- What is the paradox that the LBGTQ community faces that is leading to the decline of or transformation of the gay enclave? What are the important social functions of the "gayborhood" for marginalized members of the LGBTQ community?

CHAPTER 10

THE REVITALIZATION OF THE HISTORICAL INNER CITY

Gentrification, Theming, and Uneven Development

Consider two signs that have appeared in various parts of Denver, Colorado since 2016. One sign that a chain coffee café named ink! placed on a two-sided sidewalk billboard outside its store in Denver's five points neighborhood read "Happily Gentrifying the Neighborhood Since 2014" and "Nothing says Gentrification Like Being Able to Order a Cortado" (Hesse, 2017). The cafe is located in Denver's RiNo district that was once populated by artists and comprised of run-down warehouses, but has experienced significant economic revitalization in recent years. The backlash to the sign was predictable. Another one began popping up in northeast Denver that read, "My Community is Not for Sale" in English and "Mi comunidad no está en venta" in Spanish (Tracey, 2016). In contrast to the RiNo District, the northern parts of Denver are largely comprised of low-income and Latino and aging white ethnic groups. These signs represent the class, cultural, and spatial tensions created by the revitalization of historic inner cities, such as Denver that has occurred due to rising real estate prices since the 1990s.

One of the fastest growing metropolitan regions in America can be found in Denver. The Denver MCMR is comprised of ten counties with a population of 2.8 million people. The historic inner city's population surpassed the 700,000 mark in 2017, a gain of 100,000 persons since 2010. To put this turnaround into context, Denver's historic inner city experienced decline throughout the 1980s, largely due to the drop in oil prices that adversely affected its oil and gas extraction companies, and only began its transformation as a desirable place to live in the 1990s. Denver's economy diversified along the lines of public employment tied to it being the state capital, large firms that benefit from federal defense and aerospace spending, and a high-tech research corridor, to go along with its mining operations. In 2016, The US World News and Report ranked Denver as the best place to live in America.

How did Denver turn things around as a best place to live? What makes it a desirable place, and more importantly, for what people exactly is Denver the best place to live? The economy is an obvious pull factor, but the economy alone does not account for Denver's revitalization. City politicians worked with real estate developers to condemn and raise houses only to replace them with upscale buildings. Colorado's Tourism Board markets Denver to prospective residents as "urban sophistication meets outdoor adventure" (Denver.org). The influx of high-skilled employers has increased median housing values and driven up the cost of renting storefronts. For well-to-do whites, the economic revitalization of Denver has meant prosperity while for others it has meant a mean gentrification leading to the displacement of ethnic and racial minorities that are less affluent.

Gentrification is one contemporary example of uneven development that brings together investment capital uninterested in playing with stocks and the second circuit of real estate. The process involves capital (typically from outside the community) being invested in the real estate of urban areas that have become run-down due to uneven spatial development. Essential to the process is the promise of local politicians to control original residents and subsidize new, upscale construction. Consequently, while this form of making money in the second circuit has the promise of revitalizing poorer neighborhoods, new investment does not necessarily benefit the neighborhood's original residents. In everyday life tensions develop between the residents that were already there and the ones moving in. Those who are further marginalized express their cultural connections to the neighborhood as a means of activating political levers to protect their standing in the community. Meanwhile, with the blessings of government officials, those who stand to benefit from the gentrification process may try to obscure these differences, or they may apply the pre-existing cultural identity of the neighborhood in their efforts to theme their neighborhood in order to push consumer spending, even as those who created this cultural identity are displaced.

Despite the domination of suburbia in regard to the total regional population, there is no doubt that the historical central city retains a pedestrian and consumer-oriented culture that remains relatively unique and attractive to all residents. Global capital invested in renovating historic buildings can leverage the symbolic value of the structure's historic characteristics and central location to create housing or business offices that appeal to upwardly mobile workers. Gentrification often occurs in poor urban neighborhoods, in part because lower rents make the promise of profit from capital investment more likely, but also because poorer neighborhoods are close to the historic inner city. However, the gentrification of poor neighborhoods is primarily restricted to poor *white* neighborhoods and poor Hispanic neighborhoods. Only recently have black inner city neighborhoods and ghettos, such as Bedford-Stuyvesant or Crown Heights (in Brooklyn), faced gentrification. Revitalized inner city neighborhoods also play an important role in nighttime activities for a diverse group of people ranging from young adult bar hoppers, music and theater aficionados of all ages, and tourists looking for a "good time."

This chapter takes a critical look at gentrification of the historical inner city by situating it alongside other forms of uneven development in the MCMR. Despite the emergence of the multicentered metropolitan region as the new form of urban space, large cities continue to matter symbolically and economically for the MCMR. The main question we are dealing with is why does the remaking of the historical inner city involve emphasizing cultural aspects of the urban political economy? How has remaking the historical inner city left a mark on the image of its location or of the greater metropolitan region that contains it? Finally, how does the ebb and flow of investment in the second circuit of real estate turn to profit making in the depressed inner city with the aid of local politicians and the influx of businesses requiring a more affluent, professional labor force.

GENTRIFICATION

Even if this is the first scholarly text you have read in urban sociology, you have likely encountered the term "gentrification." Gentrification often involves socioeconomic changes in a less affluent urban space that forces the existing, typically working-class residents out of their neighborhood. Consequently, along with revitalization and the movement into an area by a more professional, high consuming labor force, comes the displacement of original residents that then have to find another location with low rents and property values in order to live. Thus, the popular usage of the term often ignores the field of research it has inspired and obscures the scholarly and social scientific understanding of its meaning. Ruth Glass (1964), who is widely credited with coining the term "gentrification," explained it as a process of England's middle class moving into the working-class sections of London. Glass understood gentrification as the result of the consumption patterns of the wealthier residents, who invest in home improvements to increase the home's value, which ends up driving up the cost of housing throughout the area thereby making it difficult for any of the poorer residents to remain. Glass's initial conceptualization echoes the Chicago School assumption that cities were neatly divided into stable neighborhoods and enclaves, albeit with a reversal of Burgess' concentric zone model that predicted an outward movement of the middle and upper classes from the historical inner city. In this way, Glass's research demonstrated early on that, despite the formation of the MCMR as the new urban space, the original large central city still played an important role.

In contrast to the popular usage of gentrification, a social scientific definition needs technical indicators to distinguish this phenomenon from other forms of urban development. There are three basic criteria that distinguish gentrification from other forms of urban transformations. They are the supply-side, the demand-side, and displacement.

Supply-Side

The supply-side aspects of gentrification include the role of economic investment, different levels of government subsidies, and the role of the real estate sector to sell the neighborhood to more affluent and white-collar workers. This aspect highlights the role of capital's interest in maximizing rent, or profit from urban space, and investing in local places to supply new consumer places that would revitalize the city (Smith, 1996). Government policies, including public–private ventures based on development plans, public subsidies for renovations like tax credits, and transportation policy changes often accompany capital investment itself as attempts are made to regenerate the value of inner city location. Consequently, the phenomenon of inner city revitalization involves a complex process with many actors—local politicians, real estate speculators and the presence of new, more professional people drawn to the city location by job opportunities.

The supply-side facets of gentrification are part of the second circuit of capital and the process of capital switching. Gottdiener (1985) explained how the movement of capital between circuits changes urban space and shapes social life in the city. The primary circuit of capital is the industrial sector. Here, capital is invested in labor to create products that are sold at a profit. The secondary circuit is real estate. Capital switches circuits from industry to real estate often because of recessions in one sector or the other, where rents or profits can be more stable and acquired, or, when there is enough loose cash around for speculative investment opportunities in real estate to promise a higher return than investing in the primary circuit of capital. Yet, the valuation of property or business stocks in the first and second circuits are always in flux and are often out of sync with each other (Gottdiener and Budd, 2005). As a result, these shifting real estate investments within the historical city center, that are called gentrification or revitalization of place, contribute to overdevelopment, real estate bubbles, and uneven development. Because capital is primarily controlled by white owners, but is invested in poorer and devalued neighborhoods, this process becomes imbued with racial and class antagonisms. As access to these spaces shifts from the less to the more affluent, new meanings are embedded in places, and thus, new group identities are affirmed that marginalize the displaced residents' symbolic attachments to place.

Demand-Side

The demand-side aspect of gentrification functions as a pull factor because it makes a neighborhood attractive to prospective new residents. Pull factors include the construction of luxury apartments that include indoor resident parking and fitness rooms, exotic and fashionable restaurants newly opened in the area, and

boutique shops for varied higher end consumer goods. Often more affluent people may be attracted to a gentrifying area because it retains something of its original urban character including just the right amount of those residents who originally lived there. However, by necessity, a city government must guarantee the safety of these new affluent residents through an increased police presence and swifter response times for criminal or medical emergencies. Without such a drastic change in the way a city cares for a particular and formerly depressed area, gentrification will not occur.

The demand-side approach, therefore, captures the changes in the role of consumer culture and cultural orientations, as well as political influence caused by the movement of new, more affluent social classes into a neighborhood. The more privileged residents want both upscale amenities and some preservation of colorful elements belonging to the original urban neighborhood. For example, Brown-Saracino (2017) finds that wealthier gentrifiers are often "uneasy" with their roles in changing the structure and character of their neighborhoods. The uneasy gentrifiers become social preservationists by trying to prevent the displacement of some original residents, because the recent occupiers perceive the old-timers as essential for maintaining an "authentic" community in that neighborhood. Hyra's (2017) study of the Shaw/U Street neighborhood in Washington, DC, notes how some of these new residents discuss occasional crime and violence in the area as though these occurrences make the location "edgy and authentic," without much apparent concern for being victimized. Meanwhile, lower-income black residents continue to fear paying the price for persisting urban crime. As a result, "intense frictions and tensions" emerge in the neighborhood, as a class- and race-based struggle over political control of the territory turns into a political and cultural fight.

Displacement

Gentrification involves the push and pull factors of capitalism, the real estate sector, changes in consumer amenities *and* the struggles of differential groups against displacement. According to Lefebvre, differential groups such as racial minorities, women, the elderly, and LGBTQ have no existence as groups until they appropriate a space of their own. Without the spatial component of their culture, they cannot assert their right to participate in decision-making that works against their fragmentation and marginalization, and they cannot claim their right to equality as residents with the newer population.

In addition to the housing aspects of displacement, there are also cultural factors at play, such as whether or not a resident feels like they belong to the neighborhood, feels welcomed living there by other residents, or can enjoy amenities that they can freely use, such as churches, community centers, a dog walk park, a baker, or a grocery store.

Controversy exists over the desirability of gentrification. Some see it as the solution to decades of urban decay, as a way to promote economic development and as a reduction of urban blight in an area for deindustrialized older American inner cities that were commonly understood to harbor dangerous, crime-filled neighborhoods. Paton (2014) recognizes that municipalities often uncritically cheer gentrification processes, and that gentrification has become a *de facto* policy of revitalization despite its consequences of displacement for the less advantaged, former ethnic people or minorities. She challenged portrayals of working-class residents as unsympathetic victims. They can also produce displacement. But, the difference between middle-class and working-class residents remains the degree of control that each group possesses over their lives. As rents increase and consumer choices expand, the ability of the less affluent people to make consumer choices becomes more limited in a process that slowly excludes, and eventually displaces, working-class residents from the neighborhood.

Box 10.1

A Case Study in Gentrification: The Lower East Side

2018 was the thirtieth anniversary of the Tompkins Square Park riots. On August 6 and 7, 1988, the NYC police department attacked a group of protesters in Tompkins Square Park, causing a brief but violent encounter between the police and protesters. In 1988, Tompkins Square Park itself was a place that local homeless, addicts, and members of New York's punk rock and hardcore scene hung out. But the reason for the protest was gentrification.

The Lower East Side, renamed The East Village in the 1960s, was a mixture of white, black, and Hispanic residents, almost entirely working class, with a healthy dose of artists and musicians, including the famous beat poet Alen Ginsberg, and the musician and author Richard Hell, who has lived in the same East Village apartment since 1975, one floor above Ginsberg. CBGB's, the famous music club and birthplace of punk rock music in the 1970s, was located in the Lower East Side. There were run-down and abandoned buildings that were transformed into squats, especially in Alphabet City, that was home to an estimated thirty squats. 1988 was not the beginning of the era of gentrification, but it was a tipping point where residents organized to try and stop it.

Upper-class whites, many of whom worked on Wall Street, began moving into the East Village in the early 1980s. The flow of Wall Street money was tied to the neoliberal turn in American politics, especially the 1981 Kemp-Roth Tax cuts and the deregulation of the banking and housing sectors. Wall Street was a supply-side pull factor that brought young professionals, or yuppies, back to

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New York. Many of these yuppies wanted to live in the city. The real estate sector sold the Lower East Side to yuppies in search of a place to live that was considered cool and bohemian. At this time, other parts of Manhattan, notably SoHo and Greenwich Village, experienced an uptick in gentrification as well, but the availability of tenements and abandoned buildings in the East Village were ripe for development. Mele (2000) characterized the new high-end residential and commercial buildings in the East Village as "a contrived sense of urban grittiness and 'feel' of downtown without the risks and inconveniences of poverty" and as places where "the symbolic inclusion of difference coexists with its material exclusion" (2000: 3, 4). What distinguished capital investment into the Lower East Side in the 1980s and 1990s was how it was paired with how the real estate sector promoted and represented the East Village as a cool and gritty alternative to Greenwich Village.

The new residents pushed for the city police department to crack down on the visibly poor that hung out on the sidewalks and the parks. Although Mayor Ed Koch was considered a liberal on some social issues, he was a staunch supporter of giving business and developers various tax incentives to gentrify New York, supported private groups taking control over public space, like the parks, and used the New York City Health Department to shut down gay bath houses and some of the more seedy straight clubs. His mayoral successor, David Dinkins, hired an additional 2,000 police officers. Dinkins's mayoral successor, Rudy Giuliani, hired an additional 12,000 police officers, as part of his all-out war against the poor, rationalized through his racist zero tolerance and broken windows theory style of policing.

