KEY CONCEPTS IN
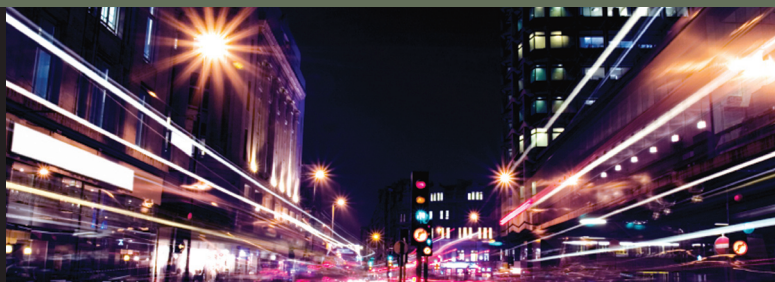# URBAN GEOGRAPHY

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KEY CONCEPTS IN

URBAN GEOGRAPHY

KEY CONCEPTS
IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

The *Key Concepts in Human Geography* series is intended to provide a set of companion texts for the core fields of the discipline. To date, students and academics have been relatively poorly served with regards to detailed discussions of the key *concepts* that geographers use to think about and understand the world. Dictionary entries are usually terse and restricted in their depth of explanation. Student textbooks tend to provide broad overviews of particular topics or the philosophy of Human Geography, but rarely providing a detailed overview of particular concepts, their premises, development over time and empirical use. Research monographs most often focus on particular issues and a limited number of concepts at a very advanced level, so do not offer an expansive and accessible overview of the variety of concepts in use within a subdiscipline.

The *Key Concepts in Human Geography* series seeks to fill this gap, providing detailed description and discussion of the concepts that are at the heart of theoretical and empirical research in contemporary Human Geography. Each book consists of an introductory chapter that outlines the major conceptual developments over time along with approximately twenty-five entries on the core concepts that constitute the theoretical toolkit of geographers working within a specific subdiscipline. Each entry provides a detailed explanation of the concept, outlining contested definitions and approaches, the evolution of how the concept has been used to understand particular geographic phenomenon, and suggested further reading. In so doing, each book constitutes an invaluable companion guide to geographers grappling with how to research, understand and explain the world we inhabit.

Rob Kitchin
Series Editor

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URBAN
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1.1.2: Park, R., Burgess, E. and McKenzie, R. (1925/1967) *The City*, Chicago: University of Chicago, Chart II. Urban areas. p. 55.

3.1.1: 'Generalisations of internal structure of cities', Fig. 5, p. 13 in Harris, C. and Ullman, E. (1945) 'The nature of cities', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 242: 7–17.

3.1.2: Latham, A. (2003a) 'Research, performance, and doing human geography: some reflections on the diary-photo diary-interview method', *Environment and Planning A*, 35: 1993–2017. (The image is from page 2010.)

Acknowledgements

INTRODUCTION

It is easy to list the things that seem to belong to cities. Audacious skyscrapers. Bustling sidewalks. The hum of traffic. Elegant department stores. Subways and flyovers. Ethnic restaurants and street cafes. Squares, parks and piazzas teeming with people. Shopping malls and industrial parks. Giant sports stadiums. The cries of street hawkers. Trolley cars and double-decker buses. Outrageously dressed people. Street markets. Slums and tenements. Beggars and drunks. Soot stained buildings. Smog. Foul tasting tap water. We should not forget exhibition halls and conference centres, art galleries and cultural quarters, Staffordshire bull terriers and corner gangs, warehouse conversions and new media start-ups. Nor monuments and memorials, skid rows and strip malls. The list goes on and on. It is also pretty easy to list the kinds of adjectives that convey some sense of what cities are about. Fast, loud, noisy, brash. Diverse, cosmopolitan, superficial. Unnatural, inhuman, anonymous. Risky, sexy, dazzling, dangerous. All these words convey something about how cities are experienced, and how cities are understood. But it is hard to define what makes a city a city, and what makes life urban. For example:

