

# Metamorphoses, Transformation and European Cities

*Gösta Arvastson*

*Tim Butler*

The first thing that meets the observer who takes the airport coach towards a city centre somewhere in Europe is the sight of monotonous suburbs, run-down factory areas, slum housing and the ruined remains of small companies that the market created. It is still possible to decipher posters on fire- and brick walls that illustrated a time of special emphasis on the few texts displayed in the public space. The city erodes and is exposed to stresses and strains that can't be repaired, neighbourhood social safety disappears, cars take over the streets and the district crumbles. Symbols and monuments are not replaced. The city expands into the suburbs and beyond and the suburbs devour the city centre.

Scholars looking for perspectives have often chosen to investigate the city as an expression for the processes of civilisation. The city was seen as a homogenising force and transformed incomers from the countryside into modern citizens. The power of the city crumbles and homogeneity amongst its inhabitants is no longer preserved. It cannot control all the cultures, interest groups and organisations that spring up, and it can't manipulate its inhabitants and sustain the myth of an immediate disintegration. The city crises of the 1990s were mainly enacted at institutional and government levels.

In the new heterogeneity, inhabitants established their districts and recreated ways of life that should really have vanished somewhere along modernisation's straight line of development. Even during the 1990s, the city was on the frontline in this continuous revolution; a

centre of tourism and information and communication technologies. The city continued to be the physical coating of desire. Nothing of the playful and unpredictable disappeared just because homogeneity and the concept of the city proved to be impossible. The city has always held a fascination both as a landscape and for its unplanned encounters between people. New innovations in our time include the architecture and the idioms of global culture that are developed in conflict with those national and local cultural hegemonies that also make claims on the city. The global economy's centres of glass and concrete convey sweeping changes in the city's appearance. The modern city has changed and industrial premises stand empty. The dwindling labour market makes its mark on the city. Life is condensed in new forms, places are given new meaning and the old is dismantled. The European city is born and dies at the same time.

This anthology focuses on European cities. It's about how new worlds of life have been developed and how people's experiences of the city have been dictated by change and mobility. While it is mainly the last half century that has captured the authors' interest, a longer time perspective is often essential to an understanding of today's debate on the city.

## Urban Movements

Already by the 1820s London could boast a population of just over a million, and Paris was developing in similar vein. Large numbers of people moving to the city led to overcrowding

and poverty. Their colonisation was beyond the control of the authorities. Travellers who found their way to Europe's metropolises in the 1880s moved like spectators through the crowds and were often affected by a pensive melancholy. A society was in process of disappearing and, at the same time, they could imagine that dramatic changes were taking place.

The stream of people from countryside to city is common to European urban history. One great concern was the overpopulation caused by the previous industrialisation wave during the latter part of the 1800s. Cities grew at a much faster rate than the authorities had resources. Many lacked passports and official papers and this caused huge problems for the authorities. The need to take stock of the cities led to a renewed interest in identities. Originally, the need to establish identity with physical evidence had a policing purpose. At the end of the 1800s, fingerprinting was introduced by the police in London. City dwellers gradually became subject to increasing cataloguing and registering.

When Eugène Haussmann's columns spread during the 1800s and the city gained in aesthetics, powerful visual markers of "cityness" appeared. The idea of Parisian bourgeois dwellings along open boulevards spread to many other European cities. The first floor of a block of flats was the best. Facades were adorned with pilasters and personified mouldings. Wide and straight fashionable streets of Parisian and English mould described the city dweller's enthusiasm for overstepping cultures. Grecian symbols and a neutralised aesthetics in terms of lines, ellipses, rhomboids and mathematical forms, restored the city dweller to a community-creating classical inheritance.

## Circulation, Pulse and Flow

The European city also became an international prototype. Europe's capital cities, especially Paris and Vienna, also became prototypes for city cultures in other parts of the world. They were especially significant to the American city culture – North and South; Buenos Aires was known as "the Paris of the South". In the colonies of Africa and Asia, experimental cities

were built that had no European counterpart and that cultivated an aesthetic and European feature in a more complete way than had been possible in Europe.

The planning of the European city at the end of the 1800s dealt with a complete machinery of life. To a great extent, the city was the result of an engineering that sought parallels in nature. The access paths of the ant-hills and the well-organised beehive represented a model for the cities that elevated the status of engineer and stationed the architect as lord of creation. Production and service sectors were amalgamated with public entertainment and were given their own space. The planned flow of city people was indicated by transport tracks between home and work. Already at the beginning of the previous century engineers had developed mobile pavements so that people would be well catered for. Cities were built for mobility.

At the same time, the city was a symbol of life and circulation and the pulsing flow of goods, capital and people – the functional whole. Historians used headings like *the urban revolution* or *the capitalist city* whenever they described these sweeping transformations of the city. The emphasis on revolution led thoughts towards the idea of a stagnating peasant society. Of course that was not the case. The big European cities had been founded on urban culture since medieval times, and had been places of public ceremonies as well as ritual contacts with other citizens outside the family circle long before the dawn of industrialisation. The difference during the industrialisation phase was the speed of the transformation.

Modern society was characterised by standardisation; an abolition of cultural differences. Prior to the First World War, the cities of Europe had become symbols of development and modernity (Sennett 1978:133). Here were institutions and authorities that exercised control, but despite the constant presence of police, individuals discovered that they had plenty of opportunities in which to investigate sections of society other than the officially recognised. Anti-modern movements opposed international exhibitions and new cultural chasms appeared. The cultural boundaries of the city were trans-

formed. From this perspective, the city could be read as a conflict zone between antagonistic interests.

## Opinion Creation and Mass Culture

Film was a fitting medium for those who wanted to portray people in the city. As an instrument of reflection and cultural critique it was unbeatable and united city dweller with modern times, development and the ideas of the permanent revolution. Sequences and movements were there on the streets. Every visual impression could be captured in a continuous present. The made-up beds and the beggar's park bench were contemporaries. So too were a street washed down with a hose and a girl that washed in her room. One situation slid into the other. Encounters between people were swift and profiled social competence.

The photographers of the 1920s and 1930s absorbed themselves in architecture, people's movements and light variations between dawn and dusk. One of the pioneers of international documentary film was Dziga Vertov. In *The Man with the Camera* (1928–29), he simply allowed the city to march past in front of the lens. He fixed his camera to the front of motorcycles and railway engines. He was obsessed with capturing the busyness of the traffic, engineering workshops and factories, and he allowed the lens to wander its way over chimneys, radio masts, facades of houses and right into the rooms of both rich and poor. It was