As capital and yuppies continued to flock to the East Village, the feel of the neighborhood changed, and local residents were displaced. Some were displaced because they were evicted or had their buildings demolished so a new high-rise condo could be constructed. Others have left because they felt like they no longer belonged. New restaurants and boutique shops replaced the dive bars. However, not all of the original types of residents have left the East Village. Some have stayed, and you can still find a record shop, a Knishery, a bodega, and even a flophouse or two—but probably not three.

When Target opened its first store in the East Village in 2018, it recreated the famed CBGB's facade and canopy with the letters TRGT and a poster with the word "resistance." Although Target thought it was a homage to the cultural heyday of the Lower East Side, it was much more symbolic of who and what was displaced.

Thus, the phenomenon of gentrification as a policy of urban renewal must be understood within the context of the existing class and racial structure. Thomas, for example, rejected the notion that "urban problems can be alleviated by replacing the poor with the middle class" because "today's 'urban problems' are but a manifestation of the recurrent problems of class and race inequality and injustice in a place-based context" (1979: 69). Indeed, those who emphasize the positive possibilities of gentrification do so without much consideration for the impacts on more vulnerable local populations.

Gentrification is a particularly interesting concept to examine through the sociospatial perspective because it illustrates how different groups make claims to social space. The phenomenon of a social group making a claim for residential location, especially when it is already occupied, captures the circulation of capital in and around the metropolitan area, the way places are embedded with social meanings, and the continual contested nature of social space during the stage of global capitalism when economies are not as stable as in the past.

BEYOND THE ONE DIMENSIONAL VIEW OF REVITALIZATION

Gentrification is not a universal feature of all metropolitan areas. Many cities in the Rust Belt and midwest, and some of the deindustrialized regions of Europe, have experienced disinvestment and population decline without revitalization. These places face the urban social problems of abandonment, social upheaval, and high levels of poverty and violence. Rousseau (2009; 2012) argued that such areas are victims of the uneven development of global capitalism. Nevertheless, municipalities continue to invest in supply-side and demand-side policies as a strategy to reverse regional economic decline and fight urban disorder. State and municipal governments have tried to create the cultural conditions that they think would attract their preferred residents—white-collar workers, affluent people of means, and upscale employment in new industries. This has led to government aiding capital by investing limited public resources that subsidize amenities which do not benefit existing residents, such as expensive restaurants and specialized "boutique" stores, or by converting warehouses into loft spaces using public money; that is, by redesigning the historical inner city around the cultural tastes of the affluent middle class and potential business or real estate investors.

Another dimension to contemporary inner city renewal not considered as "gentrification," *per se*, involves the process of "embourgeoisement." Often, affluent people may simply move into an area because of its locational advantage without thought of making a profit on capital investment. Even in areas where there are colleges, students may displace poorer residents by taking over apartments and being willing to pay higher rents including putting up with roommates that

share space. In these cases movement of people with means into a depressed part of the city pushes original residents out. However, these examples of embourgeoisement are merely ways in which neighborhoods are altered by the general characteristics of urban growth (Preteceille, 2007), rather than the more complex, often coordinated process of gentrification that involves both the public and private sectors. Embourgeoisement occurs in post-industrial cities because, usually, the most affluent people never really abandon the historical inner city even if they also own property in other areas of the MCMR or in other regions of the country. A considerable amount of legacy wealth from the industrial era remains in the Rust Belt for example. And not surprisingly, these same elites have benefited the most from state investment in the region's cultural economy, driven by an economic ideology that developing cultural amenities can stimulate further economic growth (Clark et al., 2002). For this reason, even in deindustrialized inner cities that have failed to rebound, both public and private investment can be found in museums, public events like "Shakespeare in the Park," municipal zoos, special children's day activities, 3K and lengthier jogs for various causes, bicycle and pedestrian days when city streets are closed to auto traffic, regular farmer's markets, and other efforts to get regional populations to visit the urban downtown. Americans living in our largest cities are all familiar with these kinds of measures, even if their historical downtowns continue to languish in a depressed state.

If reinvigoration is successful in a location, invariably it is because state and local governments create the conditions for speculative investment in specific areas and neighborhoods. For example, Detroit's Cass Corridor, Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood, and the placement of an inner city medical corridor by the New York State University at Buffalo (SUNY) within Buffalo have resulted in substantial investment followed by mixed outcomes measured by rising rents, the influx of the more affluent, the appearance of high-tech business along with residential displacement of poorer residents. The question remains whether or not the form of displacement is due to the distinct, coordinated process of gentrification or, rather, some form of embourgeoisement as a consequence of unplanned positive investment in the historical inner city, itself.

Regardless of the cause, much urban renewal of neighborhoods creates landscapes that look the same in every inner city, as Maloutas (2011) has observed. In this milieu we find old brick warehouses or abandoned factories turned into expensive lofts. Every other corner may have a local brewery that sells $8 pints of beer, cafés and coffee shops peddling lattes and French pastries for about the same price, or high-end grocery stores like Whole Foods and Trader Joes that sell the experience of consuming distinctive food more so than buying distinctive foods, and boutique specialty shops replacing affordable department stores. In this sense, the historical inner city takes on the same middle-class consumerist atmosphere, with the same stores everywhere, as do the malls that make up other areas of the MCMR.

Regardless of the cause, as well, the issue in regions across the US and in European countries that have experienced inner city revival remains the same—housing is too expensive. Here at home, we have a national affordable housing crisis that is only getting worse and distorts the market position of all households. More money paid on shelter means less money paid to local businesses through consumption. Our debt economy expands while there seems to be little evidence that people are living better. We know they sure are working harder. Inner city urban living seems to exclude the child-rearing middle class, that is, the type of people that give neighborhoods the stability they need to maintain the quality of community life. How different are the streets of the city today than in decades past when kids played safely and with gleeful abandon? How different today are families, college students, and young adults just starting out in careers that are saddled with excess rents or mortgages with premiums too high by earlier government standards? In Chapter 8 on Social Problems we discussed the affordable housing crisis at length. Now, in this chapter on revitalization of the inner city, it is important to remind readers again that the high cost of shelter is the greatest impediment to the quality of life in our society. Whatever improvements in residential and business development that may draw investment back into depressed urban areas, they cannot raise our standard of living without full frontal facing of our national affordable housing crisis.

Box 10.2

The New Bohemia

Richard Lloyd notes that while cities have always played an important role as incubators of cultural innovation, new ideas about the artist and his or her relationship to the city developed during the course of the nineteenth century, particularly in Paris. The romantic paradigm viewed artists and poets as "exulted and often tortured geniuses" alienated from and often unappreciated by the larger society. The Latin Quarter in Paris developed from student quarter to intellectual community, described by Balzac in *Un Prince de la Bohème*, with the ideals of the bohemian lifestyle: hedonism and self-sacrifice, rejection of bourgeois values, and the primary of *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake). The hillside village of Montmartre would later displace the Latin Quarter as the center of bohemian life in Paris.

In the past, one had to look deeply to find bohemia in the United States; Greenwich Village in New York City was the original bohemian area in the United States, consciously drawing on the European example. After World War II, a new bohemian style developed—the beatnik—along with bohemian districts in San

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Francisco (North Beach) and Los Angeles (Venice Beach). In the last few decades, however, there has emerged an alternative culture, populated by struggling writers, thrift stores, indie rockers, and the omnipresent coffee house. Richard Lloyd explains how this form of bohemia—once an exotic land confined to the metropolis—has become an ordinary thing in cities large and small across the country.

Bohemia has become an established district in even medium-sized cities and is promoted as a lifestyle amenity that increases property values. Richard Lloyd's ethnographic study is situated in Chicago's Wicker Park, once home to Frankie Machine, a junkie, in Nelson Algren's *Walk on the Wild Side*, later the site of violent gang warfare in the 1970s and 1980s, and finally the location of Rob Gordon's record shop, Championship Vinyl, in the 2000 film *High Fidelity*. Today Wicker Park is home to fashionable bars, art galleries, and high-tech start-up companies, as well as the people who work in them. Lloyd locates the new bohemia at the intersection of contemporary alternative cultures and the new forces of globalization; the locals are drawn to creative industries like media, advertising, and design and have a tolerance for other nonconformists; they are "creatures of the night" who flaunt thrift store clothes, piercings, and tribal tattoos, and they are the perfect workforce for the new creative industries, willing to work odd hours on a freelance basis at relatively low wages. The bartenders, baristas, and computer designers of Wicker Park have developed a lifestyle and values that are at odds with the suburban lifestyle, and to some degree, with mainstream society as well, as they have traded high wages for more regular jobs in the business world for the romance of bohemia.

SOURCE: Adapted from Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia* (2006) and "Bohemia" (2009).

REMAKING THE CENTRAL CITY AND URBAN SEMIOTICS

What makes an urban location an interesting place to live in, to shop in, or simply to visit? Why do some places acquire reputations for being creative and progressive, like San Francisco or Minneapolis, while others are viewed as backwater "river towns" like Memphis or a "mistake on the lake" like Cleveland? What makes Las Vegas "Sin City" and New Orleans "The Big Easy"? Are these slogans an example of clever marketing, or do they illustrate deeper sociological factors of how we create urban identities?

If you have described a place as cool, run-down, or friendly, you have participated in socially constructing the identity of that space. An array of social actors are involved in defining a location's identity, including government place marketing,

tourist accounts, newspapers, policy think tanks, and even television shows (King and Crommelin, 2013). Business magazines rank states and cities in terms of good or bad for business, best places to raise a family, and best places to see live music. In this regard, an urban location's identity is partly constructed by marketers looking to give a specific destination a distinct brand, to accentuate positive images of it or to combat negative sentiments associated with it (Kavaratzis, 2004; Ward, 1998). Paulsen refers to this as "place character," a "conceptual tool for understanding how qualities of a location combine with local patterns of meaning and action" (2004: 243). In this regard, the meaning of a place includes the subjective views about a destination, its social history, cultural heritage, and its style of architecture.

Given that there are so many ways to describe and define a place positively, the first question we need to answer is why does one meaning stick while another meaning fails to catch on? Why can't some deindustrialized locations that remain run-down just say they are fun and exciting and full of smart, talented, and beautiful people? If we are going to understand how an MCMR identity can be remade through central city development, we will have to go beyond a study of the subjective meanings of places and toward an approach that accounts for the discursive and material aspects of MCMR revitalization. We find that approach in urban semiotics.

Urban semiotics focuses on the relationship between the material or built environment and symbols that bestow identifiable and clearly understood meanings to urban space (see Chapter 2). The key point implied by semiotic analysis is that we can understand where, when, and by whom or for what reason a specific sign or symbol was created and sustained in the local culture. This means we can account for the role of powerful and influential authority actors in creating reputations that have a disproportionate influence over the meaning of place. This is an exercise of power, because when someone in a position of influence speaks, it carries more weight than the average person, and it is especially true of developers with perceived money to spend, or planners and other government officials that have public power. Finally, urban semiotics can also account for, the opposite, the counter frames and symbols created by residents that contest the symbolic meaning of a place as a method of resistance with citizens not buying in to the larger, constructed narrative of place boosters.

Gottdiener's research on the theming of urban spaces shows how entire areas are embedded with motifs to "address the global aspect of declining profits in commercial enterprises" (1997:105). In other words, theming is a response to uneven development; a reaction by developers to revitalize declining areas in lieu of economic decline by differentiating themselves based on creating unique symbolic distinctions that then are attached to development projects. Examples include such developments as the Aquarium and Inner Harbor in Baltimore and Barcelona constructed by the same company utilizing the very same development model, by the Disney Corporation creation of its theme parks or the

redevelopment of Times Square that is also planned according to the same landscape model, or the fantasy casinos of Las Vegas that are all themed by mimicking Hollywood movie tropes, such as "the Old West," "Pirates," "Tropical Paradise," or by constructing simulations of famous urban places, such as Venice, Paris, and New York (Figure 10.1). Theming is not a city-based phenomenon. Themes are disbursed throughout all nodes of the multicentric region, especially by consumer retailing, so one centralized location may have a themed restaurant (the Rainforest Café) and another node a themed entertainment district (the Strip in Las Vegas). Urban themes are designed to connote pleasure and fun and are designed specifically as attractive memes providing a reason why you may want to visit there. Even though our focus in this section is on renewing the historical city center, we have to keep in mind that urban spaces always sit in relation to other minicenters in an MCMR with regard to economic, political and/or cultural forces producing the built environment.

The primary logic behind remaking a declining location is a cultural logic that creates and attaches a new identity to it. Any node in the MCMR's identity is always in flux, through new planning and development schemes, construction, renovation, or conversely, disinvestment. Redefining a place is a top-down effort

FIGURE 10.1 Theming of the Urban Environment. New York, New York Casino/Hotel complex in Las Vegas. SOURCE: Photograph by William Holt.

to shape a location's character with the hopes of making it more attractive to investors or workers considering moving or consuming there. As Miles and Paddison (2005:833) explain,

> What is remarkable here is not just the speed with which culture-driven strategies have become advocated by governments and local development agencies as a means of bolstering the urban economy, but also how their diffusion has globalized. Within the space of little more than two decades, the initiation of culture-driven urban regeneration has come to occupy a pivotal position in the new urban entrepreneurialism ... The language of place marketing has become as integral to the Asian city as it has the European or North American city—that, more specifically, the invocation of culture has become central to the ambitions.

Consequently, when considering any specific area of the MCMR, please pay attention to the symbols and signs used to mark space and give it a meaning that can be translated into money if visitors are attracted to businesses in that area. When, for example, we drive through a section of a city, not done before because we are tourists, and we pass up local Mexican or Italian restaurants, only to dine at a Taco Bell or an Olive Garden, then we have participated in a national semiotic process promoting signs for profit rather than the food prepared inside establishments because of our failure to risk something not themed and new.