> The city is everywhere and in everything. If the urbanized world now is a chain of metropolitan areas connected by places/corridors of communication (airports and airways, stations and railways, parking lots and motorways, teleports and information highways) then what is not the urban? Is it the town, the village, the countryside? Maybe, but only to a limited degree. The footprints of the city are all over these places, in the form of city commuters, tourists, teleworking, the media, and the urbanization of lifestyles. The traditional divide between the city and the countryside has been perforated. (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 1)

So, we are faced with a problem. While many of the themes that excite urban geographers may at first sight be associated with the dense melting pots of the world's most exciting places, we can also think of a list of things that are a product of urban society, but not necessarily of the *city*: bento boxes, golf balls, soap operas, barbecues, shipping containers, credit cards, filing cabinets, petrol pumps, microwave ovens, grass verges at the sides of roads, birthday cards, rubbish dumps, melting ice floes. The footprints of the city are, indeed, as much in the urbanisation of lifestyles as in any spatial form.

Defining cities, defining the Urban

So, how do we begin to define our terrain of interest? Definitional questions are quite important to consider, as we may be using cities as a 'spatial fix' or 'fetish', a means of projecting social relations onto a defined territory in order to make them more understandable (Beauregard, 1993; Pile, 1999). There tends to be a slippage between talking about cities, and talking about the urban, both in academic texts and in popular usage. The quotation from Amin and Thrift above draws on the useful idea of a 'footprint', where even the countryside becomes urbanised through the industrial-scale manufacture of food, or the commuting urban dweller moving into a village cottage, or the television showing the mean streets of an American crime series in the living room of a remote village. Certainly, the creation of nationwide networks of motorways, railways and air routes brings even remote areas within an urban time-space, thus lessening a distinction between the country and the city.

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However, most people would agree that an important – perhaps defining – element of cities is their human *density*. This has a legal dimension. In medieval Europe a city was any town that had been empowered by the local nobility to build a city wall. In the United States, 'city' refers to an incorporated urban area with powers of self-government. Cities like Los Angeles or Chicago, legally at least, are made up of scores (in some cases hundreds) of incorporated cities – they are quite literally cities of cities (Fug, 1999; D. Massey, 2005). And these cities have only the loosest relationship to population numbers. The smallest city in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, Industry, has a residential population of just 777. Nonetheless, attracted by the absence of local business taxes, Industry is home to over 2000 businesses and 80,000 jobs (see Davis, 1990). These raw numbers do point to the fact that sheer size of population (and with it settlement density) in some sense structures the dynamics of a city, that it helps give a city its *city-ness*, if you like. They also point to the fact that a sense of political incorporation, some sense of shared interdependency, lies at the centre of what cities are about. And, the example of Industry points to the way that cities are not just about who lives within their boundaries, but also all the activities and other entities (companies, workers, factories, and so forth) that populate them. Here, we can see the importance of cities as sites of interaction and association, involving new forms of social relationships (between children in school

playgrounds, car drivers in complex traffic routes, business people stitching together transactions, friends or co-believers congregating to celebrate football or religious beliefs).

It is important to also consider the geography of knowledge production in urban geography. One of the great temptations in all work on cities – which by its very nature tends often to be case study based and place bound – is to claim that the city being studied is definitive of the thing being studied. The book edited by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess (1925) that defined the Chicago School of urban research in the 1920s went by the rather generic title *The City: Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment* despite the fact that it is almost entirely based on research undertaken in Chicago. More recently, a group of urban studies scholars have pushed forward the claim that Los Angeles is the best place to witness the future form of metropolitan life. As Ed Soja (1989: 191) claimed:

> What better place [than Los Angeles] can there be to illustrate and syn- thesize the dynamics of capitalist spatialization? In so many ways, Los Angeles is the place where 'it all comes together', to borrow the immod- est slogan of the *Los Angeles Times*. Being more inventive, one might call the sprawling urban region defined by a sixty-mile circle around the centre of the City of Los Angeles a *prototopos*, a paradigmatic place; or pushing inventiveness still further, a *mesocosm*, an ordered world in which the micro and the macro, the idiographic and the nomothetic, the concrete and the abstract, can be seen simultaneously in an articulated and interactive combination.

