The cultures of cities

Key questions addressed in this chapter

➤ What is culture?

➤ Why have the concerns of cultural studies and postcolonial theory become so important in the study of cities?

➤ What are the roles of space and place in the formation of culture?

➤ What is meant by the postmodern city?

Without doubt the most important change in urban studies in recent years has been the increased attention given to issues of *culture*. This development reflects a broader trend in the social sciences that has become known as the '**cultural turn**'. In the last two decades the cultural turn has radically influenced the study of city cultures, affecting both *what* is studied and the *way* cities are examined. As suggested by the sociospatial dialectic, cities have long had a crucial impact upon, and have in turn been influenced by, cultural dynamics. What makes cities especially interesting in the contemporary

context is that they bring together many different cultures in relatively confined spaces. Appadurai (1996) calls the diverse landscape of immigrants, tourists, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups to be found in many contemporary cities an **ethnoscape**. This juxtaposition of peoples often leads to innovation and new cultural forms as cultures interact. But it can also lead to tensions and conflict, especially if cultural groups retreat into particular areas of the city.

This chapter provides a guide to understanding the cultural turn and explains why issues of culture have so radically altered our ways of looking at cities. This will equip us with a series of concepts and perspectives that we can use to understand the many issues that will be considered in following chapters, including: citizenship (Chapter 5); ethnic segregation (Chapter 8); neighbourhood formation (Chapter 9); and sexuality (Chapter 11).

3.1 What is culture?

Culture is popularly thought of as 'high art' in the form of paintings, sculpture, drama and classical music, as

found in museums, art galleries, concert halls and theatres. However, in the social sciences culture is usually interpreted in a much broader sense. Culture is a complex phenomenon, and therefore difficult to summarize briefly, but may best be thought of as consisting of 'ways of life'. These ways of life involve three important elements:

1 The values that people hold (i.e. their ideals and aspirations). These values could include: the desire to acquire wealth and material goods; seeking out risk and danger; caring for a family; helping friends and neighbours; or campaigning for political change.

2 The norms that people follow (i.e. the rules and principles that govern their lives). These include legal issues such as whether to exceed speed limits when driving or whether to engage in illegal forms of tax evasion. Norms also involve issues of personal conduct such as whether to be faithful to one's partner or whether to put self-advancement over the needs of others.

3 The material objects that people use. For most people in relatively affluent Western societies this is an enormous category, ranging from everyday consumer goods through to transportation systems, buildings and urban facilities.

A number of important insights flow from these points.

The materiality of cultures

It should be clear that these elements of culture – values, norms and objects – are all highly interrelated. Culture is *not* just about ideas: the material objects that we use also provide clues about our value systems. The widespread use of the automobile, for example, says something about the value placed upon personal mobility. The same applies to the urban landscape. The structures of cities – whether they display extensive motorway networks or integrated public transport systems, uncontrolled urban sprawl or tightly regulated, high-density development – provide us with indications of the wider set of values held by the society.

Because we can attempt to 'read off' people's values from the landscapes they inhabit, landscapes can be regarded as 'texts' that can be scrutinized for layers of inner meaning, in a manner analogous to reading a book.

The relationship between material objects and culture may be encapsulated by the notion of **intentionality**. This concept draws attention to the fact that objects have no meaning in themselves but only acquire meaning through the uses that people put them to. To sum up, culture involves much more than high art; indeed, in cultural studies a text comprises any form of **representation** with meaning and can include advertising, popular television programmes, films, popular music and even food.

Shared meanings

Central to culture are shared sets of understandings – what are often called **discourses** or narratives. The study of the signs that give clues about these meanings is known as **semiology** (or semiotics). The things that point to these wider meanings are termed **signifiers**, while the cultural meaning is called the **signified**. Activities that are full of cultural symbolism (which includes virtually all social activity!) are known as **signifying practices**. The study of meanings behind urban landscapes is more generally known as **iconography**. A good example of iconography is the downtown corporate headquarters. The imposing and expensive architectural forms of such buildings may be seen as signifiers of a discourse of corporate power. Large architectural projects that are full of such symbolism are often called **monumental architecture**. Monumental architecture involves imposing buildings and monuments in which an attempt is made to symbolize particular sets of values. Restricted access to these buildings is often a key component of their monumental and imposing status. For example, Jane M. Jacobs (1996) has documented the imperialist aspirations underpinning many of the proposals to redevelop buildings in the financial centre of London (known as the City of London). Preserving the architectural heritage of buildings that dated from the time when the British Empire was at its height is seen as a way of reinforcing the global status of the City of London.

Diversity and difference

While societies do have dominant value systems, these are often resisted by many groups. For example, a large downtown office block may for some be a symbol

of financial strength and influence but others may regard this as a symbol of unfair working practices and corporate greed. One of the most striking and best documented clashes of urban culture comes from London – in Docklands, a previously run-down inner-city area which has been transformed by an urban development corporation that has provided infrastructure to encourage private sector investment. The huge monumental buildings of Canary Wharf in London's Docklands are therefore highly symbolic of this new role for private capital in urban regeneration. However, the Docklands office developments have juxtaposed affluence and relative poverty as highly paid professional groups have moved into newly constructed residential areas. Furthermore, the development of Docklands involved bypassing traditional forms of democratic accountability. While public meetings were held, giving an aura of consultation and inclusion, they were typically used to legitimate planning decisions that had already been taken behind closed doors. The result has been a deep-rooted hostility on the part of many local working-class communities. Such antagonisms have prompted attempts in many cities to write urban history from the perspective of local people. These accounts contrast with the sanitized versions of local history produced by development corporations as they attempt to sell inner cities as sites of potential profit for speculators.

It follows from the above discussion that the values embodied in landscapes and other material objects are not natural and inevitable, but have been created and are actively fought over by many contesting groups in society. Nevertheless, the dominant sets of values will tend to reflect the most powerful forces in society through advertising, politics, the media, education systems and so on. The codings of spaces and people that are embedded in urban landscapes assume a taken-for-granted familiarity that is a powerful cultural and political influence: **moral landscapes** with a stealthy, sometimes hallucinogenic normality which both reflects and reinforces the implicit values that have been written into the built environment. As Pierre Bourdieu (1977, p. 188) has observed, 'The most successful ideological effects are those that have no words, and ask no more than complicitous silence.'

A key theme of cultural studies is *diversity* and *difference*. There are, within the dominant values of a society, many smaller subgroups with their own distinctive cultures, known as **subcultures** (and sometimes

Monumental and iconic architecture: the Défense district of Paris. Photo Credit: Paul Knox.

termed 'deviant' subcultures if the norms are significantly at variance with the majority). The term **alterity** is sometimes used to denote a culture which is radically different from and totally outside that to which it is opposed. However, even within these subcultures there are usually many distinctions and divisions. In the United Kingdom, for example, what is often referred to in the local press as *the* 'Muslim community' contains different sects and groupings. As with landscapes, our definitions of these groupings are often determined by the most powerful in society.