The Historic Central Business District as an Adult Playground

Historically, the central business district has been, and in many cases, still is, the physical location of important political and economic buildings. If you go to any MCMR's historical centers, you'll most likely find a cluster of significant government buildings, like city hall, the county building and the courts, a cluster of powerful economic buildings, such as banks, and law offices and insurance companies, as well as legal services. This is why Ernest Burgess defined the city center as the CBD, or central business district. However, the formation of multicentric regions built around minicenters instead of the historical inner city location, changed the composition of that space. Many midlevel or back office banking and insurance companies are located in the suburbs, as are law offices. Each suburban town has its own court building and city hall, just on a much smaller scale. More people live in the suburbs than in the cities, and as we saw above and in previous chapters, residential neighborhoods range from ghettos to abandoned neighborhoods to newly gentrified areas and places where the most affluent live. Now, the central business district that Burgess emphasized as the prime place from which additional waves of development emanated and which once contained all the main civil and economic functions of society no longer exists.

Although many traditional inner city functions have now decentralized, cities most often remain the regional cultural center of entertainment, high culture and nightlife. For many regions, the revitalization of the historical inner city has focused on transforming it into an adult playground of sporting events, theater districts, museums, specialized restaurants that are relatively expensive, themed bars and nightclubs. Minneapolis, for example, has transformed its formerly deindustrialized area of abandoned factories within the inner city into an extremely concentrated entertainment zone. The National Basketball Association (NBA), National Football League (NFL), and Major League Baseball (MLB) teams are all located in this one area as well as upscale restaurants, bars, brew pubs, galleries, music venues that feature national groups as well as more local bands, the prestigious Walker modern art museum, and the Tyrone Guthrie Theater. Gone are the flop houses, drug addicts, and homeless vagrants who were very evident in this area during the 1960s and early 1970s. The new residents that have moved into new, high-end developments are solidly middle class. The new light rail system stops at Target Field, the baseball stadium that hosted the 2014 All Star game. The same light rail system also delivers tourists and consumers to the Mall of America, the largest mall in the United States, which is located outside the inner city and near the airport thereby promoting multicentered regional growth.

Professional sports are a highly lucrative and highly subsidized popular business. MLB franchises do not pay taxes, and neither did the NFL until 2013, because sports franchises are classified as 501(c)(6) non-profit. This fact is very hard to believe when fans note that they pay outrageous prices for tickets today. Professional sport largess from the pockets of average citizens does not stop with its influence on the federal government. State and local governments use public tax dollars to construct stadiums. Strangely enough, despite the popularity of government subsidization, an NFL stadium may only be used ten or twelve times a year. Despite all this direct subsidization by taxpayers who often balk at paying higher taxes to support public education, regional residents are passionate about their professional sports, evidenced by the large amount of money they provide through these various government subsidies for new stadiums, local television ratings, radio stations dedicated to talking about sports, local newspapers with a dedicated sports section, and hobbies like fantasy football. Although the trend has been to build NFL stadiums away from the historical inner city thereby expanding the reach of the MCMR, because of the space needed for tailgating and to avoid heavy traffic congestion, urban centers like Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland have created sports entertainment clusters in and around the historical inner city by building multi-purpose stadiums (stadiums that can be used for basketball, hockey, and concerts) rather than single purpose stadiums (stadiums used

solely for baseball or football). An increasing trend is the construction of smaller complexes for amateur sports, indoor fields that can house activities, such as soccer, softball, and lacrosse leagues, that service all locations throughout the MCMR. Amateur sports are a year-round and lucrative industry, and developers have eyed abandoned malls and warehouses or brownfield sites in the outer region as the location for these activities that also serve as training places for amateur athletes. Thus, when it comes to sports, all other collective public services, such as education, maintenance of parks, community centers, special programs for targeted populations, such as seniors or young children, and public libraries must take a back seat with limited tax support.

Another reason why traditional city centers retain their unique importance is that they have always been the center of nightlife. In part, the anonymity that accompanies the urban lifestyle allows partygoers to step outside of familial or occupational roles and experiment with or indulge in different identities. Today, nightlife has sprouted up in the older parts of urban places, such as the sites of abandoned and underused buildings and historic districts. The action in Kansas City, for example, has recently shifted from the oldest part of town, Westport, to the "Power and Light District" that has sprung up in the historical warehouse and train yard area just east of the old central business district. In this type of new urban space, we find a similar mix, as elsewhere, of upscale

FIGURE 10.2 Los Angeles, California, USA—April 12, 2017: Aerial view of Staples Center and neighboring Oceanwide Plaza construction site.

restaurants, barbecue places, brew pubs, music venues and museums (a science museum for children in the revitalized Union railroad station). In Columbia, South Carolina, the warehouse district along Gervais Street on the west side of downtown, known as the Vista, now hosts an ever-changing array of upscale restaurants, shopping, hotels, art galleries, and nightlife. Many of these businesses operate in historically preserved buildings, and Historic Columbia offers guided Happy Hour History walking tours that explore the neighborhood architecture while stopping at several bars along the way.

The logic behind the revitalization of the city center through sporting events and nightlife is that it retains the use of the otherwise abandoned historical inner city by elements of the population, such as middle-class adults or college students, with disposable income. On the whole, suburban residents have more money to spend on entertainment than their average inner city counterparts, and an evening out on the town that consists of an upscale, gourmet dinner and the theater or drinks and a hockey game is the way the nightlife cultural economy operates. The ideal partygoers, though, are young adults, especially young professionals or college students who live in the inner city, have or are studying to have professional jobs, who tend to be single, have no children, and keep significant amounts of money handy to have a "good time." Chatterton and Hollands (2003) have written an interesting case study of night life in the UK. They depict an active scene of young adults where local bars draw large crowds almost every night with many offering live music, although drinking and meeting potential romantic partners seem to be the major attractions. For this reason, development of such nighttime businesses as bars and theaters has, in the last two decades, been viewed as a major aspect of urban regeneration that greatly benefits the historical inner city through the growth of local businesses and increased tax revenue. Keeping the once abandoned downtowns busy with people is viewed as urban renewal, although the growing crowds may inconvenience the day-time residents of these areas with noise, traffic, and crime.

Cultural Tourism

A related but parallel trend in city center development is cultural tourism. Yet, this phenomenon is actively generalized throughout the MCMR and even includes areas that were formerly peripheral and sparsely populated, such as rural places, due to their agricultural products, like vegetables or wine, or for their historical value. Therefore, the entire MCMR trades on tourism.

Cultural tourism is also a global industry. Tourism accounts for 24% of Greece's GDP. Chinese investors have invested billions to acquire hotels in foreign countries to house tourists hoping to see well-known sites, such as Niagara Falls, The Statue of Liberty, or to enjoy world famous local cuisine in New Orleans. What is new and different about cultural tourism today is the use of culture by urban places for global positioning that emphasizes their local distinctiveness. Typically these types of historical tourist attractions have developed over the

course of hundreds of years, if not centuries, with the use of semiotic marketing they become themed for the consumption of space and transformed into an adjunct of profit making by offering attractive cultural experiences.

In the context of capitalist economic development and global competition, the new way in which culture is exploited often clashes with the old, such as

Box 10.3

Racialization and Tourism in Chinatown

The phenomenon of Chinatown occurs in many major cities in the West, re-creating a small part of the Orient. Chinatown came into existence in the old American West because of the large-scale immigration of cheap Chinese labor during the building of the railroads. These areas have always been regarded with an element of suspicion and fear by Westerners, together with a curiosity and desire to indulge in the pleasures and vices that frequently seem to occur there, even to this day.

The liner notes to Thin Lizzy's *Chinatown* album capture the air of mystery surrounding the racialized community. San Francisco's Chinatown intrigued tourists from its beginning. One of the main attractions toward the end of the nineteenth century was a group of opium dens that flourished in the warren of underground passages beneath the houses, shops, and restaurants. In 1877 Miriam Florence Leslie, wife of the publisher of *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*, toured one such den with a group of friends. She recorded her impressions in her book, *California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham City to the Golden Gate*. The tour guide was a local police officer. As late as 1974, the popular image of crime and corruption captured public attention as the title of the Roman Polanski film *Chinatown* (even though the story does not take place in Chinatown).

By the end of the twentieth century, Chinatown had become something very different. No longer dark and mysterious, it now was a tourist destination, advertised in city maps and the official tourist web pages for major cities (not just in the United States but across North America and in other countries as well). While some Chinatowns remain working communities, others have taken on a Disney-like flavor as they shed ethnic culture for tourist business. As is the case with other themed environments, the re-creation of the historic ethnic community means that it no longer is a living ethnic community; the racialized space has been tamed and marketed to the larger society. Chinatowns are important economic generators within the community; after 9/11, when many businesses across Lower Manhattan were struggling to survive, the mayor held a news conference announcing that the rebirth of the city economy would begin in Chinatown.

in local neighborhood resistance to grand projects of branding in attempting to acquire world attention. Cultural tourism represents a separate case of the consumption of space as well as the production of space for consumption. Bernadette Quinn (2005:927) researched the effects of city "festivals" in this regard. Quinn argues that city authorities "tend to disregard the social value of festivals and to construe them simply as vehicles of economic generation or as 'quick fix' solutions to the city image problems. While such an approach renders certain benefits, it is ultimately quite limiting." According to her research, art festivals have not worked to include enough local residents and have not led to an improved quality of life for them so that the festivals do not have a lasting effect on the people who live in the city. They have become vehicles for profit making by a partnership of local government and global outsiders that does not benefit residents.

Another aspect of urban revitalization using culture and consumption is reported in an interesting study of Holland by Bas Spierings (2006). He uses Lefebvre's idea of the "spaces of consumption" to investigate how inner city areas restructure their businesses in order to attract consumers from suburbia. This is a kind of restructuring that ignores the needs of local, less affluent residents, in favor of economic development and profit. Spierings's research specifically focuses on attempts by historical inner cities to attract a particular consumer: an upper-middle-class, mobile, demanding person with money to spend and with an interest in having an experience in shopping as well as finding goods that might be purchased. "The belief in the accompanying mobile spending power has made intricate—urban competition flourish" (2006:189) in multicentered metro regions. Thus, developing the inner city for such consumption competes with suburban shopping malls as well as regional tourist destinations, and vice versa, in the area. Transformations of this kind also change completely the culture of all places devoted to tourism because they introduce new sign systems that come from global corporations that are instantly recognizable as chain marketing by tourists familiar with world popular culture.

Spierings's study highlights aspects of the sociospatial approach of this text. It illustrates an important dynamic of MCMR internal processes—namely, the competition of locations throughout the region for consumer dollars. Unlike the early and now obsolete compact model of the city, advocated by the 1930s Chicago School, the multicentered metro region model allows for and even promotes the analysis of spatial economic competition among separate locations within the larger area that is applicable, as well, to the study of a similar dynamic among individual global cities competing for such things as tourist dollars. This competition using cultural tools mirrors competition for financial investment among all cities, as a consequence of multinational control of the global capitalist economy.

URBAN IMAGES, SIGNS, AND MENTAL MAPS

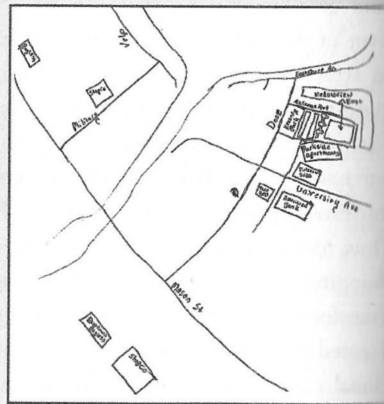
The Image of Lived Spaces and the Role of Meaning

Cities and suburbs are not just spaces where people organize their lives. They are also physical environments that are meaningful. People impute distinct meanings and associate specific emotions with places. Often a single space, such as the historical city skyline or a neighborhood school, can invoke an incredible variety of meaningful associations from individuals. People move about the metropolitan region through different routines, interacting with different landmarks, and developing their own unique mental maps and image of the city.

Box 10.4

Mental Maps

Residents of the same city or suburb will have different mental maps based on their unique experiences and perceptions of their environment. The technique of mental mapping is used to discover how residents of any given place conceive of their environment. They are asked to draw their own local neighborhoods and fill the picture in with as many details as possible. Studies are done by obtaining mental maps from a sample of residents. In all cases, the conception of place will vary from person to person. Researchers then study the causes of such variation by comparing individuals and groups with one another. We know, for example, that the way children draw mental maps of their environment differs from adult maps.



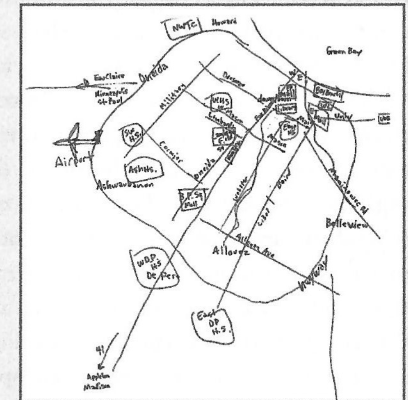
One of the more common results from mental map research is the discovery that differences in both the conception and meaning of a local place are correlated with differences in class status (Golledge and Rushton, 1976). In general, differences in the conception of space reflect social stratification or the perceived differences regarding power and class in society. Researchers have uncovered racial differences in the way people conceive their local settlement space. One study of the Mission Hill area of Boston, which contains a housing project inhabited primarily by low-income African Americans surrounded by a white

continued

continued

community, discovered that the black residents' view of their environment was greatly restricted, while comparable white residents held a much more expansive image of their surroundings (LaGory and Pipkin, 1981:119).

