

OXFORD

PETER CLARK

European Cities
and Towns 400-2000



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Urban Trends 1800–2000

The last part of this book examines the period from the early nineteenth century to the late twentieth century when, step by step, Europe became an urban continent. After the Second World War the majority of the European population, in some countries the great majority of the population, was living in towns rather than villages, and conurbations became increasingly numerous. In 1990, according to one estimate, Europe had 225 cities with over 200,000 inhabitants and forty of its cities counted more than a million people. Urban production and demand came to dominate European economy activity, while urban priorities transformed political agendas and Europe's cultural life was urbanized. In some countries the rural category disappeared from statistical records.

Urban ascendancy in the modern era was not achieved without cost. City expansion in the decades after 1800 was accompanied by economic crises, alongside sharp deteriorations in the living standards, environmental conditions, and health of a large part of the population, and over the longer term there was mounting social segregation. Tension occurred with powerful nation-states over their increased regulation and control of cities and towns. While nineteenth-century citizens were proud of the growing extent and panoramic monumentality of their communities, admiring them from cathedral spires, from balloons, from architectural extravaganza like the Eiffel Tower, and on the ground in commercial panoramas and displays at international exhibitions, urban cultural identity came under pressure and anti-urbanism flared at times, particularly in the early twentieth century. Rivalry between cities intensified, especially towards the end of our period, a development that has been attributed to globalization. Some of these problems were hardly new to European cities and towns, and indeed may be seen as structural to them, but they were undoubtedly heightened by the large-scale urbanization of the modern era.

Yet, as in earlier times, such challenges to the European city stimulated creativity across a whole spectrum of activities, as urban centres became leading laboratories for innovation in technology, finance, social policy, public services, governance, the creation of designed green space, and mass culture.

From the springboard of eighteenth-century developments, West European towns leapt into the lead in creativity and growth after 1800, but, as we shall see, before the First World War other regions, first Northern Europe and later the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, began to catch up in rates of urbanization. At the same time, differential growth marked out different types of community. Large cities, especially capital cities, grew strongly up to the 1960s; by contrast, regional centres and small market towns did relatively less well, though their fortunes partially revived during the late twentieth century. While Europe saw the continuity and resilience of its traditional multi-functional towns, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were remarkable for the advance of more specialist urban communities: industrial cities, ports engaged in large-scale international trade, leisure towns, including seaside resorts, and military towns. While towns of this type had already existed before 1800, mainly in Britain, the numbers, range and geographical distribution increased markedly during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; however, as we will see, many specialist towns encountered economic decline from the 1970s. The dynamism of the European urban network, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, also spilled outside Europe with the rise of colonial and neo-colonial towns from the Americas to Asia and Australasia.

This chapter starts by outlining the broad trends in European urbanization between about 1800 and 2000, focusing in particular on the crucial regional developments across the continent and indicating the main engines of growth. Here, the concern is to escape from the conventional preoccupation with Western Europe. The second part of the chapter examines the performance of different types of urban community, seeking to identify the urban winners and losers. With this overall picture sketched, the next chapters (13–16) will investigate in detail the economic, social, and cultural, as well as political forces, which shaped the creation of the modern and contemporary European city.

I

European urbanization in the modern and contemporary period occurred in three broad phases: the first up to about 1870, a time of accelerating but still limited urban growth; the second from the 1870s until the 1960s, an era of general expansion; the last from the 1960s until the end of the century, a period of some urbanization but also selective de-urbanization. In the early nineteenth century, urban growth was mainly concentrated in Western Europe where it was led by cities and towns in Britain and Belgium, which had already enjoyed significant expansion before 1800. England remained the key player, its urban order probably reinforced rather than disrupted by the French revolutionary wars. Here, urban growth was energized by the development of large-scale textile and iron industries (increasingly propelled by steam power), by a profusion of specialist, often workshop-type manufactures, by the rapid expansion of overseas commerce and the service sector, and by the spread of railways. Political stability after the 1830s may also have contributed to growth. As in the previous century, the urban dynamic was broadly based. London remained the world's largest city, its population soaring from about 1 million in 1801 to 2.7 million in 1851 and 3.9 million in 1871. However, there was a raft of successful old and new regional centres, including Newcastle, Manchester, and Birmingham, which served as marketing, financial, and service hubs for industrializing regions. No less important, specialist towns advanced in number and size: manufacturing centres, including older towns like Sheffield and Leeds, and completely new towns like Middlesbrough and Merthyr Tydvil; major international ports such as Liverpool and Hull; and seaside towns like Brighton and Blackpool (now outdoing the old inland spas). Steadily integrated into the British (and West European) urban network, Scottish urbanization accelerated, under the dual leadership of the port and industrial centre of Glasgow and the administrative capital of Edinburgh. Under their stimulus, smaller industrial and commercial towns flourished across the central lowlands. By mid-century, about 53 per cent of the British population was living in towns, and the figure surpassed 61 per cent two decades later.

Across the North Sea, the upheavals of the Napoleonic era and Dutch rule 1815–30 retarded but did not halt Belgian urbanization. Progressively,

the industrial areas of the late eighteenth century centred on Verviers–Liège and Mons–Charleroi, which were linked, via the new railways, into an urban system incorporating Brussels, the national capital after 1830 (251,000 inhabitants by 1850–1), and Antwerp, now focused on port activity. Belgian urbanization benefited from a flood of peasant labour from the countryside and from British investment and entrepreneurs; also influential were the kingdom's laissez-faire policies, and the trading opportunities offered by an expanding German economy.

Elsewhere, urban growth remained more patchy and localized. In the early nineteenth century, German urbanization was still highly variable according to regions. If the Congress of Vienna in 1815 led to the consolidation of states and takeover of many of the old imperial cities and the Zollverein after 1834 encouraged greater economic integration, the dividends for towns were often mixed. In the south, lack of agricultural and institutional reform contributed to extensive urban malaise, though Nuremberg revived as a metal manufacturing centre. In the Rhineland, towns had gained from French and subsequent Prussian reforms and agrarian improvement; even so, industrial development was still heavily workshop-based with strong links to the countryside. Across Germany and Austria, capital and residential cities grew (Vienna nearly doubled its population during the early nineteenth century to about 476,000 in 1860), but middle-size and smaller towns remained predominant.

In France, Paris was boosted by state consolidation under Napoleon and further political and economic centralization under his successors: the capital's population recovered fairly quickly from its demographic downturn in the 1790s, and reached a million by 1850. By comparison, provincial centres like Bordeaux or Nantes increased more slowly, and some provincial towns (deprived of their administrative functions as a result of the French Revolution) fared badly. The backward state of agriculture and recurrent political instability were powerful constraints on growth. Urban industrial expansion remained scattered, though important nodes thickened around Lille and Rouen (mostly textiles) in the north, and at Mulhouse in Alsace (cotton and machine manufacture), while in the Lyon and St Etienne region the major textile industries were joined from the 1830s and 1840s by mining, chemical, and metal production. Michelet described the industrial area of Rive-de-Gier near St Etienne, emerging from the countryside: 'agriculture gradually disappears. Scrub covers the mountains. Black and smoking factories emitting the thick and stinking coal fumes'. In Western

Europe, only Dutch cities remained resolutely in the doldrums—held back by ineffectual government, poor railway communications, high labour costs, and the competing investment attractions of the agricultural sector.