Identities

The diversity of cultural values in society raises issues of **identity** (i.e. the view that people take of themselves). There is a perspective, stretching back to the philosopher Descartes, which assumes that people's identities are single, rational and stable. However, this assumption is disputed by a cultural studies perspective. To begin with, it is argued that our identities are shaped by many factors such as class, age, occupation, gender, sexuality, nationality, religious affiliation, region of origin and so on. Surrounding these factors are various discourses about characteristics and abilities – what are called **subject positions** – that affect the way we behave. These subject positions are described by Dowling (1993, p. 299) as:

> certain ways of acting, thinking and being are implicit in specific discourses and in recognising themselves in that discourse a person takes on certain characteristics, thus producing a person with specific attributes and capabilities.

Identity may therefore be thought of as being shaped by the intersection of many subject positions. Of course, to a large extent these views are also shaped by people's individual personalities and life experiences. All of these things combine to form *subjectivity* – or, since they are continually changing, **subjectivities**. One consequence is that our identities are not fixed, but vary over time and space. The crucial point is that these unstable identities and subjectivities depend upon who it is we are comparing ourselves with.

Urban environments also have a crucial impact upon subjectivities because they tend to bring together in close juxtaposition many different types of people. This mingling requires a response on the part of the city dweller, whether this is indifference, fear, loathing, incomprehension, admiration or envy. Sometimes these comparisons are based on stereotypes – exaggerated, simplified or distorted interpretations – of the group in question. Indeed, the use of **binaries** – twofold divisions – is often central to the creation of these differences (e.g. male/female, healthy/sick, sane/mad, heterosexual/homosexual, non-foreigner/foreigner, authentic/fake). Furthermore, issues of power lie behind many of these comparisons; we often feel either superior or inferior to the group we are comparing ourselves with.

The process whereby a group comes to be viewed in a way that constructs them as being inferior is sometimes termed **objectification**. Identities and cultural values do not therefore evolve in isolation but require opposition from other sets of identities and values that are excluded and demoted in some sort of hierarchy of value. These processes leading to identity formation can have a crucial impact on the social geography of the city for, as we will see in many following chapters, they help to create social exclusion and residential differentiation. The processes of identity formulation may be multiple and unstable but they are anchored in power relations and the allocation of material, political and psychological resources in cities.

3.2 Postcolonial theory and the city

Some of the most important insights into the process of identity formation have come from **postcolonial theory**. The focus here is the examination of **imperialist discourses** that run through Western representations of non-Western cities and societies. As such, it attempts to undermine **ethnocentrism** – the notion that Western thought is superior. Those subject to such hegemonic (i.e. dominant) discourses are often termed the **subaltern classes** or groups. Edward Said (1978) wrote about the ways in which European thought constructed views of Oriental peoples in his highly influential book *Orientalism*. Said argued that the notion of the Orient is a Western invention, conjuring up visions of exotic and sensual peoples. The crucial point is that this conception of the Orient was defined in relation to perceived

Box 3.1

Key trends in urban social geography – food as an expression of ethnicity and cultural hybridization

There are many parallels between food and music as indicators of cultural values (see also Box 3.2). Both food and music are central to many ethnic identities, often playing a central role in religious observances (e.g. halal food for Muslims, kosher food for Jews and vegetarian cuisine for Hindus and Buddhists). However, both food and music have been subject to complex processes of hybridization over many years although, in both cases many attempt to seek pure authentic forms.

The influence of 'Asian' cuisine in Britain has been much discussed in recent years with chicken tikka massala now alleged to be the most popular national dish. This is in any case a Western concoction – although chicken tikka is a traditional dish from northern India, simmering chicken in a massala 'sauce' was an innovation by Bangladeshi chefs (who constitute a large proportion of workers in UK Indian restaurants). Although Asian cuisines have been very diverse, reflecting various geographical origins as well as Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam, they have had an impact on the wider UK population through the growth of various large food companies selling rice, spices and prepared foods. While meat consumption and slaughtering practices vary somewhat between various groups of Asian origin, the underlying similarity of spices led into a wider industry.

However, when Asian migrants started arriving in Britain in larger numbers in the 1950s many initially had problems in finding the ingredients or food preparation facilities to accommodate their traditional diets. This deficiency necessitated compromises. For example, halal-eating Muslims who wished to conform to religious rituals had three options: they could resort to vegetarianism; they could eat kosher meat slaughtered in a similar way to halal and permissible under Islamic law; or they could slaughter chickens themselves while reciting the relevant religious prayers (Panayi, 2008). As the various ethnic communities consolidated in cities such as Leicester (Gujurati Hindu) or Bradford (Pakistani Muslim) they were once again able to conform to more traditional diets. Here one can see a powerful effect of place on the consolidation of identity through the provision of facilities.

As various second and third generation Asian-British migrants have grown up, complex processes of hybridization can be observed in the sphere of food. For example, it is claimed that some British Muslims have developed a way of conforming to the restrictions of Ramadan (prohibiting the consumption of food during daylight hours) by eating a 'full Muslim'; a halal-meat full English breakfast. This highly calorific meal (typically a combination of fried bacon, eggs, bread, pork sausages, tomatoes, mushrooms, beans and more

recently US-inspired hash browns – but obviously without pork products in the Muslim case) sustains fasting during daylight hours (although ironically the full English breakfast has been in decline in the wider UK population because of health concerns). Other signs of cultural adaptation include the 'massala burger' and the 'chicken tikka pasty' (a pasty originates from the English county of Cornwall and is a meat and vegetables mixture encased in pastry).

Key concepts associated with food as an expression of ethnicity and cultural hybridization (see Glossary)

Appropriation, behavioural assimilation, constitutive otherness, cultural practices, enculturation, ethnicity, hybridity, identities, neighbourhood effect, transculturation.

Further reading

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Links with other chapters

Box 3.2: Hybridization: the case of popular music

Chapter 8: Clustering for cultural preservation

notions of the Occident (the West) as the opposite – rational, civilized and safe. In other words, the Orient helped to define the West's view of itself. However, Said's work has been criticized for creating a binary division between colonizer and colonized and for assuming that

colonial discourse is primarily the product of the colonizer. Others have argued that there is a mutual interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. The insights from the postcolonial theory are valuable in studying Western cities because many immigrants

have come from what were previously colonies of the West. Indeed, many would argue that the distinction between the West and 'the Rest' has been subverted by this infusion of ideas from throughout the world into the heart of the major Western cities.