College students attending the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay drew two maps. A student who had attended the university for several years but lived in a dorm on campus drew Map A. A student who grew up in the city and commuted to campus to attend class drew Map B. The maps suggest that for the on-campus student, activity was largely centered on shopping areas close to the university, and there was little knowledge of the larger city. The student who lived off campus included a wider range of locations and activities spread across many different neighborhoods in the city. Urban sociologists are interested in the ways in which different groups in the metropolis interact with their environment, and mental mapping gives us some important insights into this question.



In *Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch (1960) explained that the subjective understandings of characteristics of a city or metropolitan region crystalize into socially meaningful conceptions. The location's identity is socially constructed through lived experience, objective observations and subjective perceptions of the built environment and patterns of social activities throughout space. Lynch (1960) argued familiarity lends an urban environment greater *imageability*, which describes how some spaces are easier to understand as built environments or, "the ease with which its parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern" (Lynch, 1960:3). For example, Lynch contrasted the mental maps of residents in two cities—Jersey City, New Jersey, and Boston, Massachusetts. He found that residents of Jersey City had a much less detailed mental image of their space. It was more difficult for them to visualize the features of places they passed or visited during their weekly routines. Notably, however, Lynch was architecturally oriented and he never mentioned the possibility in his study if a difference in class standing or wealth helped create the contrast between Boston and Jersey City.

Mental maps assign meaning to space. But the meanings of objects also come from the ways we use them as symbols. Material forms, such as particular buildings and constructed spaces, like plazas and freeways, all possess meanings that are ascribed to them by social use. They are known to us by their functions, as the study of spatial semiotics suggests (Barthes, 1986). Therefore the phenomenon of the mental map is one special case of the more general semiotics of settlement space. When being used as a research method, the particular personal characteristics of respondents, especially a measurement of the SES, should be undertaken in mental mapping. Thus, this method studies both the resident image of a place but also the variation according to social factors of their image.

The mental mapping exercises discussed in Box 10.4 are used to study how residents of a given place picture their environment. They are asked to draw a map of their own neighborhood and fill the map in with details they think are important. Researchers then examine variations among these maps by comparing individuals and groups with one another. The results show how a quantitative metric, like a high degree of similarity across mental maps, indicates dominant signs and shared meanings across the neighborhood. It can also show how different groups have different understandings and interpretations of important signs and routes within the same social space. Hence, again, for the importance of obtaining socioeconomic and cultural data from subjects.

A mental map is formed by a person's experience of the city, so it reflects one's social status. A common result from mental map research involves both the conception and meaning of a local place correlated specifically to differences in social class (Golledge and Rushton, 1976). As we have discussed above, Lynch did not evidence thinking of this kind. Today we know better. For example, a study of the Mission Hill area of Boston, that contains a housing project with low-income African American households within a white neighborhood, discovered that the black residents' view of their environment was greatly restricted, while white residents held a much more expansive image of their surroundings (LaGory and Pipkin, 1981:119).

The study of behavior in public space is important across the metropolitan region and can involve the interaction of people as pedestrians, in public transport, and even in their automobiles. Behavior in public depends on the proper expression, interpretation, and negotiation of signs between people interacting with one another and with the built environment. This semiotic aspect of city and suburban living is essential to everyday life, as the sociospatial perspective suggests. Elijah Anderson's ethnographic study of street life in Philadelphia, for example, emphasizes the need for "street smarts" to negotiate public space:

> One gains street wisdom through a long and sometimes arduous process that begins with a certain "uptightness" about the urban environment, with decisions based on stereotypes and simple rules of public etiquette. Given time and experience, the nervousness and fear give way to a recognition that street life involves situations that require selective and individualized responses—in this complicated environment, applying broad stereotypes simply will not do. (1990:6)

Social psychologists who have studied this interaction in public insist that all behavior is interpreted according to the particular spatial context; that is, we interpret someone's action based on the space where it occurred (Karp et al., 1977). Hence, behavior is a combination of social and spatial factors.

Spatial context also determines how individuals behave toward one another. Erving Goffman (1963:36) observed that when ordinary situations become extraordinary, interaction rules among complete strangers change, and they might begin to act intimately. Thus, if an elevator gets stalled between floors, the normally silent passengers might suddenly talk to the strangers standing next to them to decide what to do. The classic study on bystanders in the city (Darley and Latane, 1970) discovered that urbanites are not by nature blasé toward other people's troubles on the street. But when an incident occurs, the more bystanders who witness it, the less the likelihood that any single one will intervene.

In 1958 William H. Whyte began the Street Life Project in New York City. He set up a camera to record interactions among persons on the sidewalks and benches in the piazza in front of the Seagram Building in Manhattan. The film shows that apparently random, unplanned interactions are in fact highly structured and even necessary to maintain order within the urban environment: people move aside to let others pass when the sidewalk becomes crowded, they space themselves in predictable ways on crowded benches, and make use of public spaces in ways that urban planners might not have expected. Half a century later, in 2008, Keith Hampton used a similar study design to see how new social media influences urban behavior. Hampton's research is described in Box 10.5.

Mental maps are a good analytical tool to uncover how all the groups we've mentioned in this chapter—long-term residents, tourists, partygoers, gentrifiers, and social groups stratified by race, class, and gender—think about a given social space. It can uncover functional questions for urban planners, such as if a park or train is used heavily or not, the extent of a network bounded by jobs or shopping centers, or which groups use the cultural clusters of nightlife and sporting districts. When combined with an imperative sociological factor analysis and semiotics, mental maps can also uncover how personal images of the city are connected to theoretical questions of inclusion and exclusion and uneven development across the MCMR.

Box 10.5

Observation Studies: Behavior in Public Space

Some fifty years after William Whyte's famous studies of behavior in public spaces in New York City, Keith Hampton hit upon the idea of replicating Whyte's work to answer an important question posed by the ubiquitous use of new social media: has the use of smartphones and other devices led to a decrease in social interaction and increased anonymity in public space? Whyte's original research included film from Bryant Park (in the Lower East Side) and the Metropolitan Museum. Hampton realized that by comparing the original film from Whyte's study with new film from the same locations, he could see what changes may have occurred with the new technologies. The results of this work, described in the *New York Times Magazine*, offer some surprising results.

Cell phone use, which was defined to include texting and using apps, was much lower than expected. On the steps of the Metropolitan Museum, a place where persons gather to relax or to wait for friends, only 3% of adults captured in all the samples were on their phones. The use of cell phones was highest at the northwest corner of Bryant Park, where the figure was 10%. More important was the fact that cell phone users tended to be alone, not in groups. In other words, people on the phone were not ignoring lunch partners or interrupting strolls with their lovers; rather, phone use seemed to be a way to pass the time while waiting to meet up with someone, or unwinding during a solo lunch break.

It turns out that people like hanging out in public more than they used to, and those who most like hanging out are people using their phones. On the steps of the Met, "loiterers"—those present in at least two consecutive film samples, inhabiting the same area for fifteen seconds or more—constituted 7% of the total (the other 93% were just passing through). That was a 57% increase from thirty years earlier. And those using mobile phones there were five times as likely to loiter as other people.

The most surprising finding of Hampton's research was unexpected. In Whyte's original observations from the 1960s, we see a constant flow of persons in urban space. But most of those persons were male. Today there are a lot more women in public. In Bryant Park, the proportion of women to men increased by 18%, while in the public space outside of the Metropolitan Museum, the proportion of women increased by 33%.

SUMMARY

This chapter explored the important changes of the MCMR city center since the 1980s. The combination of capital investment in minicenters on the urban periphery, suburbanization, and deindustrialization changed the composition of and historical importance of the city center as the central business district. In turn, cities experienced the deconcentration of economic pull factors to the region and population loss to places outside. Starting in the late 1970s and escalating in the early 1980s, historical urban centers were remade via gentrification, profound changes in its economic functions, the development of a cultural economy organized around nightlife and entertainment, and cultural tourism. These processes were the response to the uneven development in the middle of the twentieth century caused by deindustrialization and the transformations of corporations to a global economy. They have also been the drivers of uneven development through the twenty-first century in countries around the world.

Taking the sociospatial perspective's integrated view of development as the linked outcome of economic, political, and cultural factors, we can see how functional economic differentiation combining with changes in capital investment, and guided by local governments supportive of big corporations or investors have transformed urban space. On the supply-side, governments support and encourage capital investment in particular places using policies, tax subsidies, public–private developments, zoning deregulations, and public spending on transportation infrastructure. On the demand-side, people are interested in spending their time and money living and working in interesting places, which drives demand for new businesses and new housing. This is true throughout the MCMR.

The remaking of historical inner cities through cultural tourism and entertainment districts has had an enormous impact on the identity of the city and the region. Developers work with local government officials to market the city to potential investors and the preferred affluent tourists, while also sponsoring festivals tailored to these same preferred visitors. Public and private investment into entertainment districts and amenities are tailored to people outside the district. An exciting and cool nightlife in particular can act as an important pull factor for young professionals, college students, and even empty nester adults who have the time and money to dine out and enjoy what the city has to offer.

Meanwhile, the new capital investments heighten the expressions and contested nature of the inner city's image and identity. As Lefebvre argued, social life in the city reveals a world of differences. Whether or not a group has legitimacy or recognizable public persona of their own greatly contributes to their ability to enter safely and comfortably into public spaces throughout the MCMR. The symbolic meanings embedded in development projects using supply-side monetary or symbolic promotions, thereby, changes the historical identity of urban places.

STUDY QUESTIONS

- Why do large urban spaces continue to matter for multicentric regions?
- Explain the supply-side and demand-side aspects of gentrification. Is it possible for urban revitalization in the historic inner city to occur without causing displacement?
- How is embourgeoisement different from gentrification? What do the two terms tell you about uneven development between regions within the United States?
- Why do planners and local officials attempt to change the cultural meanings of place? Does the reputation of an area have an impact where you want to live?
- Map out the entertainment options of the closest historic central business district (CBD). Is there a difference in the type of nightlife amenities between the historic CBD and other suburban nodes in the multicentric metropolitan regions?
- List examples of cultural tourism that are found in different multicentric metropolitan regions throughout the United States. Are some forms of cultural tourism bigger pull factors, or draws, for global tourism? Are some forms of cultural tourism explicitly local draws to bring suburbanites to the historic central business district?

CHAPTER 11

METROPOLITAN PLANNING AND URBAN ISSUES

In May 2016, thousands of people in 212 cities spanning thirty-six countries across six continents participated in a "Jane's Walk" to celebrate what would have been Jane Jacobs's 100th birthday. There were no birthday cakes, balloons, or presents, although one assumes participants sung the copyrighted song "Happy Birthday" a time or two. The walk was not really about Jacobs's birthday. It was about celebrating her influential ideas about urban planning and urban life that emphasized the importance of people who actually live in urban neighborhoods. Jacobs was a journalist and activist, not a university trained urban planner. She led an urban social movement that saved Greenwich Village in New York City from being bulldozed to make room for an expressway. Toronto, Ontario was one of the cities that hosted a Jane's Walk. Jacobs moved to Toronto in 1968 with her husband, an architect, who specialized in hospital design, and her two sons, where she continued to write and fight developers, helping to stop the planned Spadina Expressway. There were Andy Warhol-inspired pop art posters of her face plastered all over Queens Street West. Toronto embraced its famous adopted daughter and celebrated her ideas of diversity and walkable neighborhoods as a way to fix Toronto's urban problems. However, Toronto could have also served as a perfect model for how Jacobs's ideas can be undermined by extreme, dense, real estate development that ignores people, as well as, another major urban symposium that took place in 2016: The United Nations' Habitat III conference.

The UN's Habitat III conference was held in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016. It was the first major UN event to deal with urbanization since 1996, and was planned to coincide with the momentum of the 2015 International Climate Accord, more commonly known as the Paris Agreement, to cut global carbon emissions. Over 30,000 people from 167 countries attended. The point of Habitat III was to organize a global response to the problems caused by and related to urbanization, specifically human development, the environment, and systems of governance. The Habitat III conference was void of the discussions taking place

during the Jane Walks. They encouraged people "to share stories about their neighborhoods, discover unseen aspects of their communities, and use walking as a way to connect people to their neighborhoods" (janeswalk.org). Walkable cities and mixed-use development are not pressing urban problems in the developing world. They are not pressing problems in many of the abandoned deindustrialized cities in the United States and Europe. The problems of twenty-first-century urbanization include poverty, environmental degradation, and corruption that stems from the networks between state governments, planners, and private sector developers. Indeed, Joan Clos, an anesthesiologist by trade, a former mayor of Barcelona, Spain, and current executive director of UN Habitat stated,

> It's because not many people understand that urbanization generates wealth. Just by the fact that you design an urban plan, you are creating money—because the value of this land increases 10-fold. If that is not fully understood, then of course there is going to be corruption. (*The Guardian*, 2016)

The difference between the UN Habitat Conference and Jacobs is important because it contrasts an ideal of how neighborhoods should function versus how real existing neighborhoods in an MCMR exist. As we showed in the previous chapters, the historic inner city is one node, which can be a neighborhood or a minicenter, among many nodes within a single MCMR. Walkable cities become sprawling multicentric auto dependent regions when developers and planners create the conditions for speculative real estate development, including corporate parks and, densely used, large-scale housing developments on cheap land away from the central city, or, when the state invests its resources in highways to connect peripheral settlement spaces with the city centers instead of investing in public transportation.