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The difficulty with these kinds of arguments is threefold. First, why choose Los Angeles, or Chicago? Why not New York or London, Detroit or Warsaw, Osaka or Houston, Miami or Kolkata, or Lagos, or any other interesting looking city? Second, the framework used in the analysis tends to homogenize cities, seeking to apply clinical laboratory conditions to an incredibly complex collection of social formations. In the words of Ash Amin and Steven Graham (1997: 417) 'the exception […] becomes the norm, applicable to a vast majority of what might be called "unexceptional" cities'. So behind the glamorous representations of Los Angeles, New York, London and Shanghai, the urban condition is being lived out in fairly unremarkable urban places. For example, a recent book entitled *Small Cities* addresses 'the woeful neglect of the small city in the literature on urban studies' and seeks to outline 'appropriate ways to understand what small cities are, what smallness

and bigness mean, how small cities fit or don't fit into "the new urban order", or what their fortunes or fates might be' (Bell and Jayne, 2006: 2). Relatedly, there is the notion of the urban as an ever-increasing thing: 'the discourses of cities … have tended to follow the logic that cities should be big things, either amazing or terrifying in their bigness, but big nonetheless. The very idea of cities is to be big and to get bigger: shrinkage, even stasis, is a sign of failure.' (Bell and Jayne, 2006: 5). Third, such cities can be expressive of a longstanding divide within geography, where the study of cities in the so-called 'Third World' is often undertaken within the sub-discipline of development studies, rather than urban geography. For example, it has been argued:

> the limited applicability of different accounts of (western) cities conventionally remains unstated, even if it is implicit in the context … This is much less the case for writing about cities outside the West, where explicit naming of the region or cities covered highlights the implicit universalist assumptions underpinning the often unremarked localness of much writing on western cities. (Robinson, 2006: 543)

This is not to say that such claims are not without their uses. A term like the Chicago School, or the Los Angeles School, becomes shorthand for a series of distinctive arguments about how cities are structured. And the hyperbolic claims for paradigmatic status ('new kind of city', 'biggest', 'fastest growing', 'most dynamic', 'where it all comes together') can, as Michael Dear (2003: 202) argues, help jolt readers out of received ways of thinking and 'encourage new ways of seeing' cities. However, focusing on the exceptional and the remarkable can cause one to miss the ordinary, the small variations that actually make a particular urban space, or city, distinctive. Instead, we suggest that it is important to think about cities and the urban 'as the co-presence of multiple spaces, multiple times and multiple webs of relations, tying local sites, subjects and fragments into globalising networks of economic, social and cultural change' (Amin and Graham, 1997: 417–8).

So, the purpose of *Key Concepts in Urban Geography* is to present a series of ways of thinking about what makes cities what they are. The 20 chapters that make up the book offer a series of routes into the complexity, the heterogeneity, the ambiguity and the dynamism of urban life. We want to consider how cities are not just defined by propinquity (by things being physically close together) but also by a whole range of long distance relationships – connections to the countryside around it, to other cities, to other countries.