In the Mediterranean world, urban growth was flat and urban networks retained strong traditional features, despite, or perhaps because of, the heritage of large cities in parts of Italy and Spain. Institutional and agrarian conservatism were major obstacles to advance. During the early nineteenth century, expansion was confined to a few areas. In northern Italy, proto-industrialization provided the basis for manufacturing growth in the Genoa, Turin, and Milan triangle, but elsewhere most industrial activity was tied to old-style urban crafts. Apart from Barcelona, the principal cities in Iberia, including Madrid and Lisbon, grew only modestly. Barcelona benefited from the buoyancy of the Catalan textile towns, helped now by modern machinery imported from Britain. Further east, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire led to the formation of new Balkan states and the renaissance of some cities: thus, from the 1830s, Athens developed not only as the Bavarian-styled capital of a new Greek state but as a classical heritage site, though its population still counted only 41,000 in 1861.

The picture was not dissimilar in outer Northern Europe, where just a few pockets of urban industrial expansion can be found during the early nineteenth century. Ireland experienced a ripple effect from Britain as Ulster's linen towns and Belfast flourished, their development closely associated with Scottish urbanization. Sweden's industry remained heavily localized in the countryside and most of the main urban centres were situated on the coast. Stockholm, like the Irish capital Dublin, grew only torpidly at this time, and the Swedish urbanization rate stagnated at around 10 per cent. Under Russian control (after 1809), Finland's towns were slow to develop: the new capital Helsinki had only 21,000 inhabitants in 1850. The situation was similar in Norway (ruled by the Swedish Crown until 1905), where Christiania (the later Oslo) had no more than 28,000 people at mid-century, and most of the other towns (except for Bergen and Trondheim) recorded barely a few hundred residents.

Largely under oppressive Russian or Austrian sway after 1815, Eastern Europe remained overwhelmingly rural in character. Russian trade and manufacturing (including well over half of factories) stayed heavily embedded in the countryside, and migration to town was obstructed by serfdom (not abolished until 1861). Uncertainty about the status of towns makes it difficult to assess growth rates before the 1860s, but urbanization was

probably stagnant at 7–9 per cent, with most increases concentrated in bigger cities like Moscow, Odessa, and St Petersburg. Badly hit by the Napoleonic siege in 1812, Moscow recovered to over 400,000 inhabitants by mid-century, flourishing mainly as a merchant centre; Odessa, founded in 1794, grew rapidly as a cosmopolitan commercial city and free port (after 1819) on the Black Sea; and St Petersburg, the government and imperial Court capital, was said to grow ‘not by the year but by the hour’, her population soaring to 487,000 in the 1850s. In Poland, growth was equally selective. Warsaw’s population quadrupled between 1810 and 1870, approaching 300,000; but other cultural and commercial centres like Cracow and Gdansk grew more slowly, none exceeding 100,000 inhabitants by 1870.

Outside Britain, Belgium, and localized areas of Western Europe the pace of urban development in the early nineteenth century was tardy (compare Tables 7.1 and 12.1). What were the constraints on urban growth? Clearly, the French revolutionary era generated major economic and political instability and short-term de-urbanization in some countries. Moreover, the defeat of Napoleon and the new international order created at Vienna in 1815 was no panacea. The following decades saw recurrent political instability in France and the Low Countries, and political reaction in Austria. As we shall see in later chapters, institutional reform—abolition of guilds and internal trade barriers, and municipal restructuring—was delayed, especially outside Western Europe. Old urban elites often kept or recovered power, adapting slowly to change, and landowners retained a powerful voice in national governments to the detriment of city interests. Partly for that reason, rural industry remained a strong competitor to urban development. Linked to this was the widespread lack of agricultural improvement across most of the continent, constraining output, and keeping a large part of the population on the land. Lastly, progress was delayed by the slow dissemination of new industrial technology from Britain, inhibited by government controls until the 1840s, and by economic conservatism in many European countries. In a number of key respects the early nineteenth-century city belonged more to the urban world of the eighteenth century than to the modern era.

Even so, by the 1850s a growing proportion of Europe’s population resided in towns (see Table 12.1): an average of 25 per cent in Western Europe, and between 8 and 17 per cent in other regions. Where new steamships sailed and trains chugged (shortening average journey times by

Table 12.1. European urbanization 1850–1910

	1850: mean %	1850: median %	1910: mean %	1910: median %
Mediterranean	16.5	16.5	26.0	27.0
Western Europe	25.0	19.0	51.3	50.0
Outer Northern Europe	10.8	8.3	25.5	27.7
Eastern Europe	8.1	7.0	16.8	16.0

Principal Sources: A. Bailly and J.-M. Huriot, *Villes et Croissance: théories, modèles, perspectives* (Paris, 1999), p. 29; P. Bairoch et al., *La Population des Villes Européennes de 800 à 1850* (Geneva, 1988); National Censuses

two thirds), and where economic growth and state consolidation occurred, then we see the advent of more integrated urban networks. With growing urban populations and heavy immigration, social and environmental problems mushroomed, but there was growing recognition of their causes. Problems of governance persisted, but after the 1848 Revolutions reform was in the air. A platform had been laid for urban take-off.

II

After the 1870s, the pace of urban growth quickened decisively, as we can see from Table 12.1. Expansion of manufacturing production, trade, and the service economy (discussed in Chapter 13) undoubtedly had a dynamic influence, but so did the transformation of power structures with the expansion of the state and municipal government (see Chapter 16).

In the lead, Western Europe enjoyed large-scale and sustained urbanization, exemplified by its large cluster of leading cities (see Figure 12.1), which continued up to the Second World War and beyond. Britain's urban population jumped from 62 per cent in 1871 to 75 per cent in 1911, and 82 per cent in 1951, triggered by the rapid expansion of London, the leading global city, and other metropolitan centres, along with the take-off of manufacturing, port, and other specialist towns; even some of the traditional country towns underwent a revival, aided by the growth of new manufacturing and service trades. Germany saw an even more striking transformation as the urbanization rate nearly doubled between 1871 and 1910 (to 60 per cent). Berlin's rise as capital of a unified Germany and major industrial and financial centre was matched by the upsurge of

manufacturing towns, especially in the Rhineland. In France, urbanization was less dynamic, initially restrained by continuing agrarian backwardness and persistent political instability. Nonetheless, Paris—its central districts remodelled by Haussmann in the 1850s and 1860s—grew quickly, reaching 2.9 million in 1910–11, its dazzling cultural success complementing its power as a financial and industrial nexus and the capital of an expanding empire. Urban industrial growth was also consolidated in the areas around Lille and Lyon, while state expansion promoted the revival of regional capitals such as Bordeaux. But stagnation in other parts of the urban network (such as the south-west) meant that the majority of Frenchmen remained village peasants until the end of the 1920s. In the Low Countries, Belgian urbanization continued to build up momentum (reaching 57 per cent in 1910), fuelled by industrialization, strong economic links to Germany, and pro-business government policies. Most striking, Dutch cities, hitherto in the doldrums, experienced a sustained recovery. Amsterdam's population jumped to 574,000 by the First World War, other major cities revived, and new industrial centres emerged such as Eindhoven, run by the Philips Company. Vital here were improved communications, more effective government, expanding overseas markets in the colonies, and trade liberalization.

On the eve of the First World War, the principal West European cities were urban superstars admired and emulated across the continent and beyond. Just as Paris was the cynosure of culture and luxury shopping, so London was the leading global port and high altar of international finance, and Berlin the epicentre of scientific innovation and new technology from electrical engineering to optics. The First World War posed acute challenges for West European cities. As well as the destruction of many provincial towns in Northern France and Belgium, cities in the belligerent countries faced problems of disrupted trade, restructured industry, with labour and food shortages, and both Berlin and Vienna (like other German and Austrian towns) were badly affected by the demographic and economic aftermath of military defeat. The war had other consequences—narrowing social differentials, expanding social policy, and increasing state control over municipalities. Nonetheless, communities showed a considerable capacity to bounce back, and the urban revival of the inter-war period was sustained, despite economic volatility in the 1920s, the Great Depression after 1929, and the Nazi tyranny (with its anti-urban rhetoric). The resilience of the urban system in Western Europe was demonstrated by



Fig. 12.1 Map of Leading European Cities about 1900. Cities in bold with over one million of inhabitants.

the Second World War. Aerial bombardment and land campaigns led to widespread urban destruction. In France, for instance, over 320 towns suffered damage and about 18 per cent of all urban buildings in that country were affected. Even so, the city system in Western Europe soon revived—aided by heavy capital investment, both national and international (mainly American)—and retained its economic vitality up to the 1960s, as we shall see in Chapter 13.