By 2016, Toronto was dealing with a set of urban problems characteristic of a large multicentric metropolitan region. Toronto's suburbs are growing five times faster than its downtown, even despite heavy inner city real estate development there. Toronto has become a wealthier and more diverse city than in the past, but newly arrived immigrants find a low quality of life awaiting them in Toronto's inner suburbs. To be sure, the structure of the metropolitan Toronto region is complex. Yet, at the heart of its metropolitan region we find a tension between two types of urban planning: the once existing lower density type of growth, including single-family homes, that created a walkable city and the massive real estate investor-led higher density development or its counterpart in regional, sprawling suburban growth. This tension reflects the political and cultural differences, as well as unique lived experiences of metro and suburban Toronto. Metro Toronto residents are more to the left than their suburban counterparts, and many cringe at the sight of growth for the sake of growth, symbolized by the cascade of condos that now dot the cityscape. The Jane's Walk took place in metro Toronto, not in

suburban Toronto. Toronto's chief city planner, Jennifer Keesmaat, noted that even though Jacobs was "a prophet" and "on the right side of history", we should "not over romanticize this. Canada is a suburban nation primarily built around cars" (Ballingal, 2016). Recent history in Toronto is a story of corruption, rising housing prices in the city center, and a sprawling population in the outer region replete with an immense highway infrastructure that has eroded green spaces. Even though its real estate developers use Jane Jacobs as a marketing tool, downtown Toronto is the antithesis of what Jacobs advocated. Conversely, Toronto today is an excellent example of the MCMR, as the new form of urban space, rather than a picture of Jacobs's walkable city that preserves neighborhood scale.

To understand how these approaches to the urban landscape have occurred, it is necessary to look more closely at the situation of urban planners within societies dominated by global capitalism and the profit making power of a free market in real estate.

THE ADVISORY ROLE OF PLANNERS

Urban planners' influence over the built environment resides in the combination of their institutional location within the state and their particular form of expertise. Planners must maneuver within this politically constrained milieu by exercising their influence on developers, speculators, homeowners, renters, local community activists, and public officials (Weiss, 1987). Professional planners employed by business and government specifically work out the ordinary details of mandated land use and construction requirements. They pursue the unglamorous job of drafting site usage plans for developers, reviewing and updating zoning maps for local governments, and assessing traffic studies. They also collect and review demographic information on the present and future growth patterns of individual urban spaces.

The most basic kind of planning involves zoning for land use, which follows from political reforms of the nineteenth century when it was realized that placing businesses, such as hog butchering immediately next to housing drastically ruined the quality of life. Zoning partitions metropolitan space into distinct areas for each activity, mainly according to their function, so as minimize the effects disparate activities have on each other. Space is partitioned into zones reserved for residential use, commercial activities, and industrial work, among other functions. Planners may set aside land or help design an industrial park for factories and businesses, an office tower or city skyscraper complex, a mall, or a large residential development. New developments require infrastructure planning as well as the construction of the buildings themselves. Roads have to be put in along with sewer and utility lines and the like. New developments, just like zoning schemes, must be approved by local political authorities. Sometimes citizens object to new growth, and developments can be blocked or changed according to local resident

desires. Most of the time, however, local elected representatives approve growth, since that is the priority of city government. Local communities often feel they must compete against one another to develop new industrial parks, shopping malls, and office centers, adding to the pressures for growth across the metropolitan region. In the end, the public and elected officials determine whether a plan will be accepted in total, or accepted with modifications.

UTOPIAN SCHEMES: HOWARD, LE CORBUSIER, AND WRIGHT

Idealistic thinkers in centuries past lamented the evils of civilization and created a genre of literature known as utopian writing. Plato's *Republic* might be the earliest example, but the consummate vision belongs to Thomas More's *Utopia*. Accounts of some fictional paradise provide us with a means of creating an idealized version of society and the self. There is also dystopian literature, imaginary places of dread, an especially prevalent theme in accounts of life in future cities, such as William Gibson's 1984 book, *Neuromancer*, and the more recent young adult series like *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*. Whereas utopia usually signals the modernist theme of progress, dystopia represents our fears about the myth of progress. This yearning for the perfection of settlement space and the realization that it may never be attained due to the limitations of our civilization constitute an important strain in Western literature and cinema. This dichotomy also stimulated urbanists to project their ideas of what constitutes land use in a better society of the future.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) calls the spaces that exist in our minds as imaginary places *heterotopias*. As mental exercises, heterotopias have the ability to influence our behavior and to envision prospective schemes for architects and planners. Planners have historically created heterotopias in relation to existing urban problems. In the nineteenth century, the major problems were caused by the industrialization and the concentration of poverty in cities. Some of these modernist visions were highly influential in the planning and architectural professions. By the twentieth century, architects no longer confined themselves to the design of individual buildings but composed manifestos and schemes that addressed the living and working arrangements of the entire city space. Among the important visionaries of new urban environments are Ebenezer Howard, Le Corbusier, and Frank Lloyd Wright.

The Garden City

Ebenezer Howard (1850–1928) was a social reformer in England. Like others of his time, including Friedrich Engels, he was appalled at the social costs of British industrialization. Howard understood the city as the future of economic growth,

but it was, to express it directly, a lousy place to live. In contrast, the rural areas remained in organic harmony with their surroundings, but they were afflicted with limited economic opportunity. Howard's vision combined the two. He proposed that all new industrial growth be channeled to new locations in outlying areas that would combine industrial employment with country living on a moderate, human scale. These "garden cities" would represent the very best of city and country living.

The concept of the garden city proved to be very influential and an enduring heterotopia. Capitalist industrialization in the nineteenth century knew no bounds. The older cities were crowded and polluted, and large cities gobbled up their adjacent countrysides. Because planners understood that growth was inevitable, they were attracted to Howard's idea of breaking urban expansion off and locating new industry and housing in moderate-size communities. Howard's ideas influenced the "new town" movement in England, that was responsible for building hundreds of such places. His idea was also important for the expansion of Florence, Italy, as late as the 1960s. During the early 1900s, in the United States, a group of architects, notably Clarence Stein, popularized Howard's approach. Working with local authorities and developers, they constructed several places across the country, including Garden City, New York, outside of Manhattan, and Baldwin Hills, California, located in Los Angeles. Ebenezer Howard lived to see the opening of the New York community in 1928. His ideas are also evident in the planned urban development of Green Run in Virginia Beach in the 1980s. But in practice, most of the American garden cities lacked their own industry and hence are little more than middle-class suburban housing developments with some interesting features, such as shared public spaces. These ideas, all derived from Ebenezer Howard's vision, are still put in practice by developers of large suburban residential projects such as planned unit developments, or PUDs. However, these have never threatened changes in urban design because they did not include mixed development with industry. Although tried a few times, such as in Reston, Virginia, now planned developments borrowing from Howard's earlier vision, have become nothing more than upscale suburban communities.

The Radiant City

Le Corbusier was the professional name of the Swiss-born French architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (1887–1965). Along with several German architects, such as Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier is considered the founder and one of the leaders of the international style of design known as "modernism." The modernist movement in architecture and urban planning was based on the idea that social life could be improved by the acquisition and application of knowledge—scientific, technological, architectural, social, and

FIGURE 11.1 Brasilia, DF, Brazil. November 20, 2017. Cathedral and museum buildings during sunset.

psychological. Part of modernist culture was the role of architecture and urban planning in solving social problems. The type of building associated with the modernist movement is familiar to anyone who has seen the skyline of a large city. The buildings are clean, straightforward, and rectangular in shape with flat roofs. They are framed in steel and feature large glass windows that are sealed shut. The design concept took over the world of architecture following World War II and persisted until the postmodern architectural revolt of the 1980s even to include the style of downtown office buildings constructed in developing nations such as Buenos Aires in Argentina, Nairobi in Kenya, or Jakarta in Indonesia.

His impact on the architectural form notwithstanding, Le Corbusier was influential because he propagated certain ideas about city living that could be achieved through architectural design. Buildings themselves were to be "machines for living," that is, the most efficient designs for the sustenance of everyday activities. The urban environment would itself have to be changed to conform to the dictates of modernist design. Because Le Corbusier lamented the terrible social costs of industrialization, he proclaimed the modernist rallying cry, "Architecture or Revolution," sincerely believing that capitalist countries had little choice but to follow his ideas or confront the revolt of the urban masses. The result was his heterotopia known as the radiant city that was another type of mixed urban development including residential, business, and administrative buildings along with large open spaces for leisure pursuits.

Le Corbusier's radiant city reordered social space across the metropolis. Instead of the relatively low density of housing and chaotic land use that was characteristic of cities at that time, Le Corbusier proposed that buildings should be high-rises. Building vertically condensed the living space and opened up the landscape to other uses. Le Corbusier envisioned these spaces as parks that would surround residential clusters, thereby transforming the congested, sprawling industrial city into an open, airy, and efficient place of mobility and light. Le Corbusier also believed that the widespread use of public transportation and private cars would improve the efficiency of urban scale. He referred to this as the "death of the street." He envisioned the rapid movement of autos, trains, highways, and feeder roads of people and commodities between the various nodes of urban space, residences, factories, shops, and government buildings. Thus, the radiant city would not be a walkable place and was not friendly to pedestrians as it was built on the automotive scale.

Modernist urban planning rooted in Le Corbusier's radiant city turned out to be a disaster. The assumptions that changes in the physical environment alone could cure all social problems was naive at best, and more likely amplified existing social problems. There are numerous cases of the failures attributed to modernist planning. The most famous example in the United States was Pruitt-Igoe, a massive public housing project constructed in the early 1950s in St. Louis, Missouri, for low-income tenants. The project consisted of thirty-three eleven-story buildings with a total of 2,700 apartment units on a site that encompassed almost sixty acres (about one-tenth of a square mile). Residents experienced problems almost immediately after Pruitt-Igoe opened in 1954 (Montgomery and Bristol, 1987). Elevators broke down and were not repaired. Children were injured playing in corridors or stairwells that could not be monitored adequately by adults. Crime began to terrorize residents due to the large scale of design that allowed muggers to remain hidden. People complained of isolation from friends and neighbors. Within five short years after Pruitt-Igoe opened, occupancy rates were already on the decline despite the subsidized rent. By 1970, vacancy rates in the buildings had reached more than 50%. By 1976, the entire project was completely torn down.

Another fabulous disaster of modernist planning is Brasilia, the capital city of Brazil (Figure 11.1). Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, two famous Brazilian, modernist admirers of Le Corbusier, designed Brasilia in 1960 following the idea of the radiant city. It is located in the interior of Brazil, 600 miles from the Rio de Janeiro coast. Brasilia looks like a giant bird from an aerial view. But on the ground, its limitations have become legendary. Brasilia's superhuman social scale led to feelings of isolation and anonymity among residents (Holston, 1989). The "death of the street" produced an austere, alienating environment where neighboring and community interaction never took root because of the inability to

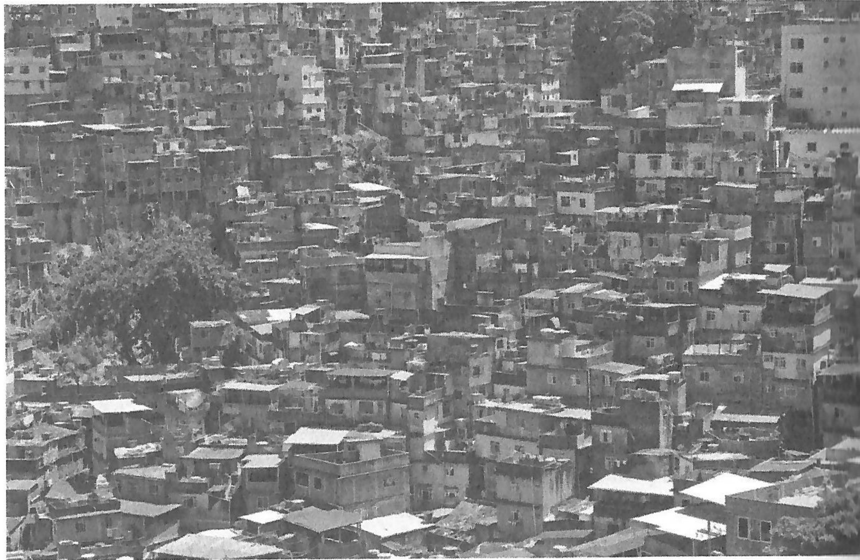


FIGURE 11.2 A Brazilian *favela* (shantytown) in Rio de Janeiro. SOURCE: Shutterstock/Elena Mirage.

overcome the automobile-based lifestyle. The lessons of Pruitt-Igoe and Brasilia remind us of the perils of physical determinism and the need for architects to work in conjunction with social science to bring about an improvement of urban conditions. Although architects often think otherwise, the mere building of places according to some innovative or aesthetically pleasing plan, cannot improve the human condition, without also paying attention to the societal needs of basic urban life that have always made citizens happy to live in a settlement space in the past. The over-ambitious view of architects that they can solve social problems by building alone is known as the "physicalist fallacy."

Broadacre City

Frank Lloyd Wright (1869–1959) was the premier American architect for most of the twentieth century. Wright was no modernist. In fact, he was much influenced by the arts and crafts movement in the United States and by Asian architecture, particularly how the Japanese used interior space. Wright believed that structures should be organic extensions of natural environments. They should embody a fluid connection with the world outside, and their construction should celebrate natural materials and settings, as exemplified by the Kaufmann home, Falling Water House (built in 1936), outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This summer

FIGURE 11.3 New York City—July 2016: Crowds of people walk by the shops and restaurants of Macdougal Street in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan in New York City on Fourth of July weekend in 2016.

home is made of concrete that is stacked like pancakes on three levels (called cantilevering) so that it sits on a rock above a forest stream. The water flows under the lower level and out over a falls. Sitting in the living room, one can watch the water flow and hear the stream as it runs over the rock below.

Wright was not enamored with the American city that he saw developing after World War II. He wrote that each new skyscraper contributed to the death of the city because it increased its population density. Wright envisioned an immense metropolis whose internal structure reduces space to a human scale through modular design. His Broadacre City was based on single-family homes each built on an acre of land! The lower density space would enable families to grow their own food and modify their surroundings according to their own personal tastes. Wright thought that the automobile would be the basic means of transportation. Houses would be connected to shopping centers by an expansive grid of roads and highways. Commercial shopping would take place in regularly spaced minicenters, and industry would be isolated in specifically designed factory areas that were zoned exclusively for business.