Hybridity

The idea that one culture is superior to another is undermined by another key concept in postcolonial theory – hybridity – the idea that all cultures are *mixtures*. Postcolonial studies therefore dispute the notion of authenticity – the idea that there is some basic, pure, underlying culture. Cultures are inevitably hybrid mixtures and yet the mistaken notion of authenticity is one that has fuelled (and continues to fuel) many nationalist

movements. In a different realm, it can be suggested that the mistaken desire for 'authentic', 'ethnic' music reflecting some pure, underlying culture, untainted by the commercialism of Western society, explains much of the popularity of so-called 'world' music (see also Box 3.2).

Often, the hybrid mixing of cultures – especially in a colonial context – led to ambivalence, a complex combination of attraction and repulsion on the part of the colonizers and the colonized. The colonizers, for example, were often flattered to have their culture copied by the colonized but at the same time did not want it to be replicated entirely because this would undermine their feeling of superiority. The colonized often admired the colonial culture and copied this (a process called appropriation) but at the same time frequently resented their subjugated position.

Box 3.2

Key trends in urban social geography – hybridization: the case of popular music

A good example of cultural hybridization is the evolution of popular music for, as Shuker (1998, p. 228) notes, 'Essentially, all popular music consists of a hybrid of musical styles and influences'. The reason for this is that in contemporary societies music is highly transportable, transmissible and reproducible. Musical forms are highly vulnerable to manipulation and they can easily be appropriated, copied and transformed. As Negus notes, 'once in circulation, music and other cultural forms cannot remain "bounded" in any one group and interpreted simply as an expression that speaks to or reflects the lives of that exclusive group of people' (Negus, 1992, p. 121). Thus the emergence of rock and roll was a popularized amalgam of white working-class country music and African-American rhythm and blues (which was also a mixture of various black styles of music – especially blues, jazz and soul). Soul itself was a secularized form of gospel music blended with jazz and funk. More

recent forms of hybridization are Tex Mex (a mixture of rock, country, blues, R & B and traditional Spanish and Mexican music) and salsa (music from Cuba popularized by Puerto Ricans in New York and incorporating elements of big band, jazz, soul, rock and funk).

Popular music is today one of the most widely disseminated of consumer products. Furthermore, it is an important part of the culture, lifestyle and identity of many groups – especially youth cultures upon which it is so heavily targeted (despite the existence of 'Dad rock' for older generations). For example, surf rock in the early 1960s celebrated a particular creation of southern Californian lifestyle based around sun, sand, surf, sex, hot rods and drag racing.

This hybridity of musical forms is a problem for cultural theorists who would wish to pin down distinctive musical styles as emerging from particular localities. Nevertheless, the

intermixing of musical styles does take place at particular locations (usually cities). There is much debate about the characteristics that give rise to innovation, including some of the following:

➤ the geographical juxtaposition of differing cultural groups;

➤ the presence of proactive local record companies;

➤ the involvement of an active student community;

➤ an active club scene.

Musical innovation often takes place in 'marginal' locations where global mainstream trends interact with local subcultures. For example, the Seattle Sound characterized by *grunge* is partly attributed to its distance from Los Angeles; the Dunedin Sound was perhaps distinctive because of its relative isolation in New Zealand, and new hybrid musical forms including Celtic elements have emerged on the east coast of Canada.

continued

Location	Approx. time period	Genres	Examples of groups/artists
New York	1945–1955	Doo-wop	Ravens, Oriels
Chicago	1940s–1960s	Electric blues	Muddy Waters, BB King, John Lee Hooker
Memphis	1950s and 1960s	Rock and roll	Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis
Liverpool, UK	Late 1950s–1960s	Britbeat	Beatles, Gerry and the Pacemakers
Los Angeles	Early 1960s	Surf rock	Beach Boys, Dale and the Del-Tones, Surfaris
San Francisco	1960s	Psychedelic rock	Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead, Moby Grape
Bronx, New York	Late 1970s, 1980s	Early rap	
Athens, Georgia	1980s	Alternative	B-52s, Love Tractor, Pylon, REM
Boston/Amherst	1980s	Alternative	Dinosaur Jnr, The Pixies, Throwing Muses, The Lemonheads
Dunedin, New Zealand	1980s	Alternative	The Chills, The Verlaines, The Clean, Toy Love
Ireland	1980s, 1990s	Celtic-rock/punk/ grunge/new age	Van Morrison, Clannad, The Chieftains, Enya, Corrs, Pogues
East Canadian Coast	1980s, 1990s	As above	Rawlins Cross, Ashley MacIsaac, The Barra McNeils, The Rankin Family
Bristol, UK	Mid-1990s	Trip-hop	Massive Attack, Portishead, Tricky
Seattle	1990s	Alternative/grunge	Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden
Manchester, UK	1990s	Alternative/Britpop	Oasis, Happy Mondays, Stone Roses

Sources of popular music creativity are shown in the table above.

Key terms associated with popular music (see Glossary)

Appropriation, cultural industries, hybridity.

Further reading

Leyshon, A., Matless, D. and Revill, G. (1995) The place of music, *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* **20**, 430–3

Negus, K. (1992) *Producing Pop* Edward Arnold, London

Shuker, R. (1998) *Key Concepts in Popular Music* Routledge, London

Links with other chapters

Chapter 8: Box 8.4 Rap as cultural expression (and commercialization)

Bhabha (1994) argued that the colonial culture is never copied exactly, hence the growth of hybridity. Indeed, appropriation can sometimes lead to **mimicry** – a parody or pastiche of the colonial culture. The classic example of the mimic is the Indian civil servant adopting the manners of the English bureaucrat. This is potentially threatening for the colonizers since mimicry is not far removed from mockery and it has the potential to undermine colonial authority. The general point to note here is that these processes continue in a postcolonial era and that all cultures are the product of appropriation in some form. Hybridity is not therefore just a mixing of cultures – it involves a destabilization of many of the symbols of authority in the dominant culture.

The social construction of culture

Both cultural studies and postcolonial theory draw attention to the fact that cultures are, above all, *social constructs*. In the case of national identities, for example, certain

aspects are usually isolated as being distinct, authentic, elements. Benedict Anderson (1983) used the term **imagined communities** to draw attention to the socially constructed nature of national identities. He argued that the formation of national identities involves the use of a great deal of imagination because, although it is physically impossible to know everyone in a country, strong patriotic bonds are forged between large numbers of people through imaginative projections resulting from the influence of books, newspapers and television. However, in previous eras, as in the feudal period in Europe, for example, national identities were much weaker.

Identification with the nation state developed rather later, following the French and American Revolutions. National identities were subsequently constructed by comparisons with 'others', especially colonized peoples. Thus, British identity was seen as based on 'reason', 'democracy' and 'civilization' compared with the supposed 'uncivilized' cultures of the British Empire. The communities to be found within contemporary cities also have a socially constructed and imagined character, for it is only in the smallest of settlements that we have face-to-face contacts with all the members of a group. Senses of community within other units such as neighbourhoods, towns and cities all involve imaginative elements shaped by many factors such as mass media and elements of popular culture.