By the First World War, though Western Europe still carried the baton of urban progress, it was no longer the only runner in the race, as is evident from Table 12.1. Outer Northern Europe, for long under-urbanized, was starting to close the gap. Here, the share of the population living in towns accelerated from the 1860s and 1870s, in part due to a strong economic performance, rates of gross domestic product (GDP) emulating those of

Western Europe. As Swedish industrialization took off (outpacing even German growth 1890–1910), the urbanization level jumped to 29 per cent in 1920, and large numbers of rural labourers moved to work in town factories. Stockholm grew dramatically from 136,000 in 1871 to 744,000 in 1951, buoyed up by industrial and harbour development: after 1900, suburbs spilled beyond the old city limits. Outside the capital, ports like Gothenburg and Malmö prospered but so did an increasing array of inland manufacturing towns, which acquired new markets through the spread of the railways. Urban-industrial expansion also affected Finland, though on a smaller scale: here, the urbanization rate rose from 8.5 per cent in 1880 to 14.7 per cent in 1910. Helsinki boomed as a manufacturing and port town, its population increasing sixfold to 147,000 in 1911; and industrializing cities like Tampere prospered too. In Norway, Oslo reached 243,000 inhabitants in 1911; and the burgeoning number of manufacturing centres helped push the country's urban rate to 35 per cent by the Second World War. If anything, the process was even stronger in Denmark, where the rate had already reached over 40 per cent by the First World War, and, within a decade or more, greater Copenhagen hosted a million people.

In Ireland the picture was more mixed. The towns of the north with their strong manufacturing base continued to prosper (Belfast reaching 438,000 in 1941), but those in the south languished despite independence in 1921. Dublin had 305,000 in 1910–11 and 489,000 in 1937, but the populations of Cork and Limerick barely moved over the same time. Taking outer Northern Europe as a whole, we can see that urban growth benefited from agricultural modernization and the introduction of large-scale manufacturing. Also significant were burgeoning overseas trade, better communications, and the expansion of central government. Vital for convergence with Western Europe was the way that Nordic cities organized hundreds of missions of experts and politicians to Berlin, London, and other cities in order to learn about and copy innovations in urban services and technology.

After the late nineteenth century, Mediterranean cities also began to expand, though, as we can see from Table 12.1 and Figure 12.1 growth was selective, due to patchy economic development (GDP rates lagged well behind those in Northern and Western Europe). Urbanization was marked by strong regionality. In northern Italy, the city system was driven forward by political unification (after 1870), by the increasing concentration of industry in towns, and improved rail communication. Taking the lead as industrial and commercial metropolis, Milan nearly doubled its population

to 424,000 in 1891. The city's horizon became thick with smokestacks and factories, blast furnaces, and gas works, most belonging to new large enterprises. Despite its failure to attract modern industry, Rome grew rapidly as the national capital after 1870, its size increasing to half a million in 1911 and 1.2 million under Mussolini. By contrast, many towns in southern Italy slumbered up to the Second World War.

Spanish cities experienced a similar selective advance. Thus, in the north, the Basque towns consolidated their importance as new iron, steel, and shipbuilding industries developed (Bilbao gained 3,000 new firms between 1900 and 1930), while Catalan towns, led by Barcelona, moved away from the old established textile and cotton industries towards engineering, cement, and electrical production; in both areas, industry was helped by the arrival of hydro-electric power in the 1880s. Madrid likewise expanded its population from 332,000 in 1870 to 834,000 sixty years later. Elsewhere, as in the south, the towns were becalmed: the city of Seville, for instance, under the thumb of landowners, had no banks and little industry, and its population of 148,000 continued to crowd together inside the old city walls. Dynamic centres like Madrid and Barcelona suffered badly from the bombardment and repression of the Spanish Civil War during the 1930s. In Portugal, the urban order stagnated into the early twentieth century and most towns remained small: only Lisbon grew fast.

In the eastern Mediterranean, urbanization was equally desultory. Though Athens was extensively rebuilt and staged the Olympic Games in 1896, its population stood at just 125,000 about this time, though it grew faster after the First World War when Greek refugees poured in from Turkey. As Ottoman power steadily collapsed in the late nineteenth century, new states and capitals were created like Sofia and Bucharest, which sought to emulate West European models, but other Balkan cities were more sleepy. During the inter-war period, urbanization advanced at a snail's pace. Greek urbanization stood at 32 per cent by 1940, but in Bulgaria the comparable figure was only 22 per cent. Across the Mediterranean, the same litany of factors limiting urbanization can be found, and among them was a striking lack of modernization in the agrarian sector; low educational standards; recurrent political instability; oppressive but often ineffectual central government; the conservatism of local elites; and the late arrival of large-scale industrialization.

Patchy development was equally evident in Eastern Europe—the least urbanized urban region in 1910 (see Table 12.1 and Figure 12.1). In Russia,

liberal reforms in the 1860s, the railway revolution, and the massive stimulus it gave to urban industry and commerce, all generated substantial urban growth. Most spectacular was the rise of St Petersburg to 2.2 million in 1914, its economy no longer driven by the Court and government but by manufacturing and financial expansion: a tenth of the population was employed in industry, many working in large factories. However, Moscow retained its influence as the leading commercial and manufacturing hub in European Russia, buttressed by important economic development in its hinterland. In the Ukraine, Kiev more than trebled its size in the late nineteenth century, its large multi-ethnic population employed in many industries, including the food-processing sector, and services. More moderate expansion occurred in smaller communities. Overall, the population of Russian cities (including those outside Europe) rose nearly threefold between 1870 and 1910.

In spite of Russian repression, Poland saw the rapid growth of Warsaw (with giant factories by 1914), the development of major industrial centres like Lodz, and the revival of ancient cultural cities like Cracow, vital for Polish national identity; even so, in 1918, only 24 per cent of the population lived in towns. In pre-war Latvia, Riga became a leading port of the Russian Empire; its population rose fivefold, and the city celebrated its prosperity and cosmopolitanism in a rich tapestry of art nouveau buildings. In Hungary, the unification of Buda and Pest in 1873 was the prelude to rapid large-scale building, industrial and commercial development, and a shower of new leisure services (including many coffee-houses). As one of the capitals of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and as the largest port on the Danube, the city's prosperity was accompanied by important demographic expansion: its 880,000 inhabitants in 1910 made it the eighth biggest city in Europe. Outside Budapest, however, Hungarian towns made less progress, held back by the lack of agricultural advance. In the Czech lands, industrialization took off as iron and steel production, engineering, and mining promoted the development of new industrial towns, while Prague had 183,000 inhabitants in 1890. The urbanization rate in the Hungarian-controlled part of the empire reached 20.4 per cent in 1910.

