THE CITY: THE MODERN PERIOD

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The modern world is an urban one. Within a few years after the beginning of the twenty-first century, more than half the world's population will be living in cities. Because Europe was the first region where the transformation from a predominantly rural to an overwhelmingly urban society occurred, the modern European city since 1800 has a wider significance. Will massive urban growth in many developing countries, given conditions of poverty and political instability, recapitulate the worst in the European experience of urbanization? Historians are justly suspicious of models which blur the specificities of time and place. There is no simple model or series of stages of urban development which every society recapitulates. Progress is neither linear nor cumulative but is rather the result of economic circumstances, social values, and political choices which necessarily vary according to place and time. But an emphasis on the differences between countries and periods which emerges from the multiplication of local studies can also obscure some of the recurring patterns associated with urban development, patterns which give some policy relevance to a better understanding of urban history.

FROM EARLY MODERN TO MODERN CITY

The biggest differences between the early modern and modern eras of urban development are the easiest to measure, namely demographic growth and the increase in economic production. But even the sense of rupture which accompanies the industrial revolution belies a continuity with an older pattern of urbanization. Of course the economic differences between the preindustrial, early modern city and the city since the onset of industrialization are dramatic and have had far-reaching social and environmental consequences. However, the explosive growth in productive capacity did not represent the emergence of fundamentally new urban functions, but rather elevated the importance of economic activity as an urban function. Because the industrial economy was itself located predominantly (but not exclusively) in cities, it can be said that the expansion of urban economic capacity, which has sustained urban growth more generally, was itself organized and rooted in cities.

The most important continuities are also the most difficult to measure, namely, cultural attitudes and social systems broadly open to novelty and change, migration, and defense of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The fact that the historic cores of many European cities have survived successive economic and political regimes is itself symbolic of what was carried over from the early modern to the modern era. Today, the identity of Europe is being shaped explicitly as a civilization of cities, symbolized by the selection each year of one or more cities as a City of Culture, and by the growing recognition on the part of the Commission of the European Communities (which does not have legal competence on urban policy according to the Treaty of Rome, 1957) that urban issues must be addressed if progress toward European unification is to be made.

URBAN STUDIES

Given the high degree of urbanization characteristic of Europe in the modern era, the study of the modern city is inseparable from a dozen or more topics covered elsewhere in this encyclopedia. If the city touches on everything, then what is its specificity? Urban specialists try to isolate the urban variables, those factors which appear to explain how and why certain events or trends evolved as they did because they took place in cities. This task is inherently difficult, not only because it is difficult to disentangle cause and effect when so many factors are in play, but also because urbanization itself has made urban life and behavior normative in society at large.

It is no surprise that many of the scholars who study urban phenomena have disciplinary roots in lit-

erature, sociology, economics, cultural studies, history, and the like. Support for research on urban issues is irregular, and university departments of urban studies often have an uncertain status, neither fully assimilated into the social sciences and humanities nor entirely independent as a professional field. The study of the city is essentially an interdisciplinary effort, but the integration of different disciplinary perspectives, and especially of the economic and the social, is elusive. Moreover, urban spatial phenomena are often marginalized in urban studies, treated as a branch of architecture and physical planning rather than as an independent factor of change. As a result, cities and urban phenomena more generally are not well integrated into larger syntheses of economic and social studies, which continue to focus on the nation-state as the unit of analysis. The national census collects vast amounts of data, but if one looks for information about social and economic conditions in a region as large as Paris-Île-de-France, with a population smaller than that of the Netherlands but with a gross domestic product as large, the gap between national and regional data collection becomes stark.

Antiquarian studies of individual cities began to be written in the nineteenth century, and local history remains an important aspect of scholarship. The major journals are *Urban History Yearbook, Journal of Urban History,* and *Urban Studies.* Broad interpretive syntheses are often organized thematically, with evidence coming from any of a score or more of cities. Important examples with a spatial-social focus are by Sir Peter Hall and Lewis Mumford. They are concerned with explaining the interaction between individuals and the urban milieu, and therefore, with a sense of optimism based on the potential for collective action without coercion, they also try to identify those aspects of urban development which promote better social outcomes. In this they echo many of the great novelists who have tried to show how the lives of people in cities are interconnected by physical pathways and by invisible social networks, thereby emphasizing the ability of individuals to shape their identity in relation to the rest of society. The English novels of Charles Dickens and John Galsworthy, the French novels of Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Émile Zola, and Jules Romains, and the German works of Theodor Fontane and Thomas Mann come to mind. Given the parallel growth of photography as a medium and of cities, it is not surprising to find that some of the greatest and most innovative photographers were also some of the most important recorders and interpreters of cities: Charles Marville, Eugene Atget, August Sander, Berenice Abbott, Bill Brandt, Robert Doisneau.

SOCIALIZATION AND THE CITY

In the early modern city, major events such as wars, even revolutions, and such cultural movements as the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment left basic social structures intact. The very mode of life in cities in the mid-eighteenth century would have been broadly familiar to anyone who could have stepped back in time to the early sixteenth century. By contrast, there can be a debate about the relative rate of change today compared to, say, the 1820s or 1910s, but not about the impact of change, nor about the importance of cities as places which make change manifest.