3.3 Space, power and culture

Another insight that emerges from the cultural studies movement – and one we have already signalled above – is the crucial role of *space* in the formation of culture. The reason for this connection is that space, like culture, is a social construct and is therefore intimately bound up with power and authority.

Foucault and the carceral city

Michel Foucault, one of the key figures underpinning contemporary cultural studies, has been highly influential in drawing attention to these issues (see also Box 3.3). Rather like Gramsci (the originator of the notion of

Fordism discussed in Chapter 2), Foucault was concerned with understanding the ways in which consent is achieved in society (i.e. the processes through which people agree to have their lives determined by others).

Foucault was opposed to the idea that such consent could be explained by any single, overarching, theory. Instead, he argued that consent was achieved by various types of discourse. These discourses are a crucial component in the exercise of power, since they help to shape the view that people take of themselves. Foucault thought of power as a crucial component in daily life that helps to construct the ordinary, everyday, actions of people. According to Foucault, therefore, power is not something that some people have and others do not; what makes people powerful is not some individual characteristic, or position in society, but the recognition by others of their capacity to exercise that power. Power, then, is a process rather than a thing that is exercised. Foucault also argued that power was like a network of relations in a state of tension. The term **micropowers** was used to encapsulate these processes. In addition, Foucault coined the term **carceral city** to indicate an urban area in which power was decentred and in which people were controlled by these micropowers (from the Latin term *carcer* meaning prison – hence the English term *incarceration*).

In this sense people may be envisaged as agents of their own domination. Foucault used the metaphor of the Panopticon to describe these processes in what he termed the **disciplinary society**. The **Panopticon** was a model prison devised by the nineteenth-century thinker Jeremy Bentham in which inmates could be kept under observation from a central point. Although the design was never directly implemented, Foucault's metaphor of the Panopticon (panoptic meaning 'all embracing in a single view') has been used to describe the surveillance practices that take place in contemporary city spaces such as shopping malls through the use of close circuit television (CCTV) and private security guards.

Some have argued that Foucault's concept of power is too passive and says too little about the capacity of people to resist disciplinary forces. For example, Warren (1996) highlights some of the tactics used by people to subvert the surveillance and control exercised in Disney theme parks, some of the most intensively controlled spaces of the contemporary world. Control measures

Box 3.3

Key thinkers in urban social geography – Michel Foucault (1926–1984)

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries French scholars have had a profound influence upon Western intellectual thought – Barthes, Baudrillard, Bourdieu, Camus, Deleuze, Derrida, Fanon, Lacan, Lefebvre, Lévi-Strauss, Lyotard and Sartre – to mention but a few! The attitudes of Anglo-Saxon scholars towards these thinkers is often polarized – some seem bewitched and dazzled by their complex and enigmatic ideas, others regard them as intellectual charlatans and impostors.

Whatever stance is adopted, it seems clear that of all these gurus, *the* cult intellectual underpinning the cultural studies movements in contemporary social science is Michel Foucault. Both his life and his work have a complex, enigmatic, mysterious and colourful character, and both have been the subject of numerous books and biographies (e.g. Macey, 1993; Jones and Porter, 1998; Falzon, 1998). His style is certainly difficult at times but his ideas have been extremely influential. Indeed, a large 'Foucault industry' seems to have evolved, reinterpreting, criticizing and extending his ideas.

To do them justice, Foucault's ideas need a book to themselves. Nevertheless, we should note here that his ideas have generated great interest among geographers through their concern with the role of space in the exercise of power and the formation of various types of knowledge.

Key concepts associated with Michel Foucault (see Glossary)

Micropowers, Panopticon, queer theory.

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Links with other chapters

Chapter 11: Sexuality and the city

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even include guards dressed up in comic costumes as Keystone Cops or as 'tourists' in order that they may watch both visitors and employees. Nevertheless, such measures are not able to prevent some tourists and employees smuggling in drugs and alcohol (considered by some to be essential to get the best out of the rides or maybe to endure the boredom of the queues).

The social construction of space

Space is something that we move through and often take for granted. It is therefore not surprising that some are sceptical about the idea that space is something more than an 'empty container', since this notion seems to run against common sense. However, cities provide many examples of the relationships between culture, space and power that help to clarify what is meant by space as a 'social construct'. For example, some people are excluded from **public spaces**. In contemporary cities measures are taken to exclude certain groups, including gangs of youths, drunks, the homeless and 'deviants' such as those who appear to be mentally ill from 'public' spaces: Lees (1997), for example, describes how the public space of Vancouver's new public library is policed by security guards to ensure standards of hygiene among the homeless as well as providing a sense of security for women and children. The reason why such groups are excluded is that they disrupt certain codes of behaviour: sobriety, cleanliness and so on. In many cases it is the *perception* that these groups are likely to disrupt these codes of behaviour that is important.

Spaces therefore reinforce cultures because the patterns of behaviour expected within them reflect particular cultural values. Segregation is therefore crucial to the creation of landscape and space, creating what can be termed **spaces of exclusion**. Power is expressed through the monopolization of spaces by some groups and the exclusion of certain weaker groups to other

Box 3.4

Key thinkers in urban social geography – David Sibley

David Sibley is an example of a geographer whose ideas have had a big influence on urban social geography, albeit somewhat late in his academic career. This belated recognition would seem to reflect the fact that his work was ahead of his time (and this led him to experience problems in getting it published earlier in his career). Although he trained as a quantitative geographer at the University of Cambridge, Sibley became interested in psychoanalytic theories relating the attitudes of adults to their early child-rearing experiences, theories that have only recently been taken up on any scale in human geography.

Significantly, Sibley and his partner spent some time outside academia developing a school for gypsy children. Based on these experiences, Sibley developed a series of ideas about processes of exclusion and their relationship with space, ideas that were formulated in his highly influential book *Geographies of Exclusion* (1995). He argued that powerful groups in society have a tendency to 'purify' space by attempting to exclude what are perceived to be the 'polluting' and 'dirty' influences of 'outsiders'. Such exclusionary practices help people to preserve their sense of identity but also reflect subconscious desires, developed in early childhood experiences, to maintain cleanliness and purity.

The difficulties Sibley experienced in getting his ideas published led to him becoming interested in the processes that lead to certain groups and their associated intellectual perspectives being excluded by the types of people who govern academic life (i.e. mostly white, middle-aged, middle-class, physically able men). He therefore highlighted the factors that led to the denigration of the ideas developed by the (mostly female) Chicago School of Social Service Administration who were overlooked and overshadowed by the Chicago School of Human Ecology (Sibley, 1990; see also Chapter 7). Although many are sceptical about theories related to psychoanalysis, Sibley's ideas have helped to foster the recent interest in geographies of youth and childhood (see Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Holloway and Valentine, 2000).