Wright's scheme seems almost like the massive suburban environments of today—and indeed Wright saw little need for the city. He was one of the earliest

architects to envision the concept of the shopping center, and his factory-zoned area is the forerunner of today's industrial parks, a common feature of the MCMR. The key element of Wright's vision, however, seems elusive, namely, the one-acre allotment of land that resolved the city/country dilemma at the smallest scale of each individual family. While suburban residences often have ample backyards, these are reserved for leisure activities. But Wright's vision of every family providing for its sustenance through backyard farming seems far removed from the realities of metropolitan life.

JANE JACOBS AND NEW URBANISM

Our contemporary ideas about urban planning have benefited from the work of critics who have taken both architects and the planning profession to task for neglecting the importance of people and social groups embedded within social space (Mayo, 1988). A dominant thread that weaves through the utopian planners and their critics is the idea that human life, behaviors, and cultural tastes can be controlled and improved through urban design. Herbert Gans (1968:28–33) noted that this line of thought commits the fallacy of physical determinism (the physicalist fallacy of modernism): the assumption that physical design alone will determine personal behavior. Physical determinism privileges the abstract space of the planning professional over social space. Social scientists are aware that behavior is determined by a complex relation of various social processes interacting in and with spatial forms rather than through the influence of the physical environment alone. In practice, planners and architects seem to ignore the social basis of behavior and falsely believe that construction design by itself can bring about desired change, such as increasing the frequency of neighborly interaction. Two of the most influential critics were Jane Jacobs and Leon Krier, who both appealed to developers that the human scale of cities should be preserved and that the best neighborhoods were pedestrian places. As we will see below, they set the stage for a new movement in urban planning that has become popular in the US and elsewhere dubbed "the new urbanism."

Jane Jacobs

Jane Jacobs (1916–2006) remains the most influential critic of the utopian planners, especially of the modernist movement. She saws modernism's emphasis on physical determinism and overvaluation of the car as the main cause of urban problems. Jacobs understood the sidewalks as the lifeblood of city culture. She saw crowded sidewalks as a good thing, an indication of a vibrant neighborhood. She criticized modernists for conflating density with overcrowding, and ignoring how sparsely populated areas were the most dangerous spaces for people. Instead, Jacobs advocated for cities built around a diversity of buildings and uses because this catered to the multitude of real uses of different social groups. Indeed, Jacobs questioned if something like active urban space could ever be planned since people construct social life in the city and create their own uses for space. Urban planning that discourages social interaction by limiting public or social space results in the destruction of the city itself.

Jacobs (1961) inserted the notion of mixed use as an antidote to modernist urban planning. Basing social space and the built environment around multiple potential uses keeps cities interesting and vibrant. Mixed use refers to the primary and secondary uses of places. Primary uses are the reason you go some place. They are typically places where a large number of people work, like an office building, a hospital, or a university. A place's secondary uses are perhaps why you stayed, to hang out at local eating and drinking establishments or shop at local stores. Jacobs argued that vibrant neighborhoods need both primary and secondary uses. The combination of primary and secondary uses meant that social spaces were used day and night. To pull this off, Jacobs argued that cities needed short blocks and a healthy amount of old buildings. In contrast to modernist planners' love of long vertical blocks, Jacobs preferred small blocks. Small blocks created more perimeter space because it created multiple storefronts that enjoyed a corner lot. Small blocks created a sense of safety because residents could always make a left or a right if they felt unsafe. Aged buildings were important because they had smaller spaces and cheaper rent, the perfect combination for specialty or boutique stores. She wasn't against new buildings per se. She was against how urban planners insisted on singular uses that stripped cities of their diverse and cosmopolitan nature.

Jacobs's ideas continue to have a strong impact on the way urbanists and planners think about city life. Planners and real estate developers have adopted Jacobs's mantra of mixed use to combine residential and retail spaces in efforts to revitalize urban neighborhoods through new build gentrification. Her lasting importance lies in convincing us that urban culture depends on diversity and the relationship between personal interactions and public space. Nevertheless, Jacobs's ideas about community strike some as passé and as an idealization of Greenwich Village's mid-twentieth-century bohemian neighborhood. Jacobs overlooked how walkable environments only work in cities with either a first rate public transportation system, or, like in many European cities, a transportation system that blends public transportation, motorized bikes like scooters, and bicycles, with automobiles. Planners have not embraced all of Jacobs's suggestions, especially her insistence that neighborhoods need a mixture of social classes and social groups to remain interesting. Racism plays an important part of how whites view the safety of the sidewalks. As Dunier (1999) showed, many of Greenwich Village's white

residents did not value Jacobs's beloved public characters when the public characters were black and poor. In many cities, downtown revitalization efforts using Jacobs's ideas have failed due to the racialized fear of urban crime on the part of suburban residents.

New Urbanism

New urbanism is an umbrella term that captures a movement within urban planning that believes it is no longer necessary to separate residential from all industrial or profit making activities of work. It includes prominent contemporary architects and planners, such as Andrés Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Jaime Correa, Steven Peterson, Barbara Littenberg, and Daniel Solomon. Calthorpe and Fulton (2001) see zoning regulations as old-fashioned and more relevant to a time when industry was messy and polluting. Now our economy is based on information processing, and most of its economic activities are environmentally clean. Drawing heavily from Jacobs, Calthorpe and Fulton, and other New Urbanists, advocate planning for cities based on a mix of residential, commercial, and manufacturing or global economic functions.

New urbanists employ a bottom-up approach to urban planning. According to their charter, "We are committed to re-establishing the relationship between the art of building and the making of community, through citizen-based participatory planning and design" (Fichman and Fowler, 2003:18). Architects like Duany and Plater-Zyberk believe that social goals such as encouraging neighboring and stemming sprawl can be achieved through the physical means of design and construction. Their designs feature houses with porches and emphasize pedestrian pathways rather than streets for automobiles. An excellent example of new urbanism in practice is Seaside, Florida, a community of 300 homes and 200 apartments on eighty acres located 100 miles west of Tallahassee. Echoing housing forms of the past, residential homes are based on plans from a century ago. All houses have front porches, and most are located on pedestrian paths rather than roads. Lots are small and narrow to facilitate social interaction among neighbors. Communities such as Seaside also incorporate many construction features dictated by architects that play an uncertain role in promoting a sense of community, such as the mandated use of tin roofs or tall, narrow house windows.

A major criticism of new urbanism is the belief that the behavior of people can be altered for the better through more enlightened architectural design. Front porches and people using the sidewalks are nice and provide opportunities to interact with neighbors. But people create neighborhoods by establishing primary relations with neighbors. They have to want to do so. Many do not because their local reference groups are spread out across the metropolitan region and elsewhere. They can keep in constant communication with these significant others through smartphones and social media. This is known as "community without locality." Another criticism of new urbanism is the economic cost of living in these developments and whether or not it is another form of gentrification or a gated community. Studies of Seaside and Celebration in Florida show that residents are almost exclusively affluent whites. The mixture of shopping and residential uses does not extend to a mixture of people. The most important critique of new urbanism is how it fails to respect the way private interests in pursuit of profit circumvent and even subvert the best laid urban plans. Thus, in opposition to what new urbanists think, money-making functions often do interfere enough with residential living to drag down the quality of community life. Profit-oriented real estate interests have a habit of taking what in their view is best about urban planning and disregarding the other recommendations in order to make money. In short, it is not an outdated form of planning, as Calthorpe and Fulton contend, that is the culprit behind sprawl and inefficient land-use schemes. It's the relentless pursuit of profit through real estate that is responsible for the failure of proper land-use planning in the US.

PLANNING IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION

The major challenge for urban sociologists and planners today is "smart" planning across the metropolitan region. We have argued that the multicentered metro region functions, on a much grander scale, just as compact central cities once did by providing locations for jobs, leisure activities, government offices, organized entertainments such as professional sports, and other societal functions that take place in stadiums, educational facilities of all kinds, commercial and retail businesses, and millions of housing units for local residents, many of which represent the norm of single-family homes. Among the major problems sociologists and planners are tackling using a combination of what they call "smart" planning are sprawl, environmental degradation, and transportation.

Sprawl and Smart Growth

Sprawl refers to the unbounded outward migration of people, shopping centers, and industry on undeveloped land away from the more populated settlement spaces without planned breaks for green spaces. The opposite of sprawl is dense or bounded development: the clustering of people, shopping centers, and employment places within existing developed land-use tracts that sit in a larger landscape with green spaces in separating other similar developments. Urban sprawl represents what we may call a *meta* problem because it is intimately interconnected with the web of other urban problems. Sprawl has negative economic consequences. The costs of maintaining roads,

water, and sewer lines, and funding additional schools necessitates increases in property taxes and encourages privatization. Open land is gobbled up for these basic uses and so leisure spaces, such as parks are largely ignored. The additional infrastructure and services required by low-density regional expansion leads to increases in property taxes that indirectly pressure rural landowners to sell land tracts to developers thereby exacerbating the disappearance of open land. As regional sprawl proceeds across counties, their government's fiscal resources become stretched and, therefore, sacrifices in some services have to be made at the same time that counties raise taxes and turn more of their land to tax generating businesses. Sprawl, therefore, creates more sprawl and limits planned solutions. It also creates negative environmental and social consequences. These include the loss of wildlife habitat space, increases in health risks from auto emissions, soil erosion thereby polluting water sources with toxic lawn chemicals, and the increased potential of flooding because of the increased amount of impervious concrete surface spaces. The human costs of sprawl include increases in social isolation, obesity, and depression as we spend more time alone in automobiles that we are completely reliant on to get us from home to work to shopping centers and back again, as well as a reliance on drive-in junk food that can be bought conveniently instead of cooking healthy at home precisely because people spend so much time commuting.

Sprawl is not a new problem. The mass movement from urban centers to single-family housing outside the central city in the 1950s was already known as sprawl and viewed by many planners as a problem. Because by 1970, more Americans were living in suburbia than in large cities, regional sprawl came to define the very nature of growth throughout the United States, especially in the development of the Sun Belt. For example, Phoenix, Arizona, one of the fastest growing Sun Belt regions in the 1980s and 1990s, increased its area at a rate of about an acre an hour. The continued absence of meaningful zoning regulations that might have included the need for open, green spaces, has left Phoenix the victim of numerous housing market crashes due to land speculation and overbuilding, as well as toxic air pollution for much of the year due to its location and the massive use of the auto (Figure 11.4). Another example of sprawl is found in the southern part of the eastern US that is also considered the Sun Belt, and especially in Atlanta, Georgia. Metro Atlanta is part of a ten-county MCMR with a population of 5.7 million people, and is now spread wider than the entire state of Delaware. During its rapid growth in the 1990s, 68.5% of Atlanta's regional growth was in its northern suburbs, leaving the city of Atlanta as the least densely populated in the United States (Bullard et al., 2000). The expansion of the suburban periphery combined with the centralization of poverty and residential segregation in the center has placed enormous social and economic costs on residents, much of which disproportionately burdens the poor and minority groups.

The problem of sprawl in the United States is the result of planners and regulators of land use having so little power over the makeup of the multicentered

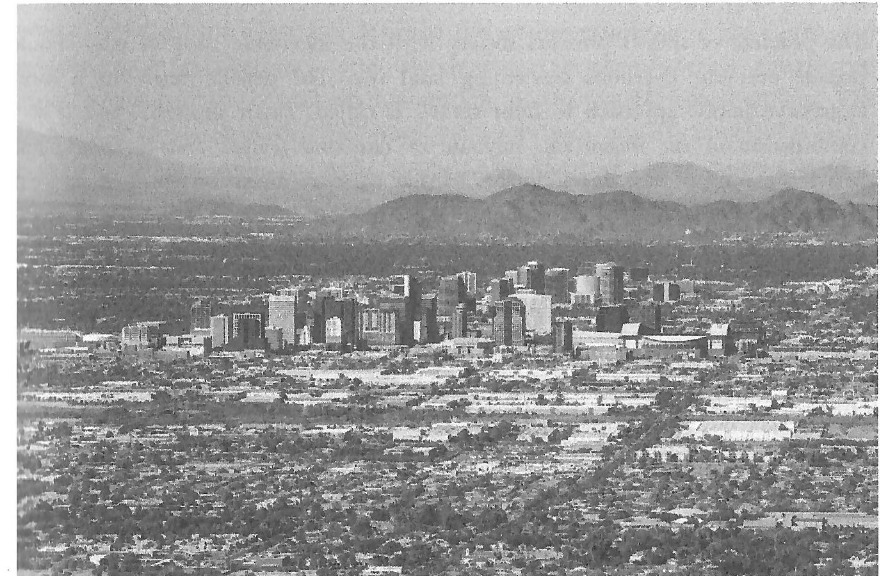


FIGURE 11.4 Phoenix, AZ—October 25, 2017: Skyline and suburban sprawl of Phoenix, Arizona from South Mountain.

metro region that they are essentially ineffective in implementing even their best ideas for more coordinated and beneficial land use. Our present pattern of endless ticky-tacky homes and strip-zoned highways personifies the historical continuity of the asymmetrical power of developers and real estate profiteers over planners and landscape designers. It's also a problem of the legacy of utopian schemes found in the new urbanism that maintains they have the "solution" to sprawl. New Urbanists argue sprawl can be stopped if only we returned to a higher density, city-centered mode of living. Unfortunately, the new urbanists ignore the other and even greater causal force operating today in our human environment: the ability, under a capitalist system of land marketing, to supersede municipal boundaries, to use legal tactics to avoid zoning restrictions and, therefore, to spread out by gobbling up land in sprawl even when a comprehensive county or regional land-use plan has been voter approved that Gottdiener has called, "Planned Sprawl" (1977). What is needed is not a return to compact city forms in the manner of the new urbanists, with higher density residential living, but a greater power to plan for minicenters and clustered neighborhood development in suburban regions that also create attractive open green spaces, which is known as "smart growth," even if building remains dominated by the norm of the single-family home.