The ability of successive generations of people—most of them migrants from the countryside or small towns—to adapt to life in cities helps to explain the survival of the city as the most complex social unit in the history of civilization. Because cities are so dynamic, even after a society reaches a high degree of urbanization, the capacity of people to adjust to change remains important. Indeed, one of the functions of the modern city involves facilitating the adjustment of individuals and groups to change. Cities do this by supporting formal institutions such as schools and libraries and informal ones such as philanthropic and community organizations, by making information widely available at minimal cost, by providing a context for social interaction and consumerism which fosters fluidity and the appreciation of novelty, and above all, by supporting large labor markets which give people opportunities to use and improve their skills as technologies evolve. Adaptability is a complex phenomenon, involving the ability of people to learn, to improvise, to innovate, and to imagine how things could be different. It is culturally contextual, because people are not sensitive to the same things—a change which is easily accepted in one place at one moment may be resisted elsewhere. What matters is that the mental and social habits of people be sufficiently flexible to accommodate changes which are often profound and irreversible in such things as technology, scientific concepts, social relationships, political institutions, and economic regulations and norms.

Until the late nineteenth century, much of the discourse about cities was part of a larger cultural undertaking to describe and define the social and cultural workings of civilization. Urban sociology emerged from this mode of thought when Ferdinand Tonnies, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, and Robert Park began to dissect the workings of social systems in cities by interpreting behavioral patterns against a model of urban society. A major theme of

this work involved how large social systems cohere and function given the high rate of individual mobility, meaning that the population of any group in a given place is unstable. Their explanatory framework tended to emphasize abstract value systems and role models which diffused expectations of normative behavior in respect to personal and social goals. In this context they explored how the city, as a social and spatial environment, affected individual behavior. Paradoxically, therefore, the greater autonomy of the individual in a city was explained, not as a reaction against or as independence from large social systems, as was the case in the romantic era of the early nineteenth century, but as a reflection of very powerful sets of ideas and pressures to conform which emphasized individuality as compatible with social goals such as enterprise, cooperation, professional ethics, and public service.

The debate today about what is happening in cities, and to cities, often appears in the media in articles about "the urban crisis" which lack a historical perspective. If cities become less able to help people acculturate, then the likelihood of social problems on a wider scale increases. Concern about crime, terrorism, and drug trafficking are responsible for the spreading use of closed-circuit television cameras and electronic surveillance, instruments of control more passive but more pervasive than anything known before. The potential for centralizing control over urban populations, which was limited in the past by the fluidity in urban society which overwhelmed systems of information and communication, has been strengthened by the introduction of networked systems linked to huge data bases that operate in real time. Urban problems emerge unexpectedly; urban policy, which evolves slowly, is more often remedial than proactive. Cities are more diverse than before: places with 500,000 inhabitants may have immigrant groups from a hundred different nations. But lacking the administrative capacity and resources of nation-states, cities are often hard-pressed to promote cohesion and integration. The balance between freedom and constraint has always been difficult to set in cities, even if their scale, density, and complexity make the issue unavoidable.

THE HISTORY OF THE MODERN CITY

In contrast to the early modern city, the history of the modern city is one of dynamic change which requires a chronological framework to be understood in its broad pattern.

Before 1800, with the possible exception of the Netherlands and parts of northern Italy where the spread of cities was greater, only about 20 percent of Europe's population was urban. That figure rose to over 50 percent in England by 1850 and in France by the early twentieth century. The post-1945 era has seen the level of urbanization reach 80 percent on average across Europe. A comparably high degree of urbanization can be found today in North America, Australia, and Japan, raising questions about the degree to which generalizations about the modern city in Europe can be extended to other continents. In countries with an indigenous urban tradition, such as Japan, the European city was seen in the nineteenth century as the model to be imitated; in countries colonized by Europeans (particularly Canada, the United States, and Australia), European cultural and legal influences had a major influence on urban spatial form, social structure, and economic functions. In the twentieth century non-European cities (principally American) have influenced European ideas about architecture, social welfare, culture, and so on, sometimes negatively, sometimes positively. But the status of Paris, London, and Rome at the top of the list of the most visited cities in the world, and indeed the importance of cities as a category of tourist destination across Europe, are signs that European cities are still admired as unique environments, even in a world of cities.

Given the high population density of cities, as much as 80 percent of the land of Europe has remained rural, even though as little as 3 percent of national employment involves people engaged in agriculture. Urban regions are characteristic of the British Midlands and southeast England, of a broad band extending from the North Sea coast of the Low Countries and France across the Rhineland to northern Italy, a Mediterranean crescent from Catalonia across France to Italy, and a Baltic archipelago including parts of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Most Europeans have easier access to more than one city than do most Americans: on average, the distance between cities in Europe is only 16 kilometers, against an average distance of 29 kilometers in Asia, 53 kilometers in America, and 55 kilometers in Africa.

The largest European city in 1800 was London, with over 1 million inhabitants; Paris, which had been larger than London from the Middle Ages until about 1700, had a population of about 900,000. Most cities were smaller, however, and the gap between the largest and the smallest (five thousand inhabitants) in cultural terms was enormous. At the end of the twentieth century, the largest cities—taking account of their metropolitan area—were again London and Paris, with about 16 million. (By then, however, the largest cities in the world, with populations of 20 million or

London, 1827. St. Paul's Cathedral dominates the City. View across the Thames from the southwest. Engraving (1827) by William Wallis after a drawing by Thomas H. Shepherd.
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more, were all in Asia or Latin America). Put in other terms, 20 percent of the people live in cities larger than 250,000 inhabitants, 20 percent in medium-sized cities of between 50,000 and 250,000 inhabitants, and 40 percent in smaller cities of between 10,000 and 50,000. Life in very large cities is still more often the exception than the rule, which should make us beware of generalizations based on conditions in them. The sheer size of large cities, combined with an interest in local history which is very widespread in more modest places, means that historians have studied small and medium-sized cities more than their individual importance in urban history might suggest.