The collapse of the Austrian and Russian Empires and the creation of new states in the region after the First World War opened the door to further change. In Russia, the Communist Revolution initially led to de-urbanization of about 30 per cent in the years 1917–20, followed by a political vogue for anti-urbanism; but, by the 1930s, Stalin was

strongly promoting cities as engines of economic modernization and industrialization. Moscow, the new Soviet capital, quickly recovered from its losses after the Revolution and grew from 1 million in 1920 to 4.2 million in 1939. Though losing its capital status, St Peterburg/Leningrad increased its population from 1.1 million in 1923, and 3.1 million in 1939, while Kiev's population quadrupled. Urban growth was augmented by massive rural depopulation as a result of brutal agrarian reform. In newly independent Poland, Warsaw's inhabitants increased to 1.3 million in 1940–1, but overall urban growth in the country, affected by industrial depression, notched up only a few extra percentage points. In the new smaller-scale Hungary, urbanization reached 36.3 per cent in 1930. Across Eastern Europe, the Second World War had a devastating effect on cities and towns. In Russia, 1,700 towns were damaged, and some were levelled. St Petersburg/Leningrad's population fell by three-quarters due to the German siege. As elsewhere, however, post-war recovery was surprisingly rapid.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European cities and towns marched broadly in the same urbanizing direction, though in Western and Northern Europe at a faster pace than elsewhere. In some ways, this was a golden age for European cities. As will be seen in Chapters 13–16, industrial growth, dynamism, and versatility were matched by an expansive service sector; urban living standards began to improve for the majority of town dwellers, and social problems, so acute before 1900, began to be contained. The cultural influence of cities was increasingly multifaceted and the urban landscape was frequently redesigned. Not least, city governments began to function more effectively, offering a much wider range of services to all their citizenry.

III

The post-war era was characterized by renewed urban growth across Europe, as is suggested by Table 12.2, based on the comparable work of Moriconi-Ebrard (the data-sets are not directly compatible with those in Table 12.1 and sometimes vary from national estimates):

In Western Europe, the advance was more limited because of the maturity of the urban order. The fastest growth occurred in France, its urbanization rate still lagging after the war. Whereas 56 per cent of the

Table 12.2. European urbanization 1950–1990

	1950: mean %	1950: median %	1990: mean %	1990: median %
Mediterranean	30.0	21.4	55.6	56.0
Western Europe	66.2	71.5	72.0	72.2
Outer Northern Europe	36.9	36.8	51.6	55.2
Eastern Europe	30.7	33.0	59.0	60.7

Source: F. Moriconi-Ebrard, *Geopolis: pour comparer les villes du monde*. (Paris, 1994)

French population lived in towns in 1954, the figure had risen to 70 per cent only fourteen years later. The urban advance here and elsewhere reflected the historically high levels of growth in European gross national product (per capita), according to Paul Bairoch running at 4.5 per cent per annum in the period 1950–73 (against an annual rate of only 0.9 per cent 1913–1950). Keynesian economics, trade liberalization (promoted by the first steps towards European integration), rising living standards, agrarian reform, and immigration (including increased non-European mobility) all contributed to the post-war urban advance.

However, by the 1970s, large clouds were on the horizon. Many of the famous flagship cities were most affected. Metropolitan centres like London, Brussels, and Paris suffered from galloping suburbanization and decentralization. Behind this exodus lay increased personal mobility (due to the motor car), rising living standards, changing attitudes to family life and nature, as well as improved job opportunities away from older city areas. Problems of the major West European cities were compounded by the mounting crisis in urban manufacturing, which will be discussed in Chapter 13. Manufacturing decline was not confined to the metropolitan cities but affected a wide swathe of towns. Worst hit were the specialist industrial cities, a high proportion located in Western Europe, which had been so dynamic in the nineteenth century. Meantime, most port towns, particularly those on the Atlantic coast, were badly affected by restructuring and modernization in the shipping industry.

If many specialist industrial and port towns suffered long-term economic problems, most other West European centres managed to recover or at least stabilise their fortunes by the 1990s. Here, public services and the relative buoyancy and flexibility of the private service and financial sector helped cushion urban economies and enabled them to diversify. As usual,

the capital cities showed the greatest capacity to bounce back, but the growth of the service sector also provided a boost for a wide range of traditional provincial towns too (discussed below). Nonetheless, economic transformation contributed to mounting social problems in large West European cities (see Chapter 14). Arguably, the long-established primacy of West European cities started to unravel in the late twentieth century.

By comparison, the evolving city system of Northern Europe achieved more momentum. With up to 74 per cent of the Nordic population, according to some estimates, resident in urban areas by 1970–6, the figure had reached up to 81 per cent in 2000. Although the major Nordic cities of Stockholm, Helsinki, and Oslo suffered from a reduction of inhabitants in the 1970s and 1980s due to decentralization, this trend was reversed by 2001; only Copenhagen experienced a long-term fall of population. Whereas some older manufacturing industries, such as textiles, fell into difficulty, restructuring took place in others, such as the paper and metal industries, and a rash of new technology industries appeared (see Chapter 13). Without the many old specialist industrial centres of Western Europe, the region escaped large-scale urban dislocation during the 1970s and 1980s, and urban economies adapted flexibly to new opportunities, including the rapid growth of the service sector. In the Nordic countries the state played a significant role in urban growth, through the promotion of new industrial sites, heavy investment in education and infrastructure, and policies for increased municipal autonomy. In consequence, in Finland and Sweden not only the capitals but also major provincial cities (Tampere, Jyväskylä, Malmö, Gothenburg) flourished at the end of the period, and even some smaller towns. In Ireland, the old industrial towns of the north declined badly, affected by political conflict as well as international competition, but Dublin and the towns of the Irish Republic enjoyed rapid development from about 1980, stimulated by European Union support for agrarian reform and infrastructure improvement, and by the spread of high technology industry. Dublin's population grew from 852,000 in 1971 to 1.1 million twenty-five years later, and the Irish urbanization rate jumped from 46 per cent in 1960 to 57 per cent in 1990. Regional growth forecasts in 2006 ranked six cities from outer Northern Europe among the twenty leading European centres (Dublin, Stockholm, and Helsinki in the top eight).

In Eastern Europe, the Soviet occupation of much of the region after the Second World War led to sustained urbanization through state promotion

of heavy industry and the creation of new industrial and planned cities, where up to 60 per cent of the populations worked in a single sector. Communist Hungary had eleven Socialist cities of this type, while in Ceausescu's Romania villages were suppressed to furnish completely new industrial towns. In Russia, the urbanization rate reached 51 per cent in 1961 and growth was particularly strong during the 1960s and 1970s. Moscow's population leapt from 3.2 million in 1945 to 8.9 million in 1987, with much of the increase the result of immigration. By 1970, more than half the Polish, Czech, and Hungarian populations were town dwellers, and here and in other Eastern bloc countries urbanization continued up to 1990, by which time the average urbanization rate for the region stood at about 59 per cent (see Table 12.2).

After the Soviet collapse in 1989–90, Russian cities experienced some temporary fall of population (St Petersburg lost half a million residents 1991–2001), but elsewhere in Eastern Europe policies of political and economic liberalization tended to promote urban growth with the expansion of the service sector and tourism in capitals such as Warsaw and Prague. In the Baltic region, cities like Tallinn and Riga enjoyed important redevelopment and renewed prosperity. Worst affected were the planned industrial towns which ran into crisis due to the end of the Communist command economy and fierce international competition: thus, Tatabánya and Ózd in Hungary suffered a serious loss of inhabitants during the 1990s. In general, though, the economic prognosis for the major cities of Eastern Europe was positive at the start of the twenty-first century: Russian cities recovered their demographic losses and centres like Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest were forecast to perform well in terms of production and employment growth.

Like Eastern Europe, much of the Mediterranean region enjoyed a burst of urbanization during the late twentieth century (see Table 12.2). The upturn was particularly dynamic during the 1960s. Spanish cities like Valladolid, Saragossa, and Madrid grew rapidly at this time. Portuguese growth accelerated, too, though Lisbon remained the most vigorous centre. In Italy, the Milan-Turin-Genoa region continued to serve as the main engine of expansion, attracting many workers from the south. In Greece, the majority of the population resided in towns by 1971, while in Communist Bulgaria the urbanization rate trebled to 65 per cent about this time. Urbanization was supported in part by large-scale agricultural modernization (increasingly financed in non-Communist countries by the European

Union), which released a swarm of rural migrants to cities. Thus, Spain in the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a mass exodus of peasants from the Granada region (and elsewhere) to the shanty towns of Barcelona and Valencia to work in industry. Large-scale factory-based industries flourished in parts of northern Italy, and in some of the major Spanish cities, but much of the manufacturing structure of the Mediterranean remained small-scale, many family businesses employing only a handful of workers.

