘power’ with ‘empowerment’ but are also paralleling the use of these structures as Hobbesian in nature.

Whether you agree with the view that the British industrial revolution was a wholly conformist process in that Victorian era workers evidently rolled their sleeves up and were encouraged to work to support the betterment of their society, the offshoots of this sort of divisional labour are a resultant division of not just labour but of the very same society. Social fragmentation occurs, society becomes stratified beyond recognition. May what might occur in a fourth industrial revolution be as similar to what Britons have just observed over more than a century and a half ago? The fundamental attributive concept of ‘empowerment’ is not something that can be avoided.

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

The proposed aim of this Bill of Parliament is effectively to give devolved power to “local leaders” who will be provided with “the tools to deliver growth”. The House of Lords Library briefing arguably sees growth in a very policy determined manner, as though policy and growth were of the same foundation or even premised to be anywhere near related to one another. Sir Keir Starmer’s Labour Government would have you believe that indeed, as in subsection 2.7.1 the Bill proposes that self-regulation through conventional ‘codes of practice’ in what is referred to as ‘the current system’ are “not working” (Tudor, 2025: p.33). How is this conclusion ascertained? Where does the proposed solution (to remove UORR) become effective and where does the problem itself end? English Devolution is something which this Party has long held aloft as a mechanism to communal ownership (of brownfield and greenfield land, of social housing and of other means such as the NHS Trust structure), are we now effectively relegating the act of devolution to the meagre confines of pecuniary incentive?

Pinsent Masons, described as a leading UK law firm, through its Out-Law.com publication which is maintained by experts such as Melanie Grimshaw and Mike Pocock analyzing its impact on housing, infrastructure and new towns, have long since commented on this topic of the mayoral power inherent to the northern powerhouse, city empowerment over local transport, housing, and healthcare, and how to devolve such power to the Mayor of Greater Manchester. In [this Out-Law News summary](#), Former UK Chancellor and now adviser to Coinbase, George Osborne deliberates the impact of Mayors in the Greater Manchester region.

A Final Word

The question of this essay surrounds the theme of “decent homes and tenant empowerment”. But where do the UK Labour Party look for inspiration as to how the world around them is conceived and how these structures of empowerment can be replicated? I have suggested a prime example are the themes found in that of Foucauldian, and Hobbesian forms of power (from within the governing state).

END

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