1800–1880. The history of the modern city can be divided into four periods, all shaped by the interaction between cities and larger political and economic events. From the late eighteenth century until around 1880, the outlines of the modern city emerged in two different kinds of places, the new industrial cities such as Manchester and older capital centers such as London. The industrial cities were strikingly different due to a large number of factories and the associated pollution and slum housing. At this time, however, the older centers did not acquire heavy industry; their change was more a function of their growth in size and of the ways of life of people. Capitals retained, and indeed enlarged, monumental spaces which conformed to their elite functions, but they also supported large numbers of small workshops, some devoted to the luxury trade which was both local and

for export. What emerges from a survey of London or Paris is the sheer range or diversity of skills and crafts practiced in the city. It is this period which is studied in depth when the transition to the industrialized economy and a society of classes is investigated.

1880–1914. From 1880 to 1914, heavy industry based on a new wave of innovations (electricity, automobiles, chemistry, media) settled in capital cities (Berlin, Budapest, London, Paris); cities in many parts of Europe such as Italy, Hungary, Austria, and Sweden which had grown modestly before began to grow at a very rapid rate; and new modes of planning and management—as well as new urban technologies such as the streetcar and modern systems for water and waste—became widespread regardless of the size and age of the city. During this period, academic departments for planning and architecture were established; frequent meetings and a stream of publications created an international, transatlantic culture about cities. At this time, widespread concern about crowd control and criminality lead to the introduction of modern, scientific methods of identification of individuals (measurement and photography). Many of the problems of rapid industrial urban growth came under control as new professions in public health, education, engineering, and administration applied scientific methods and developed new institutions.

1914–1950. The era of the two world wars, 1914–1950, was characterized by the role of the city in war

production and in the control of large social systems. This period is less well understood than other periods of urban development, notwithstanding its enormous importance for the second half of the twentieth century. Increasingly, the city was the arena of conflict, either when directly attacked or when torn by the struggle between totalitarian and democratic ideologies. From the uprisings of St. Petersburg of 1917 and of Vienna and Berlin in 1919 through such events as the Popular Front in France in 1936 and the wave of destructive attacks on synagogues in Germany on 9 November 1938, cities were the sites of riots which had the potential to provoke revolutionary change. Not since the seventeenth century had riotous activity been so widespread and intense; with good reason, this era can be called the second Thirty Years' War. The trauma of violence and sacrifice among civilian populations (including severe malnutrition and epidemics) and the profound scale of political and social change gave rise to the construction of many major monuments, provoked debates about historic preservation and reconstruction, and created new myths of civic survival for the epicenters of conflict (Verdun, Ypres, Louvain in World War I; Rotterdam, Hamburg, Leningrad, Warsaw, Berlin, Coventry, Dresden, Hiroshima in World War II).

Dependence of urban populations on technological infrastructure for daily living made cities appear vulnerable if the level of physical destruction was high enough, or attacks precise enough, to destroy the complex systems providing clean water, removing waste, generating power, and supporting communication. The assumption of strategic bombing was that modern city dwellers are so dependent on sophisticated technology that they are no longer capable of initiative if disoriented and displaced. However, this negative judgment of urban society was contradicted by the behavior of people in almost every city subject to annihilation—for the most part, people coped within the boundaries of civilized life. Although on the margins black markets, thievery, and rape were evident, the destruction of cities did not bring about a collapse of civilization.

The era of world war was decisive in several respects. It brought about a period of inflation which lasted virtually for the rest of the twentieth century, shifting influence from creditors to debtors and wiping out the savings of small investors in the short run; it caused the disappearance of such social groups as the Jews from many cities in Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, where they had lived in large numbers, often in communities that were centuries old; it gave rise to large migratory movements as prosperous northern economies recovered by absorbing surplus labor from eastern and southern Europe and, increasingly, from former European colonies as well. And it gave rise to the movement for European unification, which has been the basis for peace and growth since the 1950s and for the growing importance of supranational institutions on domestic matters which had previously been the monopoly of the nation-state.

The economic and political pressures of the world wars, and especially of World War I, had other effects which often go unrecognized for their urban significance: the collapse of the small family firm in many medium-sized commercial cities due to rapid changes in world economic conditions and to inflation, thereby encouraging people to seek careers in government or in large corporations, and the enormous wartime expansion of productive capacity, which helped to validate scientific management and large capital-intensive factories as the model of production. Only in the 1970s and after has this been corrected by the growing emergence of small and medium-sized firms and by the growth of the service sector, both of them predominantly urban in character, which have created new job opportunities for people.

The economic crises of the 1920s and 1930s limited the extent to which popular demands for a better quality of life could be satisfied in terms of improved housing, transport, and public services. During this period, control over urban economies passed decisively from the local to the central level. The imperatives of social and economic control during wartime, justified during the emergency, and the difficult adjustment to peacetime propelled central governments to expand their influence into spheres of domestic policy from which they had often stood apart in the past.

1950 to the present. The era 1950–1990 involved reconstruction along two different lines, the welfare state in Western Europe and centrally planned economies in communist-controlled Eastern Europe. As a result, the pattern of convergence in urban society which had been characteristic of the 1880–1914 period, and which made life in Budapest and in Stockholm fairly comparable, mutated into two different trajectories. In both East and West, cities had to cope with massive rural-to-urban migrations and with a lack of resources to add social facilities on a scale envisioned by enlightened planners. But it is the contrasts which matter more. Freedom and prosperity leading to the consumer revolution of the 1950s through the 1970s in the West stood in contrast to the uniform and repressed system of life in the East. The fracture line in Europe no longer ran within ur-

ban societies, separating classes and parties, but between them, along the Iron Curtain.

