PPD4: Introduction to Urban Studies

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“Shot in the streets of Kinshasa, site of Muhammad Ali's legendary 'Rumble in the Jungle', Karibu Ya Bintou ("Welcome to Life in Limbo") is a short film with music from the 2010 album 'Kinshasa Succursale' by Baloji.

Electric finger piano (likembé) played by Konono N°1, the legendary Congolese band who collaborated with Björk & count Vampire Weekend and Beck amongst their biggest fans.”

- http://vimeo.com/8907715
Outline

- Introduction
- Cities and urbanization today
- How did we get here?
- Industrial capitalism
- Utopian visions
- Suburbanization
- New Urbanism
- Documentary film *Contested Streets* and discussion questions
Why study cities and urbanization?

- Social scientists are interested in early urbanization because it holds insights into the origins of social structure and complex social relations.
- Could not decide on a major or an area of study and urban studies is interdisciplinary.
- Might lead to a job in city planning, urban design, architecture, community development, community organizing…
- Urban studies and cities are interesting, international, dynamic, fun and “hip”
- Because our collective future depends on the social and environmental sustainability of cities.
Definitions

- Urbanization is the increased proportion of the population that is urban compared to rural (Davis, 1965).
- Migration from the countryside to the city has repeatedly been the key factor in history of urban development and this continues today.
- A city is a community of substantial size and population density that shelters a variety of non-agricultural specialists, including a literate elite (Sjoberg, 1973).
- Definition includes: a settled community, an implied threshold of population size, non-agricultural employment, and cities are ruled by literate elite.
Cities and urbanization today

- 2007 marked the turning point when the majority of the world’s population lived in urban areas
- 50.6% of the world’s population (3.49 billion) live in urban areas
- One out of every 3 urban residents live in slums (this is approximately 827.6 million people)
- Annual urban growth rates are fastest in Sub-Saharan Africa (4.58 percent) and Southeast Asia (3.82 percent)
- Soon Asia alone will account for more than half the world’s urban population
- Small and intermediate cities, not mega cities, will continue to absorb most of the urban population around the world well into the future
Urban agglomerations 2009

Urban and rural population (in millions)

Urban population (in percent of tot. population)

Urban population (in percent of tot. population)

In the Year 2050

How did we get here?

- Childe (1950, 1954) viewed the development of society in distinct stages (“revolutions”)
- Agricultural, urban and industrial revolutions
- Hunting and gathering societies shifted to food production in relatively stable and sedentary groups
- Social life in these settlements became more complex and was sustained by trade and craft production
- Increasing specialization of work
- Separation of different functions through increasing interdependence of societal tasks
- In Childe’s essay “Urban Revolution” he notes cities were marked by a number of important innovations
Childe’s “Urban Revolution”

- **Increased population size and density:** By 3000 BC, Ninevah, Ur, Uruk and other Sumerian cities each had as many as 20,000 persons, larger than other human settlements up to that time.

- **Concentration of agricultural surplus:** Farmers living within the region controlled by the city paid a tithe, or tax to an “imaginary deity or a divine king” to support soldieries, priests, and other officials.

- **Public works and monuments:** Irrigation projects built by the state (through labor required of all citizens) allowed farmers to produce an agricultural surplus; the cities were dominated by temples (ziggurats) rising from a stepped brick platform.

- **Specialized labor:** The production of an agricultural surplus freed individuals to perform the specialized tasks required of artists, craftspeople, merchants, soldiers and priests.

- **Invention of writing:** System of writing and numerical notation was necessary for record keeping of commercial accounts and tax payments.
Childe’s “Urban Revolution” (continued)

- **Social stratification:** Priests, military leaders, and other officials formed a ruling class and were exempt from manual labor; workers and craftspeople were “relieved from intellectual tasks” but were guaranteed safety within the city.

- **Development of the arts:** Artists and craftspeople developed sophisticated styles and traditions in the decorative and fine arts.

- **Development of science:** Sciences were developed to predict, measure, and standardize to assist in the production of agriculture and the keeping of tax records (arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy).

- **Membership:** Participation in the community was based on residence and was no longer dependent on kinship.

- **Long-distance trade:** Raw materials not available in the local area were imported for craft production and religious ceremonies.
Neolithic communities and earliest cities

- The neolithic communities of Catal Hüyük in Anatolia are proto-urban, and pre-date Mesopotamian cities by several millennia.

- The first complex social, economic and political systems were in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley and China.
Ancient cities

- Most were walled
- Distinct citadel precinct
- Temple
- Palace
- Central granary
- Pyramid or ziggurat

- Ancient cities in China, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and Mesoamerica arose independently of cities in the Near East.
# World’s earliest cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Approximate Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mesopotamia</td>
<td>Tigris and Euphrates rivers</td>
<td>3900 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Nile River valley</td>
<td>3200 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Indus River valley</td>
<td>2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Mediterranean</td>
<td>Crete</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Yellow River valley</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Yucatan Peninsula</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cities of Ancient Greece

- Greek cities started to emerge around 1200 BC
- 500 BC had developed into productive, economically self-contained
- Population remained relatively small (a few thousand)
- Almost village-like social and political institutions
- Social life was lived at the *agora* or public market place
- Urban citizenship, democratic self-governance was the distinct contribution to urban civilization
- Women, slaves, and foreigners were excluded
- *Polis*: sometimes translated as city-state or as collective citizenry
- Ideal city was small enough where a single voice heard addressing the entire assembled citizens
Rome