Fighting Sprawl through Smart Growth

The problem of sprawl presents society with the inevitable issue of who should preside over the decisions concerning land use. The general term for a more aggressive public approach to fight sprawl is called "smart growth," and it is a combination of tax incentives, buyouts of farmland (called *land banking*), and better planning of new developments so that they are more concentrated and can be serviced by public transportation. One of the best American examples of smart growth is found in Portland, Oregon. In 1967, the state of Oregon, under its governor Tom McCall, moved to preserve farmland that was being rapidly gobbled up by suburban development. Oregon set urban growth boundaries for cities and land banked open areas in order to preserve green space. Portland went even further. Led by several activist mayors, Portland established a metropolitan planning agency that not only maintained its city boundary and "green belt," i.e., areas of preserved green spaces surrounding developments, they also invested heavily in new, affordable and comfortable public transportation to make living within the city of Portland more attractive than the surrounding suburbia. A second important component of smart growth is investment in light rail public transportation within the city making urban auto traffic unnecessary. Portland has a successful but very modest facility called the Metropolitan Area Express (MAX). It services communities within the existing municipal boundary. The MAX has succeeded within this context, although it hasn't become a solution to sprawl because it has not been combined with strong planning controls on developers to limit further development and population growth outside the core. The MAX is an example of what city planners refer to as "people movers," and they have been used largely successfully in cities around the world to limit auto traffic congestion. They are an excellent, "smart" planning idea.

By the 1990s, Portland was lauded as precisely the kind of pedestrian friendly, clustered dwelling, and public transport-oriented city that could be found in Europe. Lately, however, the center in Portland has not held. The tech boom of the late 1990s led to gentrification and the problem of affordable housing with greater payoffs to high-tech companies leading to a glut of real estate investment that raised rents and home prices. The Great Recession after 2007 did not affect Portland as much as other sections of the country where subprime home funding was used heavily. Reports are becoming common in Portland about developers violating green space ordinances and building beyond its growth barriers. The once admired Portland green belt has been breached by the construction of new buildings leading to regional sprawl there as elsewhere. In sum, aggressive smart planning to prevent sprawl is still the main tool advocated by opponents, but it may be impossible in the United States to invoke such land-use techniques without having to experience daily violations by businesses that use cash influence on

government to cut around public restrictions. This undermining of publicly supported smart growth inevitably leads to the further expansion of the metro area without more rationalized cluster development thereby dumping enlightened plans in favor of costly and environmentally destructive regional building. The Portland example is much cited since the 1990s as a positive attempt to make planning changes work that limit the negative effects of sprawl, but we have to honestly face the way its positive features have been undermined by private real estate and business interests which ate away green belts, much as in the example of rapid Long Island development outside of New York City in the 1970s (Gottdiener, 1977).

Environmental Issues and Second Nature

Environmental issues result from the expansion of urban and suburban settlement space. Because the living and working arrangements in modern societies impact the health and well-being of all residents, questions raised about environmental quality have as much to do with spatial issues as they do with economic development. In this regard, some environmental issues are related to sprawl. According to a report that was released in 2001, sprawling development claimed farmland at a rate of 1.2 million acres a year. The average suburban family now made ten car trips a day and owned at least two vehicles. In 2015, commuting in slow moving rush hour traffic released 56 billion pounds of CO_2 into the air, used an additional 3.1 billion gallons of gas, and cost the economy $160 billion in productivity losses (Texas A&M Transportation Institute, 2015). Outward development around metro cores gobbles up open space, grasslands, forests, and farmlands at a pace that threatens the very balance of nature in our country.

Environmental problems also stem from un- or under-regulated capitalism. Every time the federal government attempts control of polluting businesses when backed by the voters, corporations strike back by lobbying our federal legislators to relax those same restrictions in a game that the public can never win. On January 9, 2014, for example, 30,000 gallons of toxic chemicals that were used in the coal industry leaked into the Elk River from storage tanks owned by Freedom Industries in the Kanawha Valley located in West Virginia. The area is home to 300,000 residents, about 16% of West Virginia's population. This chemical tank farm was just 1.5 miles upstream from West Virginia's American Water's regional intake. Freedom Industries was founded in 1992 by Gary Southern, a two-time convicted felon, and Carl Lemley Kennedy II. It benefited from the 2009 federal stimulus. In his State of the State address on the night before the spill was discovered, Governor Earl Ray Tomlin had promised the citizens of West Virginia that he would "never back down from the EPA because of its misguided policies on coal" (Ward, 2014). This is a typical political statement from

conservatives backed by wealthy businesses that see government regulation as the enemy and who mistakenly think that the market solves all problems, while claiming falsely that government regulations always make things worse. He tried to define and confine the problem to the chemical industry, ignoring the relations between Freedom Industries and the coal industry. In reality, everywhere it is controlled by big business, such as in West Virginia, mining for coal pollutes water and air, leaving rural water wells so contaminated that many rural residents must rely on the extension of urban water systems or on private companies like West Virginia American Water to supply them for a fee.

The sociospatial approach understands the problems of environmental degradation through the nature of constructed space, or what Henri Lefebvre (1991) called "second nature." Lefebvre noted that natural conditions give each locale unique characteristics, and even though a city is socially produced space, it retains its "natural traits" or its unique environmental characteristics (1991:345). Unregulated urban development destroys a location's second nature, eroding its unique environmental characteristics. Unregulated economic development puts marginalized groups at risk of environmental disasters. They are two sides of the same coin and must be understood as a single social problem.

Societies around the globe have always placed economic and spatial development above environmental concerns. All societies seek to improve their quality of life through industrial development. Some countries, such as the United States, already possess a heritage of more than one hundred years of industrialization. Although all human activities produce waste products that may adversely affect others, such as the effluent problem in ancient cities with large populations, the scale and intensity of the environmental costs of more recent industrialization remain unprecedented. Premodern humans lived in nature, modifying it in modest ways. In contrast, industrial societies have attempted to control nature, and seem hell bent on destroying nature. Manufacturing results in by-products that are toxic to animal and plant life. The extraction of natural resources such as gold, lithium, oil, and natural gas damages the surrounding landscape by releasing toxic metals into forest streams. Some hold onto the promises of modernity that technology and science will make our lives better. According to Murray Bookchin (1990:20), the certainty that technology and science will improve the human condition is mocked by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, massive hunger in the developing world, and poverty in the first world. Now, years and years of unchecked carbon emissions from energy use, auto exhausts, mass-produced livestock feed lots and factory production has increased the earth's temperature to dangerous levels. This new chapter in our earth's history, called "climate change" is undeniable and is contributing to an emergent global crisis that threatens the very future of life on our planet.

Sustainable Growth and Development

Urban and metropolitan governments have sought to incorporate sound environmental principles into future plans. This type of planning is called "sustainable growth," and it has emerged as a very important perspective today. The concept of sustainable growth derives from the environmental movement but it has also had an immense impact on urban planning. Sustainable development uses concepts of smart growth from planning and the environmental movement notion of minimizing any activity's "ecological footprint." The concept of an ecological footprint refers to the built environment's change in the natural landscape that increases its use of polluting resources and business practices. An ecological footprint can be measured exactly using indices such as carbon emissions, and the acreage scope of forest and wetland that threatens freshwater reserves through sprawling and unrestricted regional urbanization. The stated goal of sustainable growth is to reduce that environmental footprint to as small an impact as possible, thereby enabling resources to be preserved despite growth. The use of recycling, mass transit, electric or hybrid vehicles, the use of solar and other renewable energy resources, and citizen activities aimed at cleaning up vacant lots, streets, and highways are but a few of the tools used by sustainable growth. However, in order to be successful and make changes that retard the destruction of our planet, people living in our local communities and neighborhoods must be transformed into activists and build organizations that pressure local governments to pursue sustainable growth. In fact, the local community component of sustainable growth is quite critical to its success.

There are some promising developments concerning incorporating environmentally friendly policies into planning processes, housing codes, and everyday life. Painting all of the roofs in an urban area white would reduce the heat retained from sunshine and consequently lower air conditioning and energy costs. Tesla's new solar panel mimics the traditional roofing shingle and has the potential to make all roofs capable of producing renewable energy. The siting of new buildings can incorporate passive solar designs to bring sunshine in the morning when the temperature is still cool while blocking sunlight in the afternoon when temperatures are highest. Installing energy efficient water fixtures to regulate water flow in homes, including low flush toilets and tankless water heaters, and waterless toilets in public restrooms, helps conserve freshwater supplies. As we will see in the next section, mass transit systems, such as inner city or regional people movers, that connect minicenters also reduce carbon emissions that contribute to global warming and respiratory problems.

Sustainable growth has meant a renewed role for local government. Regulators and planners have become the managers of environmentally friendly development. One problem that emerged in recent years with sustainable growth is that more

cities and metropolitan areas claim to be pursuing sustainability than are actually doing so. Consequently, the term was just used as an election slogan rather than a concrete goal of local administrations. A study by Portney (2003) found that of the twenty-five cities in the United States that proclaimed they were pursuing sustainability, only eight had actually taken the goal seriously. Furthermore, there is a more serious problem when no apparent linkage is made between ecological measures and planning for smart development. People might be very enthusiastic about recycling, but there is absolutely no connection made between recycling and reducing the waste of natural resources by developers and indifferent public authorities who ignore the need for better regional planning to avoid sprawl. Thus, many linked measures must be used to preserve the environment and avoid its destruction. Only an educated public can successfully monitor its government to ensure all such techniques are used so that the people are not victimized by politicians that use environmental slogans, such as recycling, for propagandistic purposes to win elections alone.

Another problem with the notion of sustainability is that cities and metropolitan regions vary considerably with regard to what they understand to be sustainable environmental issues. Some places emphasize environmental quality. Others included adequate health care, proper schools, and an acceptable standard of living as sustainability goals. According to Portney's study, then, there is no guarantee that pursuit of sustainability necessarily means pursuit of environmental quality. Neither is there a direct linkage of environmental programs to stronger land-use planning controls aimed at managing sprawl. Once again, the public must know an increased amount of information to make sure that comprehensive measures to save the environment are being followed.

So far research has shown, unfortunately, that sustainable development strategies are unevenly applied across social space. A process best described as *environmental displacement through planning*, or, "environmental racism," increases the negative health risks stemming from area contamination in marginalized communities. Many of the hazards that differentially affect minorities and the poor are the consequence of industrial location patterns. Factories, chemical plants, mills, and the like are located in areas isolated from middle-class residential space. Because housing costs are lower in settlement spaces constructed around manufacturing areas, this is where poor people are more likely to live. Chemical emissions, spillovers of toxic by-products, unpleasant smells, and loud noises are just some of the hazards that affect these relatively powerless communities. Historically, poor and minority communities are selected as sites for unwanted land uses (or LULUs) such as landfills, toxic waste dumps, and waste treatment facilities. For example, four landfills in minority zip code areas represented 63% of the South's total hazardous-waste disposal capacity. Moreover, the landfills located in the mostly black zip code areas of Emelle, Alabama, Alsen, Louisiana, and Pinewood, South Carolina, in 1987 accounted for 58.6% of the region's hazardous-waste landfill capacity (Bullard, 1990:40). Love Canal in New York State was situated within a white, working-class community, and it was these people who paid the price of toxic pollution. In Alabama, the town of Triana was judged to be the unhealthiest in America (Reynolds, 1980:38). Time and again research shows that society continues to produce toxic pollution and that poor and minority communities are its victims (Berry, 1977; Blum, 1978; Bullard, 1990). Hence, even though there is greater recognition among voters to pass regulations that safeguard environmental quality, in reality, regional location patterns produce injustices in the disposal of environmental threats because of the placement of industrial, chemical, and human waste sites in marginalized communities.

Despite these drawbacks, the sustainable development movement is becoming increasingly popular in the United States as public awareness grows regarding serious environmental problems and the costs of development. The notion of sustainable growth forces urban planners to consider the following questions. What are the environmental by-products of social activities? What effects do the different types of activities, such as manufacturing, have on population groups within their vicinity? Who pays the environmental costs for development? What is the environmental impact of growth on the health and well-being of citizens? These and other questions frame the discussion of "saving the planet" in our expanding multicentered metropolitan regions.

Transportation: Accessibility and Spatial Capital

New York's Governor, Andrew Cuomo, dubbed New York City's 2017 summer as the "summer of hell." The five boroughs of NYC have witnessed their share of notable summertime problems. Forty years prior, in the summer of 1977, the Con Edison electrical blackout of the entire city ignited two days of looting. It was also the summer of the "Son of Sam," also known as the .44 caliber killer, a reference to an insane serial killer named David Berkowitz who shot his victims with a .44 caliber handgun and took directions from a neighbor's dog named "Sam." In addition, that summer marked the beginning of the structural adjustment of NYC's municipal budgets after the federal government refused to bail out NYC from its fiscal crisis that led to the firing or temporary release of hundreds of municipal employees. In 2017, by contrast, New York's "summer of hell" wasn't about fear or urban decay. It was about the closing of Penn Station for badly needed repairs to the rail lines coming in from New Jersey and Long Island. That is, this hell was about transportation and the utter chaos in the inner city that followed the need to shut down a major rail and bus hub which forced people to find alternative means of going to work.

The problem of transportation is one of those under the radar urban issues that take a back seat to those of crime or schools, nevertheless, it is just as

important or more so to the quality of daily life. We don't tend to think much about how we commute from home to work, or from home to other places we need to go, such as shopping centers, schools, or, essential services, such as medical care, until we encounter congestion and delays that lead to stress and cost us time. Congested highways, bridges, trains, city centers with narrow roads and the absence of free parking, or congested offices where we go for personal care, are all problems that frustrate the best of us. Sitting in a car in traffic when you want to be home. Running late for work. Standing shoulder to shoulder on the train that arrived thirty minutes late because ridership has outstripped capacity, or, problems such as canceled trains and air flights, for example, can all lead to the kind of unbearable stresses that afflict our daily lives.