While the West had more freedom, its cities were faced with a growing burden of national regulation and with an inadequate tax base and limited borrowing power, making them dependent on provincial and central governments for an appreciable proportion of their finances. National trade, tax, transport, health, and especially economic policies have far more influence over cities than any strategy designed at the city level, or even any explicit urban policy at the national level. Although most people live in cities, provincial and national legislatures often are overrepresented by rural areas. In a hierarchy of national administration, the city may be the lowest level, but to many citizens it is the highest level of government with which they have regular contact.

The symbols of municipal office, the debates in the city council, the routine functions of civic administration, and mayoral elections play a vital, irreplaceable role in democracy. This role, however, is under pressure due to decreasing participation in local elections. Increasingly, cities are exploring the limits of their freedom of action, especially in the international arena, through developments such as the twin city movement, direct representation abroad, international marketing, and positions on issues of international importance. Decentralization in the 1990s was not so much a response to demands from cities for more autonomy as a response by central governments to pressures in the financial markets to reduce their expenditures and limit their exposure to potentially very high levels of social transfers and welfare payments. Cities are taking advantage of the opportunities provided by decentralization and globalization to develop cooperative international networks, economic development strategies, and local environmental initiatives.

Three issues highlight a positive trend toward an urban renaissance in Europe: sustainable development, which calls attention to social cohesion and environmental quality in cities; decentralization, which highlights the importance of strong regional and local institutions capable of guiding the development of cities; and civil society, which calls for greater public participation in decision making, a role for community and nonprofit organizations, and a culture of trust and understanding in an increasingly diverse society. The survival and reinforcement of cities is a more conspicuous objective of public policy in western Europe than in Australia, Canada, or the United States. The pursuit of a more balanced form of development, a priority in Europe, is increasingly accepted as the objective for cities everywhere.

BUILDING AND REBUILDING THE MODERN CITY

No one foresaw the rate of urban growth or its consequences. The gap between the goals set to improve cities and the means applied to meet those goals has often been very wide. At first, urban conditions had a bigger impact on society, depressing living standards. Only from the mid-nineteenth century onward has society made substantial progress in remaking the city. In the final analysis, however, the burden of urban problems associated with rapid urban growth and with the management of very large cities has not undermined the city.

The modern city differs from the early modern in the nature of its physical expansion, which had enormous consequences for social organization. (The importance of city building in economic terms is captured by the percentage of a country's capital stock that is invested in urban buildings and infrastructure, which often reaches 25 percent.) The early modern city (with rare exceptions, such as Paris after the 1660s) was enclosed by walls which provided defense and served as a fiscal barrier. New districts within or without the city were realized only when the city walls needed to be modernized, new public squares built, or when part of a city destroyed by fire needed to be reconstructed (all too frequent a phenomenon until fire regulations and insurance spread in the most commercially sophisticated cities during the eighteenth century). There was always a tendency toward social segregation within the early modern city based on wealth and family or ethnic affinities, but it was never total in a given area or along a particular street. Cities in the nineteenth century were refortified, and remained so until after 1918 (Paris regained walls after the 1840s), and population growth quickly filled in whatever open land was left. Population pressure on housing therefore maintained a pattern of social heterogeneity, with the exception of the worst tenements and rooming houses, often in areas already known to be unhealthy or adjacent to industrial facilities. The breach in the walls was the railroad, whose construction toward the center of the city and whose capacity to absorb land brought irreversible change. Efforts in the twentieth century to provide an outer limit to a city, through regional planning measures such as new towns and a green belt, have been of limited success, partly because they are difficult to sustain over long periods of time, and partly because development can leapfrog around them.

The rebuilding of the city is most often associated with Baron Georges Haussmann (1809–1891), whose administrative control over Paris for nearly
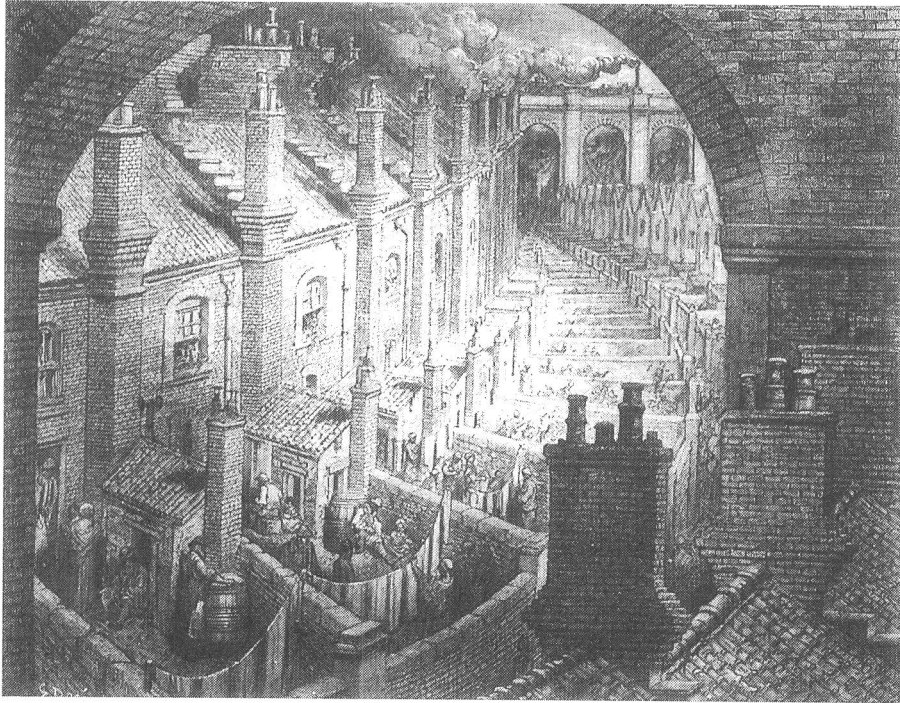
Tenements for the Poor. "Over London—by Rail," engraving by Stephane Pannemaker after a drawing by Gustave Doré. The engraving appeared in William Blanchard Jerrold's *London, a Pilgrimage* (1872). CENTRAL ST. MARTINS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN, LONDON/THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