Key concepts associated with David Sibley (see Glossary)

Exclusion, exclusionary zoning, purified communities, purified space.

Further reading

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Links with other chapters

Chapter 10: Box 10.3 How to understand geographies of childhood and youth culture

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spaces. However, these power relations are often taken for granted as a 'natural' part of the routine of everyday life (see also Box 3.4). This leads to **cultural imperialism**, whereby the dominant power relations in society become 'invisible' while less powerful groups are marked out as 'other'. Cultural imperialism is quite common in discussions of ethnic identities. The focus is frequently upon the distinctive characteristics of a minority ethnic group and not upon the wider society or what 'whiteness' means, for example.

Space and identity

Space is therefore crucial to all the processes of identity formation, stereotype construction, objectification and binary construction noted above. The term **spatialized subjectivities** is often used to describe the processes leading to identity formation. And again, cities have played a crucial part in the formation of such identities. Most notably, the perception of the working classes as dirty, disease-ridden and dangerous was fostered by

the increased spatial separation of classes that emerged with the early cities of the Industrial Revolution. Richard Sennett drew attention to these issues in his highly influential book, *The Uses of Disorder* (1971), in which he used the term 'purified communities' to draw attention to the ways in which groups build walls around themselves to exclude others.

Once again, we can see the sociospatial dialectic at work here. On the one hand, an area of a city may serve as a social setting in which particular cultural values can be expressed; on the other hand, the neighbourhood can serve to form and shape those distinctive cultural values. However, it is crucial to remember at this point that the cultures of the city do not emerge in these spaces in isolation. Not only are they defined in relation to cultures in other areas but they also involve a hybrid mixing of various elements from elsewhere. For example, even something as traditional as the (once?) staple fare of English working-class culture – fish and chips – is a remarkable demonstration of cultural hybridity. The large English chip (French fry) is a direct descendant of the *pomme frite* first introduced into England by the Huguenots from France, while battered fried fish were brought by Russo-European Jews. In fact, recent surveys show that Britain's most popular dish is no longer fish and chips but a 'curry-style' dish called chicken tikka massala, an entirely hybrid concoction that has only a passing relationship to its assumed Indian heartland. Indeed, yet another irony is that the popular 'Indian' cuisine of the United Kingdom is largely the product of chefs from Bangladesh (see also Box 3.1).

The history of a particular space is therefore intimately connected with events outside that space. As Massey noted:

We need to conceptualise space as constructed out of sets of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local to the most global.

(Massey, 1992, p. 80)

The socially constructed nature of space means that cities are, in a sense, texts that are rewritten over time. The term scripting may therefore be used to describe this process whereby we 'produce' or 'construct' cities through our representations. This does not mean that they can be anything we choose to make them. Cities have obvious physical attributes that constrain and influence how they can be presented but, nevertheless, these representations are quite malleable. This is well illustrated by the changing representations over time of the impoverished East End of London. In the nineteenth century the East End was seen as a dangerous place but from the 1890s onwards, under the influence of many factors – urban reform movements, the Labour Party, the church, state education, housing redevelopment and representations in music halls – the East Enders became transformed into cheerful, patriotic Cockneys. With the influx of ethnic minorities, especially from Bangladesh, and the growth of Thatcherism in the 1980s, the area became an 'imagined community' of self-reliant entrepreneurs.

Other examples of changing city images can be seen in the attempts by public agencies to 'rebrand' cities and make them attractive to investors. In the United States in particular, place promotion (or place marketing) has become a multibillion-dollar industry as consultants and public relations firms specialize in the packaging, advertising and selling of cities. Processes of globalization have eroded some of these links between culture and territory. The reason for this is that new technologies of mass media and telecommunications have enabled transnational corporations to impose what Robins (1991) terms an 'abstract electronic space' across pre-existing cultural forms. This is especially noticeable in the film and music industries, whose stars are viewed simultaneously throughout the world. Audiences are constructed around common shared experiences on a global scale and culture is less dependent upon local forms of knowledge.

This process whereby local cultures are eroded by the processes of globalization is sometimes called delocalization (see also Chapter 2). However, many would argue that this tendency towards homogenization of culture can be overstated. Indeed, we have recently seen a reaffirmation of local forms of identity through various nationalist movements and distinctive cultural expressions in spaces within cities – perhaps largely as a response to the perceived threat of some external mass culture.

Culture, then, is not a preserve of elite groups in society; it is something that is all around us in consumer goods, landscapes, buildings and places. Furthermore,

it is not a static thing but is a continually evolving and disputed realm that is alive in language and everyday social practices.

3.4 Postmodernism

One way of summarizing recent cultural shifts in cities is through the concepts of **modernism** and **postmodernism**. As with the Fordist/neo-Fordist division noted in Chapter 2, the concepts of modernism and postmodernism can be used in many complex ways: as a particular *cultural style*; as a *method of analysis*; or as an *epoch in history* (Dear, 1999). Harvey (1989b) and Jameson (1984) both argue that postmodernism is the logical cultural partner to the regime of flexible accumulation. Not only does postmodern culture help to produce many diverse niche markets but it tends to produce a fragmented populace supposedly bewitched by the glamour of consumption and lacking the collective institutions to mount a challenge to the dominant powers in society. To understand how these concepts are used we first need to examine the concept of modernism.

Modernism is usually regarded as a broad cultural and philosophical movement that emerged with the Renaissance, coming to full fruition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Above all, it was characterized by the belief that the application of rational thought and scientific analysis could lead to universal progress. This eventually led to **social engineering**, the notion that society could be improved by rational comprehensive planning and the application of scientific principles. This philosophy was implicit in comprehensive urban renewal (i.e. slum clearance) and traffic management schemes within cities in the 1960s. Modernism may similarly be regarded as a basic foundation for the quantitative and behavioural approaches discussed in Chapter 1. As the twentieth century progressed, however, wars, famines, political repression and disillusionment with the social and ecological costs of advanced technologies and attempts at comprehensive planning led to a significant degree of disillusionment with the concept of modernism.

A central feature of postmodernism is that *there is no pure, immediate, undistilled experience – all our experiences are mediated through sets of cultural values that are embodied in language and other forms of representation.* The crucial point is that our understandings of the world are always filtered through particular theoretical perspectives. What claims to be a superior way of understanding the world is therefore often an attempt by one group to impose their understandings on others. Because of this, postmodernism focuses upon the methods and systems of representation rather than the reality itself. Postmodernists therefore argue that theories (or 'knowledge claims') are bound up with power – they represent an attempt to impose views on others. Postmodernism argued that there is not just one effective way of analysing the world (what is sometimes called a **metanarrative** or **totalizing discourse**). Instead, there are many differing ways of representing truth, depending upon the power relations involved.