Hence, the Mediterranean urban order largely bypassed the heavy manufacturing phase of urbanization that had been so important in Western Europe: it thus escaped some of the worst ravages of de-industrialization in the 1970s. Here, the exception was the Communist Balkans where an attempt to follow the Soviet model of urban industrialization led to a sharp increase in the number of cities, many of them industrial centres with over 100,000 inhabitants; as elsewhere this had disastrous consequences during the 1980s and 1990s. However, across the Mediterranean region, urban economies generally benefited from an expansive service sector, helped by the growth of the state and the new importance of the Mediterranean coast as a holiday destination. In addition, cities promoted themselves through new museums, theatres, art galleries, and international sports events. Once again, capital cities displayed powerful momentum: Rome grew rapidly up to the 1980s, many of its 3 million inhabitants resident in the sprawling, chaotic penumbra, while Belgrade's population reached over a million in 1981.

By the close of the twentieth century, Mediterranean urbanization was running out of steam. Agrarian reform had largely run its course and migration from the countryside declined. State financial cutbacks dampened the growth of administrative services; environmental pollution was growing; horrendous political conflict in the Balkans led to damage to cities, economic disruption, and a massive decline of tourism in the area (though this was partially displaced to the towns of the Western Mediterranean). Many major cities in the region suffered stagnation or loss of population in the 1990s.

Two broad points are clear so far from this survey of urban trends. Firstly, European urbanization, as in previous centuries, was marked by strong regional variations, but by the late twentieth century the lagging regions had mostly caught up, with urban growth rates in Eastern and Mediterranean Europe particularly strong up to the 1980s. The map of leading European cities in 2000 (see Figure 12.2) shows a wide regional

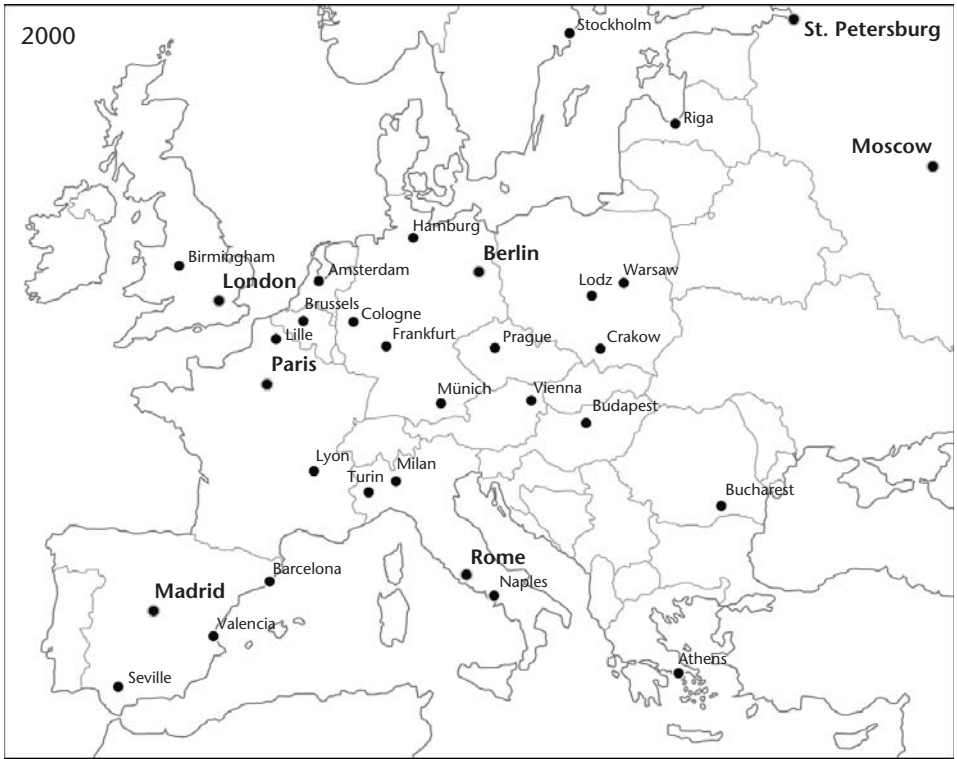


Fig. 12.2 Map of Leading European Cities about 2000. Cities in bold with over two million inhabitants.

distribution. Secondly, some types of urban community fared better than others. In the final part of this chapter, we shall focus directly on the winners and losers, taking firstly the more traditional, multi-functional towns, and then focusing on the growing range of specialist communities.

IV

Heading the traditional urban hierarchy in much of Europe were, of course, capital cities: some like Paris and London important since the Middle Ages, others like Madrid, St Petersburg, Vienna, and Stockholm developing essentially in the early modern period. Numbers grew substantially in the modern era with the consecration of Rome and Berlin as capitals of unified states, the foundation of Athens, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia as the state

capitals of new Balkan countries after the Ottoman collapse, and a last surge of new national capitals (often previously secondary capitals) after the First World War, among them Dublin, Helsinki, the Baltic capitals, Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw. In 1917, St Petersburg was replaced by Moscow as the Russian capital.

In the early nineteenth century only a few of these primate centres, notably London, Paris, and Brussels, enjoyed large-scale growth and construction; otherwise expansion tended to be modest. The biggest city in the world, London by the 1830s already had the crowds ('people apparently without end'), the pollution (poisonous 'peasouper' fogs), and the sense of anomie (men, animals, and machines appearing 'like streams of living atoms reeling to a fro') that one associates with the modern mega-city, but most metropolises in this period retained strongly traditional features: crowded central districts with unhealthy narrow streets; constricting military defences; limited social segregation and modest infrastructure improvement.

The incarnation of capital cities as modern metropolises, equipped with the institutions of the nation state, diversified economies, a cavalcade of cultural activity, and a grand, monumental landscape, was achieved during the late nineteenth century and start of the twentieth. Whilst London's sanitation improvements in the 1840s established a model for other capitals, it was Haussmann's redesign of central Paris in the 1850s and 1860s, opening up the grand boulevards, turning the central districts over to bourgeois apartment blocks, hotels, government offices, and department stores, forcing poorer inhabitants and industry to decamp to the suburbs, that influenced the rebuilding of most European capitals by 1900. As nation-states increasingly competed with one another, so did their capitals, whether in architecture, technical services (fierce rivalry flared at the end of the nineteenth century to become the leading electrified 'City of Light'), or economic development. As already noted, populations soared: five European capitals had more than 2 million inhabitants by 1914. No less striking was their spatial extension. London, with its penumbra of villa suburbs, covered 1,792 sq. kilometres by 1914, but many others such as Paris, Brussels, St Petersburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Berlin boasted their own sprawling suburban districts. After the First World War, Paris had 2.9 million residents plus another 1.5 million on the outskirts who lived mostly in shanty-towns. Right across Europe, irrespective of region, capital cities became the kingpins of the urban order.