twenty years gave him the opportunity to execute redevelopment projects on an unprecedented scale. These projects called for the rebuilding of the center to accommodate more people and activities, the construction of new linear traffic arteries, and new building codes allowing larger buildings while creating an impression of uniformity at the street level. Haussmann also annexed many suburban communities, thereby extending the limits of the city far beyond its then current needs in 1860, a model for management which has been followed elsewhere. The transformation and enlargement of Paris, and of other cities on this model such as Vienna, Berlin, and many smaller provincial centers, led to more homogenous residential areas; the creation of functional zones devoted to retailing, wholesaling, legal and administrative activities, and cultural and leisure facilities; the construction of new broad, long avenues for circulation (which often involved the demolition of much of the existing urban fabric along their path); and the extension, through engineering on a large scale, of urban facilities into the countryside, to meet urban needs (canals, reservoirs, etc., as well as places for relaxation, such as parks and forests). The organization of agriculture to supply cities, the construction of modern transport, and the growth of large markets in cities as distribution points were parts of a single process by which commerce and government worked to assure a supply of food at low cost to a large urban population.

Imagination and considerable managerial skill were needed to build water supply and sewer systems, underground or elevated inner-city rail networks, electricity generation and distribution facilities, and so on. Indeed, some of the modern techniques of large-scale organization management, including personnel policies, differential pricing to consumers, in-house research laboratories, market research, and the like either originated in or were developed on a large scale in relation to these networked systems by which technology reshaped not only the city and its environmental impact but also the daily lifestyles and temporal rhythms of its inhabitants. These interrelated technological networks compressed space, permitting densities to rise and buildings to soar, but they also expanded the use of time, enabling people to undertake more activities stretched over more hours. A key result, visible in European cities by the 1870s, was a marked decrease in urban death rates, thus breaking the dependency of cities on in-migration for growth—a truly historic change.

The specialization of architecture accompanied this process. New structural forms were based on iron, steel, glass, and concrete, thereby giving rise to debates about whether traditional structures such as churches and theaters could be given radically new architectonic expression. Factories were often monumental structures, dominating urban form and the cityscape. The debate between traditional and modern views of architecture was often linked to broader political, ideological divisions.

In the nineteenth century the vast majority of urban residents, whatever their incomes, were tenants; most landlords were small investors, though some were large-scale property developers whose ambitions often created spectacular fortunes but could lead just as easily, when a downturn in the economy came, to bankruptcy. Row houses for the middle and upper classes were built by the same methods as tenements for the poor, the difference being the quality of construction and space per inhabitant. Because the quality of housing was linked to incomes, many poor people were condemned to overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, which prevailed until the post-1945 era. Suburbs connected to cities by rail lines (beginning with Bedford Park in London) gave middle-class people a wider range of options, but until the 1920s and the expansion of mass transit and the construction of social housing on a large scale, cities continued to grow faster than suburbs. Rising levels of home ownership are only characteristic of the post-1945 era, and are associated with a decline in the population size of cities relative to suburbs.

The principal civic structures of the modern city mix opulence with utilitarian purposes: libraries and museums, department stores, theaters, hotels, hospitals. The proliferation of such facilities has been accompanied by the expansion in numbers of people working in the cultural and service sectors (health, education, and culture are often the largest single employment sectors in cities today), and it reflects the capacity of strong local cultures to survive and modernize, often with an impact felt far away (theater in Munich, music in Milan, architecture in Glasgow and Barcelona). The growth of dedicated vacation towns by the sea (Brighton, Deauville) or of spas (Vichy, Aix-les-Bains, Baden-Baden) also represented a form of specialized urban space, produced to stimulate a certain kind of consumption, in this case fashion, health, and entertainment. Civic art, especially in the form of decorations on the facades and in the interiors of buildings, gave visual delight and beauty a pervasive presence in many parts of the city, whereas before aesthetic design had been associated only with churches and great public buildings, which people did not frequent on a daily basis.

MODERN URBAN SOCIETY

Although social segregation increased in housing, the city streets remained a part of the public realm, characterized by great heterogeneity. For most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even after the introduction of mass transport (horse-drawn omnibuses, cabs, streetcars, rapid-transit trains), people walked considerable distances daily, and walking remained the most common form of movement. People also mingled in concert and music halls, pubs and cafés, parks and churches. The nighttime illumination of the city, first by gas and then by electricity, coupled with the extension of police patrols, transformed the hours after dark into a time of recreation. But as literature and drama reveal, the interaction in the city at night was often an occasion for lonely people to witness others enjoying a good time from which they were excluded. Émile Durkheim, in his famous study of suicide, found that the people who were most likely to take their own lives were those who had the fewest connections or networks with other individuals. Solitude led to death. Today, however, people are increasingly likely to live in cities alone, either as a lifestyle choice when young or as a circumstance of old age. Is this a sign of greater individuality? Or a failure of social communication and organization? Whatever the answer, this is a novelty in urban society, leading in turn to a need for more dwelling units for a population of a given size, and for more social and commercial services outside the home.