We should note at this stage that the validity of postmodernism is much questioned. Many have objected to postmodernism because of its implications of moral relativism – suggesting at times a complacency towards the activities, experiences and living conditions of other people. Giddens, meanwhile, argues that rather than being postmodern, contemporary societies reflect a **late modernism**, characterized by an intense degree of individual **reflexivity**, whereby people are increasingly aware of the attitudes they adopt and the choices they make in their everyday life and are also self-conscious about their reflexivity.

Postmodernism in the city

A key feature of postmodernist thinking, which is in keeping with the cultural studies movement, is a recognition of the diversity of different groups in society. This diversity of groups and their aspirations is reflected not only in academic writing but also in popular forms of representation such as music, advertising and literature. In terms of the landscape of cities, for example, postmodernism is reflected in a diversity of architectural styles rather than the rectilinear appearance of modernist styles. Postmodern styles may range from 'high-tech' to neo-classical and frequently involve an eclectic blend of many different motifs. Postmodern design often attempts to be playful or to allude to layers of meaning. Whereas the architecture and urban planning of the modernist city reflected a striving for progress, contemporary buildings

represent consumption, hedonism and the creation of profit with little regard for the social consequences. This issue is developed further in Chapter 9.

Another key theme of postmodernist interpretations of the city therefore is the increasing importance of signs and images in everyday life. The leading postmodernist writer Baudrillard (1988) argued that postmodern culture is based on images or copies of the real world (known as **simulacra**) that take on a life of their own and are difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish from the reality they imitate.

Another feature of postmodern culture is that advertising and mass media produce signs and images that have their own internal meanings, producing what is termed a **hyperreality**. An environment dominated by hyperreality may be termed a **hyperspace**. The theme parks of Disneyland are perhaps the most extreme and obvious example of this hyperreality since they present a non-threatening, sanitized view of the world that extols patriotism, traditional family values and free enterprise and that glosses over issues of violence, exploitation and conflict. This conscious creation of environments has been termed **imagineering**.

The ultimate extension of the Disney philosophy is the creation of Celebration City in Orlando, an integrated, privatized, residential community in which the tensions associated with social polarization can be excluded. Celebration is planned for more than 8000 residential units and a mixed-use town centre with more than 2 million square feet of retail space that includes apartments above stores, a school, a branch college campus, and a hotel as well as office space. There is an imposing town hall with 28 columns and a gigantic door, but no town government – the town manager is a Disney executive. Architectural conformity in Celebration is ensured by a 70-page pattern book of house designs inspired by the kinds of places featured in *Southern Living* magazine. Curtains that face the street must be white or off-white. The colour of a home, unless it is white, must not be duplicated within three homes on the same side of the street. At least a quarter of the front and side gardens must have some vegetation besides grass; and so on. The town's many 'traditions' have been imagineered by the Disney Corporation, in true Disney style. These include snow every night from the day after Thanksgiving until New Year's Eve – the
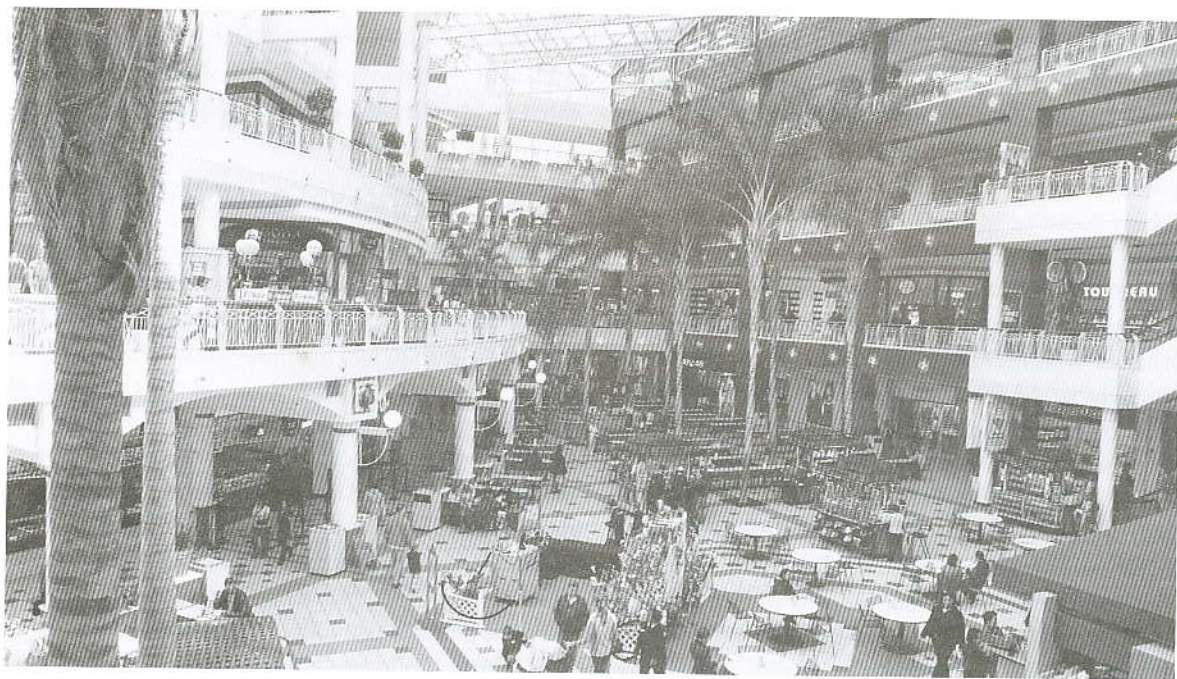
A typical 'space of consumption' in the contemporary city: the Pentagon City shopping mall, Arlington, Virginia. Photo Credit: Paul Knox.

'snow' consisting of soap bubbles. For two weekends in October, oak leaves (fabricated from tissue paper) fall from palm trees downtown.

Sorkin (1992) argues that in a postmodern era the city as a whole is becoming one big 'theme park' in which a variety of simulations present a highly distorted view of the world (a space he terms **ageographia**). The result is that the diverse postmodern buildings of the contemporary city present a shallow façade of culture (sometimes termed **Disneyfication**) (see also Box 3.5).

Box 3.5

Key debates in urban social geography – to what extent does the film *Blade Runner* represent the dystopian postmodern city?

Few films have received more analysis in recent years than the cult science fiction classic *Blade Runner*. Quite apart from the content, the history of the film is in itself fascinating. Based on the novel by the science fiction writer Philip K. Dick, entitled *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, the film was something of a commercial and critical flop on its release in 1982. A mixture of 1940s detective *film noir* and science fiction, cinemagoers expecting an action movie were confronted with a downbeat vision underpinned by a mournful and haunting soundtrack by the Greek composer Vangelis. Early test audiences found the film incomprehensible and melancholic and (contrary to the director's wishes) a crude voice-over was hastily added to explain the plot, while film clips of pastoral mountain scenery from Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* were used to give a rather creaky happy ending. However, *Blade Runner* was in many respects a film 'ahead of its time' and it attracted something of a cult following among devoted fans who purchased videos and attended regular late-night screenings in art-house cinemas.