Metropolitan expansion was boosted not just by the increase of state functions and bureaucracies, but by economic diversification. Of Paris, Paul Valéry wrote: ‘much more than a political capital and an industrial centre, [it is] a port of first importance and a great market, an artificial paradise and a sanctuary of culture’. Many capitals were great overseas ports and flourished on the explosive growth of European and global trade. Frequently, they were the leading manufacturing centres in their countries: Berlin had Siemenstadt and Charlottenburg; northern Paris housed many car, aviation, and chemical industries, employing thousands of workers; St Petersburg had a ring of large factories. Meantime, a multiplicity of department stores and retail shops catered for the metropolitan bourgeoisie (see Chapter 13). Again, in both the performing and visual arts the national metropolis was the cradle of innovation, commonly linked to state patronage and the commercial sector. Capitals reinforced their position as national transport hubs, shiny steel rails converging on their railway termini, while after the First World War the first international airports opened in their vicinity. Capitals became leading tourist destinations, their images heavily publicized in the new media, including films. To refresh, entertain, and lodge the crowds of visitors, restaurants, cafés, and hotels sprang up in every boulevard.

The massive expansion of national capitals was not unproblematic. Suffering serious social problems, beset by tensions with government, they provoked growing anti-urban sentiment before and after the First World War. Nonetheless, the great age of the capital cities continued, more or less, into the late twentieth century, buoyed up by the apparently inexorable rise of the state and their economic importance. In Soviet bloc countries, Communist centralization privileged capital cities like Moscow and Warsaw at the expense of provincial centres.

From the 1970s, decentralization, state regional policies, and the general crisis in European manufacturing (and in many cases the decline of port employment) posed major challenges, particularly to capital cities in Western Europe. Yet, as we have noted, capitals demonstrated a striking ability to recover, aided by their dominance of national and international business and transport networks. The upturn in world banking and finance since the 1980s consolidated their business primacy. In the 1990s, 100 per cent of Spanish company headquarters were based in Madrid; 85 per cent of British ones in London; and 90 per cent of French ones in Paris. Moscow was the focus for 80 per cent of direct foreign investment in Russia.

Sixteen of Europe's capitals were represented in the top hundred of the world's richest cities in 2005. Tourism has continued to flourish (in 2001 capital cities comprised 60 per cent of the top twenty tourist destinations in Europe), stimulating a massive development of hotel, catering, and cleaning services. Heavily backed by national governments, metropolitan authorities have marketed their attractions as business, cultural, and leisure centres in often aggressive ways, including redevelopment projects (Dublin's Temple Bar district), cultural *grand projets* (the Tate Modern, the Gare D'Orsay Museum), and international cultural and sporting events.

Generally, the durability and continued influence of European capital cities into the contemporary era has been striking (see Figure 12.2). Rather exceptional was Berlin, which lost its national status after the division of Germany in 1945, and struggled to recover its metropolitan power after reunification in 1991, but even here the city enjoyed growing success at the end of our period. Indeed, primate cities have been the most successful of the traditional spinal hierarchy of European urban centres.

V

By comparison, regional cities, often presiding since the Middle Ages over extensive hinterlands and networks of smaller towns, have enjoyed mixed fortunes. In the nineteenth century, those ancient centres which boasted important specialist industries, such as Newcastle, Lyon, Lille, Milan, and Barcelona expanded strongly, flourishing as commercial, cultural, and political centres in economically vibrant regions. The great majority of regional centres did less well, however, stagnating or growing fairly slowly, constrained by a lack of industrial momentum and by limited agrarian improvement in their hinterlands. In Britain, ancient regional cities like Norwich or Exeter went into relative decline, though the first was recovering before 1900; French cities such as Bordeaux and Toulouse failed to capitalize on their earlier importance; and in Germany former residential cities and imperial cities, without a new manufacturing function, turned into backwaters: thus, the Westphalian city of Münster was marginalized from industrial growth in the region and its ranking fell sharply. Regional centres in the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe often suffered similar problems, though in the Nordic countries a number of middle-rank cities like Gothenburg, Malmö, and Tampere developed new industrial specialisms.

During the twentieth century, however, improved communications, enlarged state expenditure, growing agrarian reform, the spread of new industries, and reformed municipal government revived the fortunes of many of these regional cities. In England, the renaissance of places like Norwich, Exeter, York, Maidstone, and Colchester was already starting in the inter-war era and became notable in the late twentieth century. In the Netherlands, the city of Groningen posted success after 1945 as a city of services, about eight in ten its of labour force being employed in public services, education, and retailing; across the German border, Münster enjoyed similar prosperity in the last decades of the twentieth century. In Finland, smaller regional centres like Jyväskylä and Oulu did well (Oulu's population climbed from 78,000 in 1965 to 121,000 in 2000); here, new industries were attracted or supported by educational and scientific agencies, often linked to universities. Clearly, state funding has played a part in boosting the wider administrative and service functions of many regional towns, but, equally important, energetic councils have sought to revive their regional cultural role, through new or revamped museums and art galleries, local radio stations, music festivals, and the like.

As we know, much less research has been done on Europe's thousands of small market towns, many of them dating back to the high Middle Ages. Nonetheless, we can speculate that the great majority grew relatively slowly for much of the nineteenth century, held back by the decline of traditional crafts, by dependence on landowners and a slow moving agrarian sector, and by belated advances in infrastructure and communications (many railways bypassed small towns). Decline was by no means universal, however. A significant minority flourished as manufacturing centres. In the Ruhr, for instance, small towns like Essen and Dortmund were caught up in the nineteenth-century industrial tsunami and surged as major urban centres with populations of over 200,000 by 1910. Another group of small towns developed as transport centres, mainly for the new railways. Other small communities acquired a leisure function as spas and seaside towns, frequently through the initiative of a local landowner—for instance, the Duke of Devonshire at Eastbourne. All in all, however, there can be little doubt that the proportion of the urban population living in small towns fell steadily during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Britain, the share of the population living in small towns slipped from 16 per cent in 1851 to 9 per cent in 1901 and just over 6 per cent in 1951. Nearly half the French urban population still lived in towns of less than 10,000 in 1831; but

by 1911 the figure had slumped to 20 per cent. In the Mediterranean region the downward spiral was less dramatic. In Spain, the small-town share of the total population slid from 50 per cent in 1900 to 40 per cent in 1960.

During the late twentieth century, the picture changed again, though once more with mixed dividends for small towns. Some took advantage of the decentralization of metropolitan centres noted earlier. This was notable around London, Stockholm, Madrid, and Rome. In eastern France, out-migration from Strasbourg had a similar effect on some smaller communities in the region. In some areas, there was a spread of new technology industries to small towns. Another beneficiary group consists of those well-preserved small towns and ports which developed as destinations for seaside holidays or cultural tourism—among the latter, the heavily renovated town of Carcassonne in southern France, the book town of Hay-on-Wye, on the Welsh border, and the various UNESCO World Heritage site towns like Rauma in Finland. In contrast, small towns in more peripheral areas have regularly undergone depopulation as a result of out-migration, ageing populations, and the steady attrition of their urban functions, including the loss of industries, shops, and other businesses. Frequently, only their basic administrative functions serve as a safety net keeping up their urban identity.

VI

Broadly speaking, the traditional urban order maintained its coherence and resilience through the modern era and generated, in the case of capital cities and at least some of the regional centres and smaller towns, vital sources of urban dynamism or renewal. Nonetheless, as we know, one of the most striking urban developments of this period was the rise of more specialist urban centres, primarily manufacturing towns, great port towns, military and leisure towns. Three preliminary points can be made. First, some of these towns were completely new centres, but the majority had started as traditional small market or port towns. Second, these specialist centres, though sharing a dependence on a particular sector were rarely specialist *tout court*. Many diversified into other sectors, needing basic trades and services to sustain their expanding populations. Nonetheless, in many industrial towns manufacturing engaged 50 per cent or more of the

workforce, substantially higher than in traditional towns, and with a greater concentration in one or two sectors. Third, specialist towns tended to create networks of complementary towns: whether regional industrial networks as in the West Midlands, the Ruhr, or Pas de Calais, underpinned by access to energy and mineral resources, a mobile labour supply, and shared transport and financial links; port towns linked by trade and merchant networking; or resort towns, as on the south-west coast of France, offering a finely-tuned array of services for an increasingly sophisticated tourist market.