Urban geography as a sub-discipline

Urban geography is a relatively youthful sub-discipline. Early work focused on the ways that climate and local geographical conditions had shaped the development of individual urban centres. This certainly produced some interesting work. Jean Brunhes' (1920) *Human Geography*, for example, showed in great detail how the architecture and form of particular settlements could be related to the surrounding region's topography, climate and geology. But there was only so much to be said about the importance of the immediate physical environment to things like settlement location, or a city's internal morphology. It is only in the past 50 years that urban geography has emerged as a recognisable entity either within geography or, more broadly, within social scientific research on cities and urbanisation. As recently as the end of the 1950s, urban geography was defined by just a handful of textbooks and monographs (see Dickinson, 1947; Taylor, 1949; Mayer and Kohn, 1959) and, in North America and the United Kingdom at least, it was rare for university geography departments to offer undergraduate courses focusing exclusively on urban issues. Prior to the 1950s geography in general was preoccupied by two principal themes: first, that of regional distinctiveness and second, on the relationship between humans and the physical environment. Geography was thus essentially an idiographic discipline (a discipline concerned with singular empirical cases) closely aligned with the humanities, and a discipline where the division between human and physical geography was blurry (humans were after all part of the physical environment).

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This situation altered dramatically in the early 1960s, as urban geography emerged as a quantitatively based 'spatial science', defined by three central principles. First, it was convinced that the aim of geography should be to find general laws that defined the formation of geographical relationships. Second, to discover these relationships geography had to develop rigorous and empirically testable theories. And third, geography had to adopt established scientific techniques such as statistical analysis, hypothesis testing, or mathematical modelling, to properly test these theories. Thus, to be scientific, data needed to be measurable and countable. And to be rigorous, data needed to be scientifically tested against some theory about how the world worked. While these principles may appear straightforward enough and even rather quaint and a little naive to contemporary ears, they represented a revolution within the conservative world of early 1950s geography.

Quantitative geography thus reconceptualised geography as a nomothetic discipline (concerned with general cases and laws), one that was closely identified with the scientific project (whether that be in the physical or social sciences). However, the sub-discipline could not be insulated from the broader changes taking place across western societies in the 1960s and 1970s. While this saw the rise of an influential body of work inspired by Marxist and feminist traditions, it also saw a more general interest in the 'peopling' of geography, aligned with a growing interest in *place* (Cloke et al., 1991: ch. 3). Such a 'humanistic' geography was diverse in its content, but shared an 'insistence on taking seriously the inter-subjectively constituted lifeworlds – the shared meanings and "common-sense knowledges" – associated with groups of people who lead similar lives under similar circumstances in similar places' (p. 87).

The broad movement that underpinned this shift is often referred to as the 'cultural turn', which is well documented by Barnett (2003), Mitchell (1999) and Scott (2004). For Barnett, this turn involved a threefold rejection of Marxism, a methodological interest in ethnography (drawing on methods of qualitative social research or textual analysis) and a commitment to social constructionism (seeing place and social identity as being constituted through texts, images and discourses). It also implied a sensitivity to difference, be this based on gender, race, sexuality or other forms of identity (Anderson, 1999: 12). Poststructuralism, which made its way into geography via the humanities, 'questioned the coherence and fixity in categories [and] created a hunger for what has become known as "problematising"; for situating within narrative context that which is assumed to rest on a bedrock of truth'. Such an agenda also included an interest in institutions 'as cultural domains': 'Universities, banks, the military, the levels of state, the law, the church, corporations, schools, the media and even families impose some narrative plot onto their activities, binding members to the unit and justifying their existence to themselves and society at large' (Anderson, 1999: 7).

More recently, there has been an expansion of the cultural turn into the field of everyday life. Certainly, not all cultural geographers share this concern. For Anderson (1999: 3): 'The taken-for-granted minutiae of dress conventions, traffic rules, table manners, codes of humour, funeral rituals, subtleties of fashion shifts and definitions of personal beauty, are probably beyond the purview of geographers'. This is no longer the case and, whether one agrees with its relevance or not,

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recent urban geographical work has included work on tending gardens, sitting in airports, sitting in cafes and using telephones (e.g., Hitchings, 2003; Power, 2005; Laurier and Philo, 2006; Adey, 2007).