A key turning point in the film's fortunes was a screening of director Ridley Scott's original version (minus the voice-over and happy ending) at a classic film festival in Venice, California. It is alleged that spontaneous and rapturous applause greeted the film as it became evident how emasculated the original released version had been. Sensing commercial success at last, Warner Brothers released a 'Director's Cut' in 1992. Since then, the film has spawned a virtual '*Blade Runner* industry' of books, articles and films. The visually stunning character of the film has also had a crucial impact upon subsequent science fiction movies. One of the reasons for this extraordinary amount of attention is that the film (like Dick's original paranoid vision) seems to highlight with remarkable prescience some of the key elements of the evolving postmodern city:

Environmental disaster: set in Los Angeles in 2019, instead of a sunbathed land of opportunity, the city is portrayed as dark, polluted, cloud-ridden and rain-soaked (cynics have joked that this vision more closely corresponds with that of a bad night in the industrial city of Gateshead in the north-east of England where the film's director Ridley Scott grew up!). The crucial point about the film is that, rather than portray the future as a place of technological sophistication and ease, it was one of the first science fiction films to portray the future as problematic.

Urban underclass: Los Angeles is a socially polarized city with a large, powerless, multi-ethnic underclass – although curiously without African-Americans. (In *Blade Runner* this underclass has a strong Japanese influence – perhaps reflecting the paranoia about the growing influence of Japanese economic might in the early 1980s.)

Corporate domination: *Blade Runner* portrays a world in which people are dominated by large, faceless, corporations.

Genetic engineering: new technologies are utilized to produce androids – 'replicants' – that are virtually indistinguishable from humans. (It is surely no coincidence that the chief protagonist, Deckard, seems to be a pun on Descartes who gave us the famous phrase 'I think therefore I am'.)

Postmodern culture: the dominant discourses in the city are those based around commercial interests. Consequently, the urban underclass lacks any sense of collective vision. The prevailing ethos is one of selfishness, the main priority simply survival in a hostile world. As in the postmodern city, the culture of this futuristic city is a hybrid; the language, food, clothing and iconography is a mixture of American, European (mostly Hungarian) and Asian (mostly Japanese) influences.

Subcontracting: as in a post-Fordist economy, the Tyrell Corporation subcontracts activities (such as eye design for the replicants) to smaller companies.

High-tech architecture: another prescient feature of the film is the

architecture. Many of the buildings have service functions such as ventilation shafts, air-conditioning units and service ducts on the exterior – a feature subsequently adopted by some postmodern architects.

Key concepts related to *Blade Runner* and postmodernism (see Glossary)

Hyperreality, postmodernism, simulacra.

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Links with other chapters

Chapter 14: Cinema and the city

Romantic capitalism: the aestheticization of consumption

The concept of a **positional good** – one that displays the superiority of the consumer – is well established. However, it is argued that in postmodern society the act of consumption has assumed much greater significance. No longer is position ascribed by birth: rather, people are able to choose various types of identity through the goods they consume. This process has been described as the **aestheticization** of consumption:

> What is increasingly being produced are not material objects but signs . . . This is occurring not just in the proliferation of non-material objects that comprise a substantial aesthetic component (such as pop music, cinema, video, etc.), but also in the increasing component of sign value or image in material objects. The aestheticization of material objects can take place either in the production or the circulation and consumption of such goods.
>
> (Lash and Urry, 1994, p. 15)

A classic example of an item that became a branded fashion icon is the Nike athletic shoe. Initially developed for wearing when playing sports, the shoe became a symbol of rejection of the mainstream when adopted by young people in the Bronx. The Nike marketers were not slow in exploiting this symbolic cultural value through the addition of innovations such as air-cushioned soles, coloured laces and 'pump-action' fittings. Together with a high-profile advertising campaign, this led to large profits and frequently considerable hardship to relatively poor families as they struggled to purchase these shoes. Of course, once it became widespread in society, the product lost much of its association with transgression and subversion.

A key element in recent postmodern theorizing about cities, therefore, is the crucial role of consumption in the shaping of identities. As Jackson and Thrift (1995, p. 227) note, 'identities are affirmed and contested through specific acts of consumption'. It is argued that in purchasing particular products, people not only differentiate themselves from others but they also find a means of self-expression in which they can adopt and experiment with new subject positions. Thus it is argued (somewhat controversially) that people are increasingly defined by what they consume rather than by traditional factors such as their income, class or ethnic background.

Colin Campbell's reinterpretation (1987) of the relationship between capitalism and the Protestant ethic is useful here. The conventional view, derived from Max Weber's work on nineteenth-century capitalism, was of a rationalized system infused with a Calvinist spirit, concerned with economic success but coldly ascetic, antithetical to mystery, romance and enchantment. Looking back from the late twentieth century,

Campbell charted the transition from this practical rationality to a 'spirit of modern consumerism' that had its origins in people's need to establish social metrics of good taste. Refinement and good character, Campbell argues, was initially attributed to people who sought beauty and goodness, and derived pleasure from them. Soon, pleasure seeking came to be tied to the consumption of beautiful, luxury goods. People's lives became infused with illusions, daydreams and fantasies about consumer objects. Thus emerged the spirit of modern consumerism, characterized by Campbell as a 'self-illusory hedonism'. Under the spell of self-illusory hedonism, people constantly seek pleasure, enchanted by a succession of objects and ideas, always believing that the next one would be more gratifying than the previous one. This is the basis of a 'romantic capitalism', driven more by dreams and fantasies than a Protestant work ethic.

Romantic capitalism blossomed in the 1950s with a post-war economic boom that was boosted by the widespread availability of credit cards. Traditional identity groups based on class, ethnicity, and age began to blur as people found themselves increasingly free to construct their identities and lifestyles through their patterns of consumption. In addition to the traditional business of positional consumption, members of new class fractions and affective 'neotribal' groupings sought to establish their distinctiveness through individualized patterns of consumption. Consumption eclipsed production as the most important arena for social, cultural and political conflict and competition. Thanks to Fordism, consumers' dreams could be fulfilled more quickly and more easily. Enchantment sprang from the affordability and choice resulting from rationalization and mass production. But this led inevitably and dialectically to disenchantment as novelty, exclusivity, distinction and the romantic appeal of goods were undermined by mass consumption. To counter this tendency, product design and niche marketing, along with the 'poetics' of branding, have become central to the enchantment and re-enchantment of things. As George Ritzer (2005) has pointed out, enchantment is also ensured through a variety of specialized settings – 'cathedrals of consumption' – geared to the propagation and facilitation of consumption: shopping malls, chain stores, catalogues, franchises and fast food restaurants, Internet and TV shopping, cruise ships, casinos and themed restaurants. Ritzer, following Baudrillard and others, points to the importance of spectacle, extravaganzas, simulation, theming and sheer size in contemporary material culture, and argues that they are all key to enchantment and re-enchantment in the consumer world.