Social mixing in the nineteenth century, when associated with high density, and at a time when contagious diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis, and syphilis accompanied a lack of sanitation and considerable overcrowding, also gave rise to public debates about promiscuity. The ability of strangers to meet— a cultural pattern promoted by so many migrants coming to the city—was linked to the ease with which people in the city could become anonymous or create a new identity. This was a factor in the rise of racist ideology designed to keep people apart in separate ethnic groups. Debates about whether city living enhanced civilization or lowered morals—debates which had their origin in the Enlightenment—were carried forward in an urban culture in which religion appeared to be declining.

Thus the city has been depicted by some as a place where society fragments and by others as a place where individuals can come together into a larger, more unified body. Disaggregation or unity? Individual autonomy or collective solidarity? Is the city a fluid, dynamic environment which can be shaped by individuals, or a rigid, structuring container which

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Although social segregation increased in housing, the city streets remained a part of the public realm, characterized by great heterogeneity. For most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even after the introduction of mass transport (horse-drawn omnibuses, cabs, streetcars, rapid-transit trains), people walked considerable distances daily, and walking remained the most common form of movement. People also mingled in concert and music halls, pubs and cafés, parks and churches. The nighttime illumination of the city, first by gas and then by electricity, coupled with the extension of police patrols, transformed the hours after dark into a time of recreation. But as literature and drama reveal, the interaction in the city at night was often an occasion for lonely people to witness others enjoying a good time from which they were excluded. Émile Durkheim, in his famous study of suicide, found that the people who were most likely to take their own lives were those who had the fewest connections or networks with other individuals. Solitude led to death. Today, however, people are increasingly likely to live in cities alone, either as a lifestyle choice when young or as a circumstance of old age. Is this a sign of greater individuality? Or a failure of social communication and organization? Whatever the answer, this is a novelty in urban society, leading in turn to a need for more dwelling units for a population of a given size, and for more social and commercial services outside the home.

Social mixing in the nineteenth century, when associated with high density, and at a time when contagious diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis, and syphilis accompanied a lack of sanitation and considerable overcrowding, also gave rise to public debates about promiscuity. The ability of strangers to meet—a cultural pattern promoted by so many migrants coming to the city—was linked to the ease with which people in the city could become anonymous or create a new identity. This was a factor in the rise of racist ideology designed to keep people apart in separate ethnic groups. Debates about whether city living enhanced civilization or lowered morals—debates which had their origin in the Enlightenment—were carried forward in an urban culture in which religion appeared to be declining.

Thus the city has been depicted by some as a place where society fragments and by others as a place where individuals can come together into a larger, more unified body. Disaggregation or unity? Individual autonomy or collective solidarity? Is the city a fluid, dynamic environment which can be shaped by individuals, or a rigid, structuring container which

imposes choices and limits options? These pairings represent, not judgments on cities as a whole, but a range of social choices which the city, more than any other settlement, can provide.

CITY PLANNING AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The problem for city planners has been that the scale on which they work is far greater than the scale which individuals inhabit and use on a daily basis. As a result, the techniques for giving form to urban space, to prepare them for development, have tended to shade the differences between people, to standardize around the average. This was above all typical in the Fordist era of mass production, when building and planning by rules and norms made possible the progressive expansion of the city while eliminating a range of environmentally unsound and unsanitary practices. The result, however, was a city zoned into single-purpose districts, each of which lacked the diversity to evolve as circumstances changed. Uniform monofunctional buildings and land use patterns on this scale risk becoming prematurely obsolete, expensive to modernize but difficult to use otherwise. In recent years, the concept of mixed-use planning (which always survived for historic urban cores) has become a goal. This involves new problems of combining different uses, and buildings and spaces created and modified over time. Many historic urban cores, a product of the preindustrial, early modern era, have characteristics more suitable to the postindustrial, knowledge-based service sector economy than areas built to serve a manufacturing labor force and urban economy twenty or even sixty years ago.

Modernism emerged during this period (approximately 1880–1960) and was often applied to city planning. Modernism was grounded in the assertion that there are principles and rules by which buildings and cities can be ordered. One can in fact talk of a tradition of modernity: a spirit of reform linked to an architectural and planning vocabulary suitable in a great variety of places and at many different scales, based on principles of reason and the criterion of meeting human needs. From this perspective, the Gothic revival of the mid-nineteenth century was just as much a phase of modernism as was the neoclassical revival of the late eighteenth. The most common understanding of modernism, however, which relates most clearly to the period from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, involved a strenuous dismissal. of decorative elements, especially if superimposed on a structure, and a celebration of a form which expresses its function and structure.

The problem is now how to change the city as it exists to meet the social and economic opportunities and needs of the twenty-first century. The lessons of the modernists are often forgotten now that technology provides many of the physical elements needed to make life in cities comfortable, but the historical effort to renew modernism is still important: modernism emphasized the need to improve environmental conditions and to give people access to light and space; it created public spaces appropriate to large urban crowds yet still often intimate enough for people to be alone; and above all, it asserted that people must understand the city to make best use of it—hence the pursuit of a visual language designed to communicate clearly and meaningfully. Postmodernism, by contrast, rejects the very idea that design can meet the needs of different people in a coherent manner, based on the argument that people are too diverse, and that any effort to develop a coherent style involves a relationship of power.

This discussion about modernism raises the question of for whom the city is made. This is an important issue because many of the problems of sustainable development, including social disparities and environmental degradation, require a high level of technical expertise to solve. How much will people be willing to learn, in order to participate in decision making? If decision making is centralized, how can it remain democratic? What decisions and investments should be taken today, to assume better living conditions in ten or twenty years? These questions are not new, but animated political and community life during much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The debates around critical planning issues and urgent social problems are now read by historians to better understand the distribution of power within urban societies, the role of gender and class in decision making, and the social construction of technology and space.