- Began as a cluster of villages around the Tiber river in central Italy and emerged as a powerful republic
- Started similar to Greek cities, but exploded into a gigantic metropolis and world empire
- Roads, sewers, aqueducts set new engineering standards of excellence
- System of military and colonial administration spread a common law from Persia to the border of Scotland
- Roman imperial expansion spread Roman literature, philosophy, art and established cultural hegemony
- Citizenship was based on imperial privilege and a rigid social hierarchy
- Roman emperors claimed to be gods and ruled by “bread and circuses”
Medieval period

- Europe was a “cultural backwater”
- Cities of Islam, Cairo, Baghdad, and Moorish Córdoba were the real centers of power
- 1000 CE Europe began to revive and late medieval cities became centers of commerce
- During this period cathedrals, guild houses, charitable institutions, and universities were established
- 12th century, money began to be generally accepted
- Commodity market within the city was regulated by local government
- Slow decline of Medieval city began with the Renaissance, nation-states and absolute monarchs
- Market capitalism and the new industrial economic order destroyed the medieval city
Extended commodity production

- Money allowed people with capital to hire both labor and resources to produce goods
- Simple commodity production ended in the exchange of goods and services
- Extended commodity production began with money (or capital), and after production and exchange, ended with still more money that could be invested in a new cycle of accumulation
- Cities with such economies began to prosper
- Cultural and social relations changed to sanction the pursuit of wealth through the accumulation of money
Industrial capitalism

- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* and Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*
- Industrial capitalism created was the beginning of global capitalism and emerging world city
- Occupations became more specialized and the division of labor more complex
- These changes were supported by an emerging nation-state
- Land, which was previously held by the church and nobility, became a commodity
- Feudalism broke down and people were forced into cities where they sold their labor for a wage
- They became the urban proletariat
Industrial capitalism

- Middle of the 18th century, cities had populations of around 600,000
- Middle of the 19th century cities had a million or more across Europe
- Europe dominated the world through an extensive project of colonialism
- This divided the world into industrialized and non-industrialized nations
- New social order based on property owning capitalist and property-less proletarians
- Cities became centers for factories and slums
- Urban parks, systems of public hygiene, urban planning
Elements of the Industrial city

- **Factories** took the best sites. In many cases, the founding of the factories led to the growth of cities, so they were central to urban form.

- **Railroads** were the factories connection to the main ports. In England these were in London and Liverpool.

- **Slums** were a consequence of the labor needs of the factory. Workers no longer lived in the same place they worked, but they need to be close to their work.
Garden City-Ebenezer Howard

- Utopian visionary who wanted to establish fully self contained cities
- Maximum population as 32,000
- Public control of land
- Each garden city would be connected by rail to a larger urban system
- The general layout of the city was concentric zones with plenty of parks and gardens
- City government and commercial functions would be located in the center
- Factors would be located at the edge of the city
Radiant City - Le Corbusier

- A French (Swiss) architect who influenced urban design
- Ideal city combined high density with open space
- 3 million population
- Publicly owned land
- High rise buildings scattered across park-like landscape
- Different functions were spread out
- Large, wide boulevards
- Individuals were expected to live and work in multistoried housing (based on type of work)
Broadacre City-Frank Lloyd Wright

- American architect whose vision was closest to the quintessential suburb
- People should be liberated from urban agglomerations
- Town and country should be merged
- Privately owned plots (one or more acres)
- This would require a great deal of space
- People would be connected by a system of highways
- All necessities should be located in 10 to 20 miles
Suburbanization

- Suburbanization with its consequential segregation by class (and later race) became a continuing feature of the modern city
- Throughout the 20th century the middle class suburb has grown in size and influence
- Suburbia now defines many cities, leaving the old inner core poorest residents
- The first suburbs were built along the inter-urban railroad lines, after WWII they were automobile based and created sprawl
- Family-oriented community of skilled workers and mid-level managers, the true middle class
- Tract-home developments were criticized as a cultural wasteland and segregated sanctuary of privilege
**Edge city**

- Sprawl and suburbia created a new kind of city
- Los Angeles grew from a population of 60,000 in 1920 to over ten million today
- Los Angeles is “a city in search of a city,” multi-nucleated metropolis or the ultimate post-urban chaos
- Preference for single family homes and replacement of a once extensive system of streetcars
- In the first stages of suburbanization the suburb was still dependent on the city center
- In the edge city there is more commuting from suburb to suburb
- The edge city is a source for new jobs, cultural centers and homes and not suburbs, but a new kind of decentralized city, a “technoburb” (Fishman, 1987)
New Urbanism

- Borrowing freely from Kevin Lynch’s *The Image of the City* (1960)
- Small lot size, increased population density, building closer to lot lines, narrower streets with slow traffic
- Increased walkability through the construction of pedestrian sheds
- Mixed use (office, shops, apartments) and mixed housing (ages, income, races) within neighborhoods
- Reduce automobile dependency, de-emphasize parking
- Celebration and Seaside both in Florida
- Elitist, over-planned, social constricting neo-rich enclaves
Questions: Contested Streets

- How has the concept and the function of the street changed over time in the U.S.?
- What are the consequences of these changes?
- How does the situation in the U.S. compared to London, Paris and Copenhagen?
- What factors make each of these cases different?
- What are the major hurdles to reclaiming the streets for non-automobile traffic in the U.S.?
- What would reclaiming the streets require on the part of citizens, government, civil society, and the private sector in the U.S.?
- How would reclaiming the streets change U.S. cities and the experience of living in the city?
Conclusion

- Syllabus, powerpoints, readings are all in the EEE course dropbox (http://eee.uci.edu/).

- There is also a course website with required articles and syllabus.

- Required reading *The Barbarian Nurseries* is for sale in the UCI Bookstore.

- Two different times for office hours. Come and see us!