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About

PhD title: 'Financial Consumerism': Thatcherism, Private-Ownership, Citizenship and Consumerism in the 1980s.

Supervisor: [Professor Matthew Hilton](/staff/profiles/history/hilton-matthew.aspx) and [Professor Gavin Schaffer](/staff/profiles/history/schaffer-gavin.aspx)

PhD Modern History (</postgraduate/courses/research/history/modern-history.aspx>)

Research

My research concerns the dissemination of 'Thatcherism', not only by the Conservative Party, but also by a variety of institutions, organisations and individuals in the late twentieth century. In particular it focuses on the evolving relationship between the individual and the concept of private ownership during the 1980s, with a particular emphasis on the popularisation of individual share-ownership.

By using popular capitalism, and share-ownership as a case study, my research explores the institutional and ideological mechanisms of 'Thatcherism'. This includes the activities of groups with varying levels of interest in the spread of wider share ownership such as the Conservative Party, the London Stock Exchange, financial intermediaries such as banks, building societies and stockbrokers, as well as the popular press. In a variety of ways, these groups contributed to the normalisation of Thatcher's economic revolution, which saw share shops, the stock market and privatisations enter the everyday culture of the 1980s.

This process also involved a concerted ideological project which reconfigured the relationship between citizenship and the consumption and accumulation of capital. Thus the case of popular share ownership allows for wider questions about the changing nature of consumer society, participation and social inclusion in the 1980s.

My current work looks at 'Financial Consumerism', a term which captures the confluence of several changes which occurred in the 1980s and which were central to the project of Thatcherism. But I hope to expand upon this by taking a more transnational approach to my research through a consideration of the complex relationship between the American experiences of neoconservatism and Thatcher's neoliberal economic revolution in Britain. This will include mapping the interactions between pro-wider share ownership groups in America and Britain as well as comparing the ways in which shares were sold to an American and a British public.