There are those for whom the city is, in effect, a residual, the product of social and economic forces. This argument is frequently coupled with an assertion that in the market economy, the spatial structure of cities represents what people want. From this point of view, there is nothing necessary about a city center: centers may have been important for technological and economic reasons during certain phases of economic development, but they can be dispensed with in the current era of globalization and information technology. Taken to an extreme, this approach to urban development does not consider the location of economic activity to be a significant variable in national economic performance. Planning has fallen into disfavor, largely, no doubt, because it is perceived as a

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bureaucratic exercise devoid of imagination, and because it is associated with an economy of scarcity, not of abundance.

The opposing view is held by people who believe that the future of cities is not to be shaped entirely by market forces and technological trends, but should rather be guided by an understanding of what they contribute to economic life and democratic society, and by a vision of what cities can become. This approach is far more sensitive to the contribution of different kinds of urban spaces and networks to economic innovation and production, and to the interrelationship among social, environmental, and economic conditions. Increasingly, economic development strategists recognize that the best investment cities can make in their own economic development is to enhance the quality of life that they offer. This is linked to an understanding of the role that city centers play as places necessary to the well-functioning of the city as a whole, and thus to its sustainability.

The perfect society, ever since the days of Plato and Thomas More, has commonly been represented in urban terms. Utopian writers have tried to show perfection in cities as a matter of a regular street pattern, buildings of uniform shape and with a high standard of comfort, and an adequate disposition of civic spaces and cultural facilities. In the perfect city, different groups would all find their place, without pressuring one another. As a mirror image of reality, utopian representations showed that the urban norm was overcrowded and conflictual, that living conditions were inadequate, streets uneven, and civic culture weak—in other words, dystopian. There was a tension implicit in the exercise of writing and drawing utopian cities, however: how to get from the way things are to the way we want them to be. Was it necessary to reform society to build a better city? Or if a better city could be built, would the environmental and social conditions in such a place improve individuals, communities, and the state? During the Renaissance and Enlightenment, the physical means to build better cities were quickly exhausted on a small number of princely towns of very modest size, or on a few distinguished urban squares or complexes. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, the sheer rate of urban growth as well as the increasingly large role of the state (or in some cases, of benevolent industrialists) made possible the design and construction of large residential and commercial areas which were very progressive in style and quality. It was only a short step further to argue that a reallocation of resources could transform cities. The economic failure of the centrally controlled economies, together with the sheer cost and complexity of building planned

towns in western Europe after each world war, have damaged the utopian aspects of planning.

THE URBAN ECONOMY IN SOCIAL TERMS

A brief examination of the urban economy is needed, not only because the modern city is devoted to economic production and consumption to an unprecedented extent, but also because the creation of wealth has been one of the foundations of efforts to improve quality of life. Given the fact that the wealth of European cities was at a much lower level than it is now—and that wars and depressions have destroyed capital—how can a poorer society become richer? The neomarxist argument holds that capitalism exploits the city, first by using speculative investment in land to accumulate capital but also by promoting a lifestyle based on the consumption of commodities and prematurely obsolete fashion. Development theory, on the other hand, calls attention to saving, investment in education and in improvements which lengthen the average lifespan and improve health in the productive years, and institutions of trust which reduce conflicts and enhance problem solving—all factors found first in European cities, and often well developed by the middle of the nineteenth century. Countries undergoing the transition from rural to urban accompanied by a rise, not a fall, in living standards include Sweden in the interwar era and Spain after the 1970s—both influenced by atypical policy environments, the former by a countercyclical economic policy, the latter by integration into the European Union. In these cases, redistribution mechanisms helped to overcome a situation which in the nineteenth century had been marked by immiseration. A virtuous cycle may even exist: when wealth is applied to the creation and diffusion of knowledge and the improvement of living standards, health, and housing, people are more productive and social capital is enriched, thus enabling society to achieve further economic growth. This cycle is difficult to initiate and difficult to sustain. It does not just happen by chance.

This cycle implies three points: first, that the modern economy rests on an essentially urban way of life; second, that efforts to make cities more efficient and productive have always given rise to questions about how wealth is distributed and shared; and third, that the solution of urban problems related to power, sanitation, communications, etc., have led to significant innovations in services and technology which have become the basis of major industries on their own. In other words, not only

was society being reshaped to serve economic systems, it can also be said that social processes have influenced economic growth.

For example, the classic narrative of industrialization omits the fact that urban growth impelled many facets of industrialization, beginning with the manufacture of building supplies and the raising of agricultural productivity. From the perspective of social history, what matters is that the organization of the city's own economy to meet the daily needs of people, as well as the production of goods and services to pay for goods imported from other places, involved the creation of opportunities based on individual initiative in an economic system that absorbed migrants. Fear of a vicious circle—that success of a city will lead to its growth, adding to the scale of problems which must be solved if the city is to remain viable—has sometimes led to efforts to limit city size, but these have always failed. Instead, we need to talk of a virtuous cycle, whereby urban problems generate innovations and solutions which improve efficiency and the quality of life.

Communication between people from different walks of life and professional fields (cross-fertilization) has long been, and remains, an ingredient in economic development. Examples of cross-fertilization which helped to solve urban problems include the growth of the insurance industry, which grew out of fire prevention codes in London in eighteenth century; electrification, as a response to the pollution associated with coal and gas; and telephony, as a response to the traffic congestion and sprawl of the late nineteenth century. A socially grounded element of the modern city which was fundamentally shaped by its economic needs is therefore the reliance on coordination and cooperation rather than on command and control systems of organization. Coordination and cooperation depend on the ability of people to trust one another and to rely on unwritten rules or norms as well as on formal modes of communication such as books and newspapers to solve problems.