In the case of manufacturing towns, high growth was driven by heavy immigration, which in the early nineteenth century often spawned terrible living conditions, as provision of services and infrastructure ran far behind demand. The situation was especially difficult in completely new towns like Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales which by the 1830s had turned rapidly from a village 'into a crowded and filthy manufacturing town', blighted by exceptionally high mortality rates, and where effective town government was lacking for decades after the town's explosive expansion. Roubaix was another new town, originally a craft village, whose many textile mills attracted a population of 100,000 and generated massive social and environmental problems. A second type of new industrial centre grew out of old small and medium-size towns. Thus, the episcopal city of Limoges developed as a national and international centre for the ceramics industry with a score or more of factories. Here, too, urban services lagged well behind rapid population growth: many streets were left unpaved, and poor quality housing bred high mortality. Bochum was another old-style country town that grew rapidly from mining, iron, and steel. Two thirds of residents were migrants and almost 80 per cent of the population was engaged in the industrial sector in the 1880s. A third category of specialist industrial centre comprised company towns, which grew up under one dominant employer who frequently furnished services, institutions, and housing as a way of controlling the workforce. Examples were Le Creusot in Burgundy, where the Schneider dynasty fabricated an iron and steel town with model houses and sanitation; the town of Crewe, established (in 1843) by a British railway company, where over two thirds of household heads in the 1880s worked for the railway; and Eindhoven, in the Netherlands, where the Philips family took over the town after 1891 and ran much of its economic and civic life. Finally, as we noted above, a spate of new state planned industrial towns were created in Communist countries after the Second World War to meet Russian economic needs, such as Sillamäe in Estonia,

set up in Estonia in 1946 to exploit the shale oil industry, or Stuchka, in Latvia (founded 1960), serving a new hydro-electric power plant.

The vulnerability of such towns was already evident from early on, cyclical commercial crises through the nineteenth century spawning waves of unemployment and social deprivation. Industrial towns like Middlesbrough, Sunderland, and the Ruhr towns (such as Oberhausen) suffered equally badly during the Great Depression, and from the 1970s many manufacturing centres like Sheffield, Roubaix, or Duisburg experienced a catastrophic decline of their core industries resulting in high and persistent levels of unemployment. Scarred by industrial pollution, specialist communities found it difficult to adapt and acquire new service functions, not least because they faced strong competition from well-established, multi-functional towns.

Overseas port cities pursued a not dissimilar trajectory of rapid growth succeeded by sharp decline in the later twentieth century. Already, before 1800, Asian and Atlantic commerce was heavily concentrated in a limited number of great ports. A number doubled as capital cities but the rest, including Glasgow, Liverpool, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Le Havre, Bilbao, and Marseille, were specialist cargo and liner ports, usually in excellent maritime locations, though often semi-detached from the main urban network. During the nineteenth century, port activity soared, driven by the rapid expansion of colonial and global trade (including rising exports of European manufactures and imports of raw materials and later foodstuffs), and the steamship revolution. At Liverpool, the volume of registered shipping using the port rose four to five times between 1858 and 1914, while Bremen's merchant fleet increased fortyfold during the nineteenth century; by 1909, 84 per cent of its tonnage was steam-powered. Great ports benefited from large-scale infrastructure investment, and the development of processing and refining industries (Bremen was important for tobacco and coffee processing) and shipbuilding (for instance, at Glasgow, Lübeck, Hamburg, and Le Havre). If the great ports did best, middle-rank and smaller ports also profited from the general expansion and specialization of European and coastal trade (see Chapter 13).

Alongside strong demographic growth came high levels of mortality (due to seaborne epidemics) and heavy immigration, often involving ethnic minorities. At Glasgow in 1851 nearly one in five of the city's population was Irish, and ports like Marseille and Genoa received immigrants from all over the Mediterranean. Too often, municipal politics were conservative

and parsimonious, and (as in the case of industrial towns) urban services were slow to catch up with the demographic explosion: there were major housing shortages and acute social problems. Widespread poverty was caused not only by cyclical trade slumps but also by the high incidence of seasonal and casual employment.

By 1900, a number of the leading ports had acquired not only some manufactures but also service activities such as insurance. For all these efforts at diversification, however, the majority remained heavily dependent on shipping and their economies had a narrow employment base. In the 1930s, many suffered badly from the Great Depression. Unemployment at Liverpool, for instance, jumped to 28 per cent in 1932. Most of the major ports were badly damaged during the Second World War: thus, Hamburg lost almost half its housing stock due to bombing in July 1943. Recovery after the war proved short-lived. From the 1960s, mechanization started to have a major impact on port employment and over the next decades containerization accelerated the process. At Liverpool, the registered dock labour force fell from 23,000 in 1963 to just 2,000 a couple of decades later. In addition, international shipping companies tended to concentrate their activities in a small number of global ports—mega-hubs with advanced facilities. In many countries, specialist non-urban harbours grew in importance, often dealing in a particular trade such as car imports. As a result, most European port cities stagnated in the later twentieth century. Even those like Rotterdam and Antwerp that grew, saw their docks and facilities moving downstream, away from the city. From Sunderland and Belfast to Palermo and Malaga, port cities comprised the largest group of declining cities in late twentieth century Europe, notable for their high levels of unemployment. In France, half the ten major cities with the worst rates of economic growth in the 1980s were ports. Attempts to resuscitate the leading port cities through the development of cultural services (such as the Merseyside Maritime Museum at Liverpool or Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum), had some success, but numerous middle-rank and smaller ports were subject to acute problems of employment and redevelopment, albeit with exceptions: thus, Calais benefited from heavy investment in port facilities to enjoy strong growth in its cross-Channel and European traffic.

Leisure towns were always much smaller than industrial cities or major port centres. A few, including spas and seaside towns, had already emerged before 1800, mainly in England, but the main take-off was from the 1830s and 1840s and at the end of the century the continent had hundreds of spa

towns. A significant proportion were located in less developed areas with their scenic views, cheap labour, and limited economic alternatives: thus, Austro-Hungary had thirty-three resorts in 1910, compared to twenty-four in Germany, seventy in France, four in Italy, and twenty in Switzerland. Offering medical treatment and polite sociability, spa town development was irrigated by rising bourgeois prosperity and the arrival of the railways (often doubling visitor numbers in a few years). Also influential was the growing impact of the medical profession, municipal and private investment, and tourist publicity. Spas figured widely in the novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky, Emile Zola, and Thomas Mann, usually portrayed as special, even fantastical worlds, but also important was the idea of the spa as a place to return to nature. Scenic views in the south Tyrol, for instance, led to the emergence of Meran as a health resort from the 1830s, patronized by nobles and royalty as well as the fashionable bourgeoisie. But, in the years before the First World War, the spas became less select as trainloads of plain middle-class families debouched, not so enamoured of fancy water treatments and more keen on climate, recreation, and respectability (Meran's visitors surged from 7,500 in 1883 to 40,000 in 1913).

If spa resorts increasingly flourished in less developed parts of Central and Eastern Europe, initially, the main tide of seaside resorts lapped Western Europe, where steamships, railways, and trams brought troops of visitors from the capital cities or industrial towns to promenade, to enjoy the clean, unpolluted air, to dip perhaps in the chill Atlantic or Baltic waters, and to marvel at the romantic image of sea and shore. As with the spa towns, there was heavy marketing from the nineteenth century by towns and railway companies, joined later by hotels, holiday companies, and state tourist offices. Belle of the North Atlantic resorts, Brighton doubled in size after 1851, reaching 131,000 in 1911, while Ostend trebled its population to 45,000 in the decades before the First World War.