One of the most striking manifestations of this increased role of consumption in contemporary cities is the increased amount of space devoted to shopping – not only in vast suburban malls but also in revitalized city centres and festival marketplaces. The internal architecture of these new spaces of consumption is carefully constructed to encourage people to spend their money. In an attempt to attract people to spend in these new shopping malls, special events, street theatre and ever more dramatic architectural forms are employed.

3.5 Conclusions

This chapter has illustrated some of the numerous complex changes in the cultures of Western cities in recent years. Such is the complexity of these changes that many have argued it is becoming increasingly difficult to 'read' and understand the city as a single cultural landscape. There is no longer *one* urban geography (not that there ever was) but a whole set of urban geograph*ies*. It is argued that the city has become decentred, not only spatially and structurally, but also socially and conceptually (these elements all being closely bound together). However, a major criticism of this culturally inspired work is that it has led to a focus upon numerous 'local' forms of knowledge and identity while losing sight of the broader structure of political economy in which these cultures operate.

One important consequence of the concern to avoid essentializing, objectifying and creating binary dualisms is that many cultural geographers are suspicious of, and frequently hostile towards, the sorts of maps and tables that have traditionally been the staple fare of urban social geography. These established forms of representation are distrusted because they are seen as masking power relations and, indeed, contributing towards the very stereotypes that cultural geographers seek to subvert. Instead, the 'new' cultural geography places much greater

emphasis upon ethnographic methods and, in particular, in-depth interviews to reflect the complexity and diversity of people's views.

Students of the city vary enormously in their attitudes towards these issues. At the extremes are those wedded exclusively to either quantitative or qualitative methods. However, Anthony Giddens, one of the world's leading social commentators, has claimed 'All social research, in my view, no matter how mathematical or quantitative, presumes ethnography' (Giddens, 1991, p. 219). In this

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Box 3.6

Key films related to urban social geography – Chapter 3

Alice in the Cities (1974) A film by Wim Wenders which, like all his work, is difficult to classify. A road movie (of sorts) set in the United States, the Netherlands and Germany. A bit slow at times but full of surprises as it deals with the impact of US culture on Europe.

Blade Runner (1984) This is *the* cult movie for all fans of science fiction, *film noir* and debates concerning the nature of postmodernism (see also Box 3.5). Essential viewing for any student of cities.

La Dolce Vita (1960) A cult classic from Italian director Fellini showing the moral decay in post-war Italy. Full startling city images and memorable scenes.

Lone Star (1995) A detective story set on the Tex-Mex border that deals in a subtle way with issues of history, identity and cultural hybridity. Directed by John Sayles, whose other films are also worth seeking out (e.g. *Matewan, Passion Fish, Sunshine State*).

Network (1976) One of the first films to highlight the power of the mass media. It highlights the moral decline of television news reporting in the search for sensationalism to boost ratings.

The Ploughman's Lunch (1983) A disturbing portrayal of the cynicism and moral bankruptcy surrounding the role of the media, advertising and public relations industry in a post-modern society.

Box 3.7

Key novels related to urban social geography – Chapter 3

Brave New World (1932) Aldous Huxley. Although in many respects dated, this is a remarkably prescient novel dealing with a dystopian world dominated by state surveillance, the commodification of sex (together with its removal from emotional attachments) and the fetishization of consumption.

Brick Lane (2003) Monica Ali. A best-selling novel focusing on the experiences of a young Bangladeshi woman adjusting to life in the East End of London. Made into a film but criticized by some in the London Bangladeshi community for its portrayal of their lives. The heroine is from a part of Bangladesh not typical of the London community (consequently it has been argued that the book is like typifying Cockneys by Geordies!). Nevertheless worth exploration.

City of Glass (1985) Paul Auster. Although written ostensibly in the style of a detective novel, the book, together with *Ghosts* (1985) and *The Locked Room* (1996), forms a trilogy of strange but compelling novels dealing with the postmodern urban condition.

Do Androids Dream of Electronic Sheep? (1968) Philip K. Dick. The book that inspired the film *Blade Runner* (see Box 3.5).

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (1971) Hunter S. Thompson. A satirical look at the hedonism of the ultimate post-modern city as two writers go on a drug-fuelled spree. Turned into a movie starring Johnny Depp.

Neuromancer (1984) William Gibson. A pioneering and prescient science fiction thriller anticipating the threats from the growing influence of computers on urban life.

Super-Cannes (2000) J.G. Ballard. A satirical thriller focusing on surveillance-dominated, postindustrial corporate cities.

White Teeth (2000) Zadie Smith. An extremely popular novel full of vivid characters dealing with issues of identity and hybridity in contemporary postcolonial London.

vein it is suggested that a judicious mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methods is appropriate in studying urban social geography. Qualitative methods can reveal the diversity of voices in the city but maps, graphs and tables, if viewed with sufficient awareness of their limitations, are crucial to reveal a broader picture.

Crucially, the latter – together with insights from the 'inside' voices of the city – are needed to effect collective, coordinated policies for social improvement. Both these methods are therefore utilized in the next chapter, in which we consider some of the basic patterns of social differentiation in cities.

Chapter summary

3.1 Cities play a crucial role in the formation of cultures. These cultures involve 'ways of life' including the values that people hold, the norms that they follow and the material objects that they use.

3.2 All cultures are hybrid mixtures of various influences that change over time and so the notion that there is some pure authentic culture is a myth.

3.3 Space plays a crucial role in the evolution of cultural values since, like culture, it is a social construct intimately bound up with power and authority.

3.4 Although postmodernism is a much disputed concept, many of the recent changes in cities such as the focus upon consumption and growing fragmentation and diversity can be interpreted as a manifestation of the postmodern condition.

Key concepts and terms

aestheticization	hyperspace	public spaces
ageographia	iconography	purified communities
alterity	identity(ies)	reflexivity
ambivalence	imagined communities	representation
appropriation	imagineering	scripting
authenticity	imperialist discourse	semiology
binaries	intentionality	signified
carceral city	metanarrative	signifier
cultural imperialism	micropowers	signifying practices
'cultural turn'	mimicry	simulacra
culture	modernism	social engineering
delocalization	monumental architecture	spaces of exclusion
deviant subculture	moral landscapes	spatialized subjectivities
disciplinary society	objectification	subaltern classes
discourse	Panopticon	subculture
Disneyfication	place marketing	subjectivities
ethnocentrism	place promotion	subject positions
ethnoscape	positional good	text
hybridity	postcolonial theory	totalizing discourse
hyperreality	postmodernism	

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