Above all, however, urban geography is multidisciplinary. Its areas of concern bleed into those of other areas of human geography (economic geography, social geography, political geography and so on) and other social science disciplines (sociology, anthropology, economics, planning, to name the four closest). As the editors of a volume entitled *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* would reflect in 2004:

> the fact that nearly half of the thinkers presented here are not conven-
> tionally defined as 'geographers' is acknowledgement of the centrality of
> space in social theory and the significance of the so-called 'spatial turn' in
> disciplines such as sociology, cultural studies, and literary studies. …
> (Hubbard et al., 2004: 2)

The 50 thinkers profiled in the volume would include those central to the discipline's recent development, such as Doreen Massey and Nigel Thrift, but also scholars from philosophy (Gilles Deleuze), sociology (Manuel Castells), economics (Amartya Sen), development theory (Arturo Escobar) and gender theory (Judith Butler). The work of some of these figures has, of course, been unevenly adopted in reframing conventional understandings of the urban, but increasingly their impact is being felt. As for quantitative geography, it remains a vigorous strand of urban geography, which continues to define new research agendas for the discipline as a whole (see Wilson, 2000; Batty, 2005; Albrecht, 2007).

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The concepts

We have chosen to select and organise the concepts in terms of five overarching areas of concern: location and movement; constructions; envisioning and experience; social and political organisation; and sites and practices.

(1) Location and Movement

As we have seen, the rise of spatial science in the 1950s and 1960s was emboldened by the potential that a raft of new statistical and theoreti-cal tools seemed to present. Quantitative geographers became fasci-nated with urban structure. Not only were cities increasingly coming to

define humanity's collective future, they were also a ready-made research laboratory. They presented a series of intriguing intellectual puzzles. Why were some cities so large, and why did they appear to be getting more so? Why were some industries concentrated in some places and not others? How did transportation networks work? Why were land rents in some parts of cities so high and others so low? What determined the flow of people and information between different cities? In a short period of time and borrowing with enthusiasm from other disciplines that shared an interest in the spatial distribution of human activity such as economics and sociology, quantitative urban geographers developed an impressive range of theories through which cities might be understood. And, at the same time, cities offered a wealth of existing and potential data sets – population censuses, railroad freight bills, electoral rolls, newspaper circulation figures, highway flow rates, to name just a few examples – with which geographers could get to work developing empirically rigorous theoretical models to answer all of these questions.

This section is concerned primarily with concepts that allow us to think about the dynamic spatial relations within and between cities. Traditionally, much of urban geography has focused on such relations. Central place theory, locational analysis, diffusion models, network analysis, systems theory and suchlike allowed quantitative urban geographers to describe the structure and morphology of cities and city systems with ever greater sophistication (see Gottmann, 1961; Haggett, 1965; Pred, 1966; Berry, 1973; Johnston, 1983). Nonetheless, this quantitative urban geography that was so confident and so intellectually dominant in the 1960s and 1970s also came to face a series of critiques of its more extravagant claims about its ability to understand the spatial dynamics of cities, particularly as the pace, density and intensity of urban life has transformed. The entry on **centrality** discusses more recent attempts to consider and conceptualise the role of downtowns and central business districts in cities. Unsurprisingly, these questions about location saw the rise of a linked, but separate, sub-discipline of transport geography. In many ways, the recent upsurge in work on **mobility** deals with the terrain usually occupied by transport geography, which has had a long and substantial contribution to urban geography. Yet it has often been boxed off, left to those with an interest in port systems, road pricing or rail travel.