Further south, seaside towns surfaced rather later. From the 1840s, San Sebastian and Santander in northern Spain attracted royal and noble patrons as well as the fashionable bourgeoisie, while over the French border Biarritz, favoured by Queen Victoria and Napoleon III, watched its population grow markedly in the last third of the century, housed in ever more fanciful villas. But, as late as 1893, a survey of over 400 European seaside towns located more than 80 per cent in Western Europe. By the First World War, though, Mediterranean resorts were advancing at a fast pace. Among the leaders, Nice had 66,000 residents in 1881 but more than

twice that number in 1911, and 242,000 in 1936. Though established as a resort in the 1840s, Rimini still had only 19,000 visitors in 1922, but 75,000 during the high summer of the 1930s. By then, resorts were spreading to the Adriatic coast (for instance, Dubrovnik). After the Second World War, middle-class and mass tourism fuelled a boom in seaside facilities along the Mediterranean shore, from the Costa Blanca to the Greek islands and Black Sea, many of them situated in and around decayed port towns, grafted on to existing urban hierarchies without supplanting them.

Though leisure resorts often derived from older small towns, they displayed distinctive features: seasonality of business—limited to three months a year; the high mobility of visitors and workers; initial fashionable patronage, but later wider social access; the overwhelming dominance of the service sector (largely small businesses); more relaxed social behaviour; and the architecture of pleasure—from piers to promenades, from funfairs to nightclubs.

Like other specialist towns, however, many leisure towns suffered from their over-dependence on one sector and were vulnerable to changes in leisure markets, competition with other centres, and environmental problems. Spa towns in the twentieth century came to depend on the sick and elderly rather than the sociable, and too often stagnated. Seaside towns in North-West Europe had their heyday in the years after the Second World War when affluent workers and their families crowded there for their summer holidays. From the 1970s, their populations waned, as they lost out to cheaper and warmer holiday destinations in Southern Europe. At the end of our period, Mediterranean seaside towns faced growing competition from beach resorts outside Europe. Those on the Black Sea that had catered for Soviet tourists crashed badly after the collapse of the Communist regime in 1990.

A last category of specialist towns consisted of military towns, probably between thirty and forty in modern Europe. One group was that of naval and dockyard towns, among them Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Chatham in England, Brest and Toulon in France, and Kronshtadt near St Petersburg, the largest naval base in the Baltic. Another group was that of barrack towns, such as Aldershot in England or Koblenz in Germany. Military towns made big strides in number and size during the nineteenth century, particularly in the decades leading up to the First World War. Brest's population coasted from 66,000 in the 1860s to 90,000 in 1911, while that of Aldershot marched from 17,000 to 35,000 during the same period. But such communities were

always highly dependent on state military expenditure and their labour force fell back sharply in peacetime. After the loss of empires in the late twentieth century, and the end of the Cold War in 1990, most have stagnated or declined, at best turning into heritage sites. Brest and St-Nazaire figured among French towns with the worst employment record, while Kronshtadt appeared derelict and depressed in 2001.

VII

To complete this survey of the different types of urban community, it is important to remember the many thousands of European-style towns outside Europe—colonial and neo-colonial cities. Though a large part of the colonial towns founded, mainly in the Americas, during the first wave of European imperial expansion (see Chapter 7) had been liberated by independence movements against Britain and Spain in the decades before and after 1800, the second great wave of European colonial expansion during the nineteenth century in Africa, Asia, and Australasia produced new generations of Europeanized towns abroad. Given the parallel surge of European urbanization at this time, it is hardly surprising that cities became, more than ever, vital instruments both of European economic and political hegemony and intra-European rivalry. Several different types are recognizable. One was the settler town. Unlike in the earlier period, when many of the new cities were populated by large contingents of European colonists, in the nineteenth century settler towns were mostly limited to French North Africa, parts of South Africa, Canada, and Australasia, with cities like Melbourne, Sydney, and Auckland.

Elsewhere, in Asia and much of Africa, most colonial cities, some ancient centres brought under colonial rule or new cities like Singapore (1819) and Hong Kong (1842), had only small cadres of expatriate officials, soldiers, and merchants (rarely more than 3–7 per cent of the total inhabitants). Populations of French Saigon or Dutch Batavia soared in the late nineteenth century. In British India there was a similar expansion of port cities like Bombay and Calcutta, heavily integrated into imperial trade, as well as the creation of administrative centres, and even resort towns—hill towns like Simla—for the European elite.

A third category of community were neo-colonial cities, as in the independent republics of Latin America, like Buenos Aires (178,000 in

1869 and 1.5 million in 1914), Santiago de Chile and San José (Costa Rica), which continued to rely on European investment, immigrants, and cultural inputs. Reflecting the economic, political, and cultural dynamic of European cities during the late nineteenth century, colonial and neo-colonial towns were influenced, more or less, by West European models of town planning, infrastructure improvement, public buildings and parks, suburbanization (particularly in Australia with the splendid Victorian suburbs of Melbourne), social segregation (reinforced by race), and cultural style. The exchange was not one sided. Just as colonial and neo-colonial cities contributed, through trade, investment opportunities, and demand to European economic development, so the imperial world shaped the monuments, landscape, and cultural ideas of European cities, through architecture, the media, imperial exhibitions, and other events. However, by the Second World War, if not before, the heyday of the European colonial city was on the wane as imperial power began to fade, nationalist movements mobilized, and alternative political and cultural forces (principally American) began to assert their influence. At the close of the twentieth century, former colonial and neo-colonial centres, especially in Asia, had often turned into roaring urban tigers, mega-cities competing against the European urban system.

VIII

To conclude, the European urban order saw dramatic changes between 1800 and 2000. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries accelerating urbanization across continent, moving from Western Europe to Northern Europe and progressively to other regions, was accompanied by the apparently inexorable ascent of capital cities, the selective prosperity of traditional provincial centres, and an upsurge of new more specialist towns. The later twentieth century witnessed equally drastic upheavals within the urban network, as cities in Western Europe in particular suffered growing demographic and other problems, and serious challenges confronted metropolitan cities and specialist urban communities. The complex economic, political, and other factors which influenced these developments will be explored in detail below.

At the same time, modern European cities demonstrated growing durability, affluence, and effectiveness. In the two centuries after 1800 they

overcame many of the terrible natural and other threats that had dogged their fortunes in earlier times. Among the natural threats only earthquakes continued to create havoc into the late twentieth century (as at Skopje in 1963 which destroyed most of the city). As we will see in Chapter 14, epidemic disease persisted, particularly in poorer urban regions, until the First World War, but thereafter improvements in public health, water supply, and medical care led to the containment of the problem. Another major natural threat, fire, had largely disappeared by the late nineteenth century as a destroyer of towns, due to advances in construction and planning (for instance, firebreaks in wooden Nordic towns), fire services, and fire insurance. The last great fires afflicting European cities were associated with bombing during the Second World War. True, warfare, particularly during the two world wars, created major crises for cities, involving high mortality, physical destruction, difficulties of food supply, and the like. Nevertheless, the recovery periods were relatively rapid, unlike in previous times. During the Second World War, planning for the reconstruction of cities and even some rebuilding was under way before the end of hostilities. Again, following the Balkan wars of the 1990s, devastation hit many urban centres but the revival was swift: Sarajevo's population nearly halved from 529,000 in 1991 to 300,000 five years later, but by 2006 stood at 602,000.

As well as these ancient challenges, European cities in the modern and contemporary era faced many other problems—economic, social, cultural, and political—linked to mass urbanization, high levels of immigration, the growth of the international economy, the rise of states and central governments, and much else. In the next chapters, we will investigate how the urban order managed to respond to these challenges, and try to evaluate the achievements of the European city at the end of the twentieth century.