When we consider commuting, in particular, the lack of transportation planning for alternatives to the car across the metropolitan region has created many of the problems that mass transit advocates are trying to address. The negative effects of sprawl and road congestion were made possible by the federal funding of highway infrastructure that also enabled the development of real estate markets in the suburbs. The majority of Americans live in the suburbs and the majority of jobs in the metropolitan region are dispersed throughout the MCMR in minicenters. The average commute from home to work increased from 9.9 miles in 1983 to 13.3 miles in 2009, and the majority of commuters spend over forty-five minutes in their cars alone (Tomer, 2012). This commute is generally from suburb to suburb more so than from suburb to the central business district. Proper transportation planning has the ability to minimize the negative effects of sprawl through smart growth and environmental sustainability. However, new and expanded forms of public transport cost money, and there is not always a willingness of states and local governments to spend money on public transportation projects. Furthermore, Americans are so attached to their own cars that it is rarely possible for public officials to acquire the kind of support they need to invest in mass transit alternatives, even given that local government desires to do so.

Transportation policy involves solving problems rooted in the questions of access to and accessibility of transportation services. Access deals with the question of mobility: connecting people with jobs, shopping centers, and other daily destinations. It also deals with the question of fixity or relative location: how some places are isolated from various markets within the same metropolitan region while others are accessed easily. Metropolitan regions devoid of successful planning, as we have seen in the last section, result in defaulting to the private car as the preferred means of transportation. This includes land-use subsidies for free parking in suburban corporate office complexes and shopping centers (Shoup, 2011). Suburban location requires more highways. More highways and more highway lanes put more cars on the road. The subsidization of roads and parking makes access to a car a necessity in the contemporary metropolis. As we have

seen, massive reliance on the auto has led to excess carbon emissions, regional smog, and the health problems that come with it. It is remarkable, for example, to be a professor at a university with courses that have heavy homework loads to learn that students very often must have outside jobs taking up precious time simply because they have to pay for a car, its insurance and gas, in order for them to commute. These costs go beyond the expected one of having to take out a student loan to pay for a college degree. For this and other reasons, our society's failure to take mass transportation issues more seriously and to build the kind of infrastructure that would enable this solution demonstrates a great failure in forward thinking which victimizes people, such as students, or others who cannot even afford a car of their own, most especially.

New York City is one of the select few American metropolitan regions that actually has an extensive mass transit system. In contrast to the typical American city, European cities have developed efficient public transportation because in Europe planners have political power and leverage over land use rather than profit seekers. European countries implemented a diverse public transportation system after World War II, when they developed local and national planning schemes for housing and rebuilding of their societies. Although European cities have also grown, theirs is a story of planned growth instead of planned sprawl. For example, consider the contrast between the city Helsinki and of Espoo located in Finland. Espoo is the second largest city in Finland, has a population of over 240,000 and is part of the greater Helsinki metropolitan area—a typical multicentered region like those in the United States. The municipal government of Helsinki still maintains control over land use and possesses the kind of immense planning powers admired by critics of American urbanism. It also has an extensive street car and bus public transportation system. In contrast, Espoo's real estate became privatized. Espoo itself contains the contradictions that come from changes in welfare state capitalism characteristic of Europe. On the one hand, it envelops the city of Tapiola, a world famous planned "garden city" that was built in the 1950s and is still thriving. Tapiola was designed according to the strict government cluster planning once well known in the United States, during that same post-World War II period. On the other hand, Espoo is home to the new headquarter complex built by the giant electronics corporation, Nokia, a private business with executive and other well-paid high-tech employees that prefer to live in private single-family homes, own cars, and drive to work, much like their well-paid counterparts in corporate America.

One major difference between New York and Espoo–Helsinki is accessibility because of a metropolitan transit system. Any person, young, old, healthy, confined to a wheelchair, pregnant, pushing children in a carriage, or walking a dog or bicycle can, if they have the fare, take a bus or a combination bus and trolley to ride wherever they like within Espoo, between Espoo and Helsinki, or any of

its surrounding areas, because of the greater Helsinki dedication to mass transportation using a clean, efficient, safe transportation infrastructure with convenient and frequent service. And they can do so, despite the desire of much of Espoo's population that prefers the car to mass transit. This is not currently the case in the US. Here our regional MCMRs are all dedicated to the private car while our public transport alternatives languish for lack of funding and government attention.

New York City's metropolitan transportation system has its own distinct set of problems (Figure 11.5). One is its decaying infrastructure and costs of maintaining and expanding miles of underground tracks. Manhattan abandoned the elevated lines on 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 9th Avenues in 1904 for the underground subways we know of today. New York State assumed control of the subway in 1968 when it formed the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to manage the city's subway, buses, bridges, and commuter rail lines. The MTA was the outcome of a political struggle between John D. Rockefeller, the governor, and the very influential state planner, Robert Moses. Rockefeller realized that the revenue from tolls could subsidize the twenty cents subway fare, a politically popular issue in New York State's largest city. Moses, in contrast, loved the automobile. He planned and oversaw the construction of the New York State Thruway, the car and bus only Triborough Bridge in NYC, the limited access highways that extended along both the north and south shores of Long Island, outside the city, as well as those limited, landscaped highways in upstate New York, some of which are no longer used and are being ripped apart to return the land to nature. Although the MTA is currently run by the state of New York, the governor appoints the director of the MTA, so it is the state's rather than the city's responsibility to pay for the subway's upkeep. Despite this responsibility, the state government, including the governor himself, has historically diverted money from the city subway to build road infrastructure outside it, in places like Westchester and Long Island, to help facilitate suburbanization. In essence, the legacy of New York State's metropolitan planning decisions created NYC's contemporary mass transit problems and, in addition, because of the particular legacy of Chief Planner, Robert Moses, tax money has been used directly to subsidize suburban highways.

Spatial Capital

Urban sociology has been overwhelmingly concerned with problems associated with mobility. Cities can only grow in two directions: up or out. Real estate elites and planners use their institutionalized location within state development networks to support the building of luxury condominiums and to develop cheap land outside the city's geographical and municipal boundaries. The problems of sprawl and environmental sustainability are, therefore, related to this failure of

FIGURE 11.5 New York, USA—June 2, 2018: Canarsie Local direction announcement on L Line train in New York, USA. New York City Subway is one of the world's oldest public transit systems.

smart regional planning which manifests itself in problems of "mobility or fixity." More specifically, regional residents, regardless of where they live within the MCMR, who cannot move due to the high costs of housing coupled with an inadequate transportation infrastructure, referred as a problem of "fixity," are, therefore, forced to live in undesirable places, i.e., locations with poor services and serious social problems such as crime, or, periodic natural disasters like flooding.

The sociospatial approach views "mobility and fixity" as two sides of the same coin. For example, the social problem, such as residential segregation is such an issue. State investment and subsidies allow for the movement of some social groups that are privileged especially because of income or race, while restricting the movement of others who are disadvantaged in the same way. As we saw in earlier chapters, tax subsidies tied to the housing market and deregulated loan amortization supported developers' efforts to keep blacks out of the newly built suburbs, which allowed the white middle class to move outward, while blacks migrating from rural areas to cities were left with overcrowded and undesirable housing in the neglected parts of metro regions. In contrast, the Chicago School's ecology model emphasized mobility of residents but overlooked fixity. For them, cities grew because middle and upper-class residents moved outward from the

central business districts and zones of transition into better housing and better neighborhoods on the periphery. They had little to say about those who couldn't leave, except for studying the low-income residents of single room occupancy hotels in the CBD catering to broken people and families.

When we look at the problem of mobility and fixity simultaneously, we can observe how spatial advantages and disadvantages exist regarding transportation. The concept of "spatial capital"; that is, the value placed on the spot where one lives, measures the locational advantages and disadvantages relative to mobility or fixity (Rerat and Lees, 2011). The term "spatial capital" is an extension of Bourdieu's (1990) cultural concept of value that he used to explain the reproduction of inequality based on how groups translate various forms of knowledge or connections into political and economic power. Bourdieu used the term "capital" in for its original meaning: accumulation. Consequently, economic capital is the accumulation of wealth. Social capital is the accumulation of social bonds and social networks that can be converted by individuals for personal gain or power over others. Informational capital is the accumulation of a specific type of knowledge tied to an occupational category that endows a person with abilities that can compete for preferred jobs or powerful public office. Cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge and symbolic status that allows individuals to strategically navigate various influential networks or institutions, and, in the aggregate it is how social groups distinguish themselves from other social groups on the basis of tastes and cultural preferences according to society's status hierarchy (see Bourdieu, 1984). Spatial capital, then, is conceived in a similar way, as the accumulation of locational advantages by any individual or group relative to existing transportation alternatives.

There are three ways to measure spatial capital. The first is access. An person or social group with much spatial capital has access to a number of transportation options. This includes access to private means, such as cars or limousines, or public ones, such as nearby public transportation like trains, the subway, and buses, but, also bike lanes and the ability to walk to shops or the workplace. Recall that the famous planning critic, Jane Jacobs, measured the well-being of neighborhoods based on resident ability residing in them to access needed goods and services or neighbors by pedestrian means, i.e., the "walking city." The second dimension of spatial capital is "competence." Competence can be measured quantitatively: the number of driver licenses in a given neighborhood or census tract or the number of transportation services that are handicap accessible. The final measurement of spatial capital is appropriation. Appropriation is the accumulation of strategies, practices, and abilities by individuals or groups, that can use all transportation options, regardless of location. In its simplest form, it represents the accumulation of techniques that enable people to navigate a built environment most easily and efficiently. The three dimensions of social capital are going to

vary primarily by location, but they are also determined at the level of the single individual by one's financial means to acquire a car or a bus pass, the perceived and real safety of a neighborhood by gender and age, and one's physical ability to actually use all potential forms of transportation.

The sociospatial perspective rounds out the conceptual and methodological use of the spatial capital concept. Scholars have used this concept to explain choices, such as why an individual moves into a particular neighborhood regardless of cost, or, why individuals perceive a neighbor as desirable or not. Rerat and Lees's (2011) study on spatial capital used surveys focused on residential choices in the context of new build gentrification. The sociospatial approach also considers the three structural aspects defining spatial capital as the agent side of analysis in the study of consumer choices supporting various transportation options. For example, whenever pro-mass transit publics become organized to fight for that option it is often suburbanites who prefer using their cars that emerge as their opposition. Because the latter are usually more affluent, they can effectively block region-wide movements for public investment in mass transit rather than highways.

The study of spatial capital involves, first, the role of government and the planners who create the conditions for its accumulation. The placement of highways and public transportation to connect social groups with needed social resources, such as jobs, makes a determining difference. Secondly, research studies the way different forms of spatial capital develop and accumulate according to different locations within regions. The third aspect of study is tied to the second by asking the question—how do social groups convert their spatial capital into economic and political power. This involves understanding where roads are built but also where roads are not built. It involves looking at the political struggles of groups choosing between private and public transportation options funded by public dollars. The more spatial capital a group has, the better their chance of winning political battles when public decisions have to be made regarding what alternative transportation resources are to be supported.

Smart growth and sustainable growth across the metropolitan region is only possible if states embrace multiple forms of transportation options and focus on connecting all social groups to the various labor, retail, and service markets embedded in the minicenters across the region. From this perspective, mass transit and bicycles promise less dependence on fossil fuels than cars and they reduce the carbon footprint of regions considerably. Electric trains, trolleys, and bicycles are the most energy efficient means of transportation. For example, cities like Amsterdam in the Netherlands or Copenhagen in Denmark possess a bicycle culture. They ride to work, to restaurants, to coffee shops, and to the opera regardless of the often rainy weather. Exercise is built into everyday life. There is even a three-story parking garage *for bicycles* about two blocks from the central railroad station in Amsterdam and, something that will make all American college students

jealous, the University of Amsterdam has a large area devoted specifically for the secure parking of bikes. Elsewhere, even in South America, for example, in Bogota, Columbia, planners have used their scarce resources wisely by constructing rapid transit bus lanes to connect residents living on the periphery of Bogota to labor markets in the city center. While New York City's subway and bus system may remind visitors of Europe, the vast majority of metropolitan regions in the United States do not have a functional mass transit system, and, consequently, their residents live with the social problems related to sprawl and possess low spatial capital.

SUMMARY

Increased public involvement in the planning process is needed to refocus attention on those issues that affect our daily lives rather than allow capitalists to reap profits from land development and the increased tax revenues that accompany urban growth. Planners must be wary of falling victim to utopian schemes and the fallacy of physical determinism. They must focus on scale and livable communities without resorting to romanticized notions of the urban neighborhood. At the same time, it is up to America's leaders and citizens to become more involved in a protracted dialogue regarding the kind of environments they prefer to live in. They can demand that planners directly deal with the issue of environmental footprints, and create transit connections between and within metropolitan regions. They have to pressure elected officials to place the interests of residents above the monetary interests of real estate developers. To be successful, sustainable growth must become a part of the struggle for democracy and against inequality to assure that all of the various interests are incorporated in the process. So far, these changes have yet to shape American thinking about our built environment.

STUDY QUESTIONS

- Environmental problems must be considered as a sociospatial issue. What are some examples of sociospatial inequalities and environmental problems that you are aware of in your community?
- The textbook suggests that physical determinism and the elitist–populist dilemma are major shortcomings with urban planning. What do these terms mean? What can be done to overcome these limitations?
- We have discussed three utopian planners—Howard, Le Corbusier, and Wright. How did these planners differ in their ideas for improving urban life? Which has had the most influence on urban development in the United States?

- How has Jane Jacobs influenced the planning movement New Urbanism? Why are some observers critical of this movement? Do you think that New Urbanism can solve the urban social problems confronting multicentric metropolitan regions?
- What does Henri Lefebvre mean by second nature? Explain how urban planners can incorporate a locale's second nature into the multicentric metropolitan region rather than destroy it.
- Use the sociospatial approach to identify possible solutions to the urban social problems of urban sprawl and public transportation.