The dynamic between the logics of centrality and mobility then forms the backdrop to the discussion of **global cities**. This is a field of study

that has boomed over the last two decades and has been an inevitable partner of the vast literature on globalisation in all its forms and conceptual shapes. This body of work has been driven primarily by cases and theories derived from economic geography, and sees cities as being defined by their ability to hold down circuits of wealth, employment and capital. There is a subtle difference in perspective here with the literature on **transnational urbanism**, which has emerged as the study of flows of ideas, practices, peoples and commodities between and within contemporary urban centres. The human flows that move between cities – either as tourists or migrant workers, either temporarily moving or going from one sedentary life to another – have tended to be defined in contrast to globalisation, allowing a tracing of how particular ethnic groups organise themselves across established national boundaries. They can be highly visible – Chinatowns being a classic example – or they can be largely hidden from mainstream society, as many migrant groups seek to establish and embed themselves through independent means.

(2) Constructions

The second set of concepts allows us to get some purchase on cities as built, or constructed environments. We begin by considering the relationship between cities and **nature**, and how the urban environment is not necessarily unnatural, but is better understood as a kind of hybrid of the natural and social. The discussion cuts across a range of themes that have been exciting theorists, such as urban political ecology (Keil, 2003; Wolch, 2007) and animals in cities (Wolch, 2007). The relationship between human actors and nature has been an important new field of study in human geography (e.g., Whatmore, 2002) and the relationship between urbanity and (controlled) nature is one that is only recently being given fuller examination.

Theorists have become interested in the diverse **materiality** through which social practice comes into being. So, they are not just interested in people and language, but also the complex networks of bodies, objects, technologies and imaginaries through which urban space is constituted. This has been a key aspect of recent debates concerning urban **infrastructure**, which seeks to explain the socio-technical constitution of the bits and pieces of urban systems such as cables, power supplies and satellite that help urban society stick together. These mechanisms shape the experience of urban life, but are often

hidden (literally and metaphorically) from our attention. And it has also invigorated debates in the field of **architecture**, both in terms of the networks of relations that come together to make a building happen and also through an understanding of how buildings are used, both in the everyday sense of home and housing and in ceremonial, identity-marking institutions such as state parliaments or museums.

(3) Envisioning and Experience

A major critique of quantitative urban geography was that its under-standing of human action was too narrow and unnecessarily constric-tive. These geographers were accused of having overlooked the social and political dimensions of the urban forms that they studied, or even excluded an interest in human *experience*. By seeing human actors as driven by neo-classical presupposition of strict economic rationality and, further, by suggesting that the only dimensions of human action that could be studied scientifically were those that could be rigorously measured, quantitative urban geography was blind to what it is that makes humans human. Emotion, memory, our ability to form mean-ingful attachments with each other, our capacity for wonder, all had no place in quantitative urban geography. A key issue, however, was an unwillingness to accept that how they envisioned the urban was a very loaded decision. The **diagrams** used in these urban geographies are important to consider, as they both imply a scientific form of 'master-ing' urban space, as well as reducing human behaviour to a series of lines drawn on maps.

In contrast, humanistic geographers such as Edward Relph, Yi Fu Tuan and David Ley suggested a quite different way of doing urban geography, one that in the words of Anne Buttimer (1978: 74) 'allows for emotion as well as thinking, passion as well as reason.' Feminist geographers like Susan Hansen, Linda McDowell, Gillian Rose and Doreen Massey too demanded a different kind of urban geography. They pointed out not only that women (and indeed children) experienced urban space in very different ways to men, but also that urban space was *gendered* in all sorts of complicated and rarely acknowledged ways (see Ley and Samuels, 1978; Ley, 1983; Women and Geography Study Group of the IBG, 1984; Rose, 1993). In her book *Visual Methodologies* (2007)*,* Gillian Rose set out a comprehensive framework for thinking through how visual methods used by social scientists could unveil some of these experiences.

These literatures underpinned the message that cities are more than physical structures: they are also sites of meaning and experience. Consider, for example, the way in which 'fast' technologies such as railways – and then airplanes – have transformed our understanding of cities. Theorists such as Schivelbusch (1986) and Schwarzer (2004) have argued that visuality is central to the modern urban experience:

> Panoramic vision turns the view of the city into a sequence of disembodied and abstracted forms. Schivelbusch realizes that since rail passengers perceive specific objects poorly, they tend not to look closely or carefully. Speed anaesthetizes vision. Sight becomes absentminded. Instead of observing a building's form, rail passengers see odd features in the shifting juxtapositions brought about by the train's velocity and their own haphazard concentration. A new type of building is seen. This is not the building carefully designed by the architect, but instead a building interconnected with other buildings, other objects, and other images in the mind. (Schwarzer, 2004: 54)

Railway or car journeys are thus interesting ways of thinking through how the urban is constituted, as it suggests that many urban dwellers switch into absent-mindedness when travelling through complex urban landscapes. By contrast, there is also a tendency to associate cities through *visual* metaphors, associating them with their distinguishing 'trademarks' such as Sydney's harbour, bridge and opera house; London's palaces and Victorian buildings; Rome's monuments and ruins or New York's skyline of high-rise towers. Moreover, they are often dominated by complex forms of visuality in how we make sense of urban space, most frequently expressed through the medium of **photography**, which has been important in the rise of cinematic productions and still images alike.

To consider this further, the next entry explores the importance of the **body** as an important site of research in itself, not least given the growing obsession with physical appearance, body shape and fashion, which have all been important sectors in the contemporary western economy. The body can be seen as a site of social action in its own right, as much as being 'placed' in the landscape. It is also the mechanism by which humans experience urbanity through sensory organs, and allow for an understanding of how emotions – which are usually contrasted with an idealisation of city dwellers as taking 'rational' decisions about housing, commuting and so on – arguably rule urban life.

We then focus on how urban experience can be understood via the concept of **virtuality**, not just in terms of the digital, but in terms of an experience that points to an imaginative and future-oriented sense of

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experience. While often associated with the rise of 'cybercities', virtuality has a more complex set of meanings, which includes the practice of imagining urban space, the use of technology to simulate 'real' spaces and a complex set of transactions in time, most notably in financial trading.

Finally, we consider a concept – **surveillance** – that allows us to get a handle on how various forms of governance infiltrate many of the most everyday of urban practices and routines. The increasing sophistication of camera technology has allowed public spaces to be increasingly monitored visually. Yet surveillance means much more than this, as corporations seek to scan consumer behaviour in the search for greater market sensitivity, governments construct databases to watch over who is part of the national community and the military adopts cartographic techniques in order to enhance their operations (often against civilian targets).

(4) Social and Political Organisation

As noted above, the power of social and political critique was given an important stimulus by developments in Marxian geography. As with the humanistic and feminist critiques of quantitative urban geography, the emergence of a Marxian (or political economic) urban geography brought with it a whole host of new thinkers, and intellectual traditions. Marxian geographers were inspired not by established geographers such as Halford Mackinder and Walter Christaller, but to Engels with his writings on Victorian Manchester, Lenin and Luxemburg with their writings on the geographical expansion and intensification of capitalism, Lefebvre with his theses about the urbanisation of capitalism, and Marx himself. Marxian urban geography was also concerned with an entirely new set of research themes (trade unions, political activists, ideological fields, the dynamics of capitalist accumulation) and a whole new range of empirical concerns, not least of which was understanding how the economic structures of a city were intertwined with its political institutions.

In 1973, David Harvey published *Social Justice and the City*, now seen as a turning point in the use of Marxian concepts in urban geography. Starting out as a politically liberal meditation on the relationship between cities and social justice, Harvey came to the conclusion that liberal – that is to say mainstream – social science was incapable of understanding the underlying causes of the many inequalities and social injustices that structured the experience of the modern city. His arguments inspired a

wide range of social geographic research. This is not to deny the significance of quantitative, statistical measures of **segregation** as captured by census data and other socio-economic surveys, but rather to take a more reflective, integrated approach to considering the categorisation of such data. In this context, the importance of recognising 'difference' has been an important motivation for geographers working at the intersection of post-colonialism and urban geography and planning (e.g., Fincher and Jacobs, 1998).