Cities therefore provide markets where standards of quality, price, and availability promote trade and innovation. The management of urban density is itself a factor in making markets work, helping to reduce the risks and costs of doing business in cities, expanding capacity, and eliminating bottlenecks. The introduction of new modes of production and of better methods of financing credit and identifying risks all implied a flexibility in organization which stood in contrast to the formal and rigid order of guild-based economic activity in the early modern era.

It is possible to categorize cities by their economic functions, not only because their spatial structure may reflect these differences but because their social structure may as well (affecting the relative distribution of professional, managerial, employed, and unskilled workers). With the emergence of the post-industrial, service economy, categories which proved useful in the past no longer apply. In the past, however, seaports, provincial capitals, and manufacturing cities were all very different kinds of places.

The port city as a type can illustrate this phenomenon. Because ports were connected to wider networks of trade, they were places where exotic goods—and contraband—could be found more easily and visibly. They were also places where foreign foods could be sampled, where zoos displayed the animals of Africa and Asia, where the flags and shields of consulates were visible in the city center, and where hospitals had specialists who could treat tropical diseases. Ports were cosmopolitan in ways that other cities, even capitals, were often not. The imperatives of freight handling and warehousing gave them a distinctive appearance (London docks, Hamburg warehouses)—highly congested. This specificity has now been lost. The commercial buildings of the port—now vacant because containerization has displaced port functions to huge, capital-intensive sites, often far removed from the city center, where large volumes of containers can be moved between ship, rail, and truck efficiently—have been reclaimed as leisure centers and as housing and office space. The river, once polluted and crowded with ships, is now often clean, but barren of human use.

The specialized functions of different cities, once reflected in a unique blend of institutions, buildings, social categories, and cultural patterns, have now been dissolved. Cities still specialize economically to varying degrees, but their specializations no longer lead to differences which are so visible to visitor and resident alike. When the famous market "les Halles" was torn down in 1972, a victim of the huge growth of Paris and congestion in the city center, which had made the distribution of foodstuffs difficult, it was replaced by an underground shopping center directly accessible to suburbanites by a series of high-speed rail links.

In this context, speculation has begun about the impact of information and communication technology and of the new networked economy on the social, economic, and spatial characteristics of cities. One early concern relates to the phenomenon of exclusion, whereby some individuals or groups lack the skill or access to participate in the new economy. Another concern relates to the possible relocation of people and activities far outside cities as the cost of communicating over distance diminishes. On the other hand, the networked economy highlights the importance of creativity and innovation in cities as an ele-

factors seem to include migration, a social mix, and some pressures in the form of mild political constraints, economic limitations, and so on which lead to polarized debates and anxiety about the future. The most important cities for cultural creativity are not necessarily those where economic innovation is strongest, and vice versa, although the distinction between commerce and culture is breaking down now that cultural activities are themselves recognized as a major source of employment. Still, the network or map of creative cities does not reproduce a single urban hierarchy, but multiple ones. Where will the creative urban centers of tomorrow be?

CONCLUSION

The modern city, in terms of social history, shows urbanization to have been a process based on the interaction between material circumstances and economic conditions, on the one hand, and social aspirations and political objectives on the other. Synchronization between what people wanted and what they could achieve has been elusive. But over time, and certainly from the perspective of the present, enormous progress has been made, especially in terms of living conditions and the formation of social capital (health, education, safety). Social cohesion, even in favorable economic circumstances, still appears fragile, giving rise to retrospective assessments of community life in the past, which can take on the aura of a golden age. Life in cities has never been easy, in part because the city is itself the largest and most complex social unit developed by man. Cultural creativity—long held to be the final measure of the potential of urban life— is perhaps the most problematic basis by which to measure change. On the one hand, there has been of late a marvelous expansion in the number of patents and in the number of titles of books in print; on the other hand, questions can be asked about the endur-

tary over cities, as well as the emergence of individual rights enshrined in law. Urban growth in the period 1880–1920 accompanied the introduction of modern telecommunications, urban infrastructures, electrification, mass production, and retailing, as well as modern social welfare systems and universal suffrage. The economic opportunities of our era, combining globalization, environmental gains, high technology, and urban growth, are fairly clear to see. But their implications for the exercise of democratic rights and for the protection of the rights of the individual are difficult to grasp. Without a concerted effort to strengthen representative government at the local and regional levels, however, it is difficult to see how the competitiveness and sustainability agendas can be implemented.

The role of the city in a highly urbanized society is unclear today. Against what point in time should progress be measured? And according to which criteria? The number of millionaires in a city, or the percentage of adolescents completing secondary school? The murder rate, or the rate of bankruptcy? Why should people want to live in cities? Traditionally, the existence of cities has been justified on the basis that they allow individuals and groups to fulfill their social and intellectual potential in ways that no other social environment can. This potential can be expressed in commerce and the economy just as well as in the creative and performing arts, or in the conduct of civic and public affairs. The past is full of examples of people who have engaged themselves with their city as much or more than with any other unit of social organization. The beginning of the twenty-first century, however, appears to mark the end of the era of the modern city as much as the end of the eighteenth century marked the end of the early modern city. A time of transition has clearly begun: its outcomes depend in part on whether people still care to shape the cities in which they live according to their aspirations and values.

See also **Civil Society** *(volume 2) and other articles in this section.*

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