Harvey was not alone in his call for a 'radical' (that is to say anti-establishment), Marxian inspired, urban geography. Since 1969 the journal *Antipode* had been publishing Marxian inspired (along with feminist and other) critiques of quantitative geography. But *Social Justice and the City* acted as a catalyst in redefining what a radical urban geography would be about – not least because it asserted, first, that geography was absolutely central to the dynamics of the capitalist system and, second, that cities in particular were key sites for the realisation of surplus value – that they were money-machines. In the following years, a multitude of geographical scholars have extended the scope of Marxian urban geography. Indeed, if quantitative geography defined the dominant intellectual trajectory within urban geography from the mid-1950s into the 1970s, political, economic and Marxian approaches dominated urban geography through much of the 1980s and early 1990s and helped shape the dominant concepts used in explaining the form of **urban politics**.

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However, Marxian geography was but one of a series of streams that entered urban geography via sociology. An important theme of urban studies throughout the twentieth century has been that of **community**. This entry traces out the diverse set of ideas that have underpinned this slippery term and argues that the literature has moved from an idea of 'community lost' (where knowing one's neighbour, for example, is an important theme of successful neighbourhoods) to 'community saved', where vibrant social relations are found either in rejuvenated – and perhaps gentrified – inner-city neighbourhoods, or else in a more distanciated form, via the internet, or even in more complex forms of interaction between human and object, where community is redefined.

(5) Sites and Practices

The final section allows us to consider some of the topographies of contemporary urban life. Again, Marxian thinkers have been influential

here, particularly those of the Frankfurt School, associated with the writings of Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Their conceptualisation of a 'culture industry' that pacified the masses with consumer goods and mass media entertainment was influential to many scholars, eager to explain why social groups in post-war societies seemed to be deradicalised and passive political bystanders, rather than active opponents of established social norms. Such work tended to ignore the desire of audiences to actively choose the consumer goods and entertainment choices that would make up their own modes of urbanised living. Recent work in geography, sociology, anthropology and media studies has tackled this issue head-on, particularly in terms of the sites of **consumption** in cities, from the spectacular to the mundane. In many ways, the mass production of new goods was dependent upon an urbanised society, 'where knowledge of consumption was essentially practical knowledge, not acquired through instruction or advertising, but from the experience of participating in activities in the dense interaction and information networks of urban life' (Glennie and Thrift, 1992: 430).

An understanding of the **media** is important in terms of making sense of how cities are represented, and in the ways in which the urban is produced, distributed and consumed. This is an emerging area of urban studies, not one that geographers have contributed a whole lot to. Yet in media studies and sociology, attempts are being made to conceptualise how media is at the same time a material practice (revolving around television studios, production companies and satellite infrastructure), a textual representation (in terms of its distribution of symbolic collections of words and images that are packaged, sold and consumed), and a relational process, in that places are linked together by media practices. This runs between of extremes, from the state-centred propaganda machines that dominate programming in China, to the completely decentralised chatrooms of the 'blogosphere'.

Such forms of social interaction pose important questions about the nature of being 'public' in the city. The entry on **public space** described some of the debates around everyday life in cities, particularly the apparent decline of political expression in public. It is suggested that – contrary to the orthodox view of there being a decline in sociality in cities – there are many new and vibrant forms of urban sociality.

Being *seen* in public is an important aspect of this, and multiple publics often seek out symbolic sites of commemoration or collective identity to express particular world-views. Recent events such as 9/11

have added to the sense of immediacy felt by geographers and others in explaining and understanding such events. Our final entry concerns the places and practices of **commemoration** within urban space, given their importance both as a form of representation of a particularly admired historical figure, a source of contest and conflict (as was the case in post-1989 East and Central Europe) or as a focus of collective or individual displays of grief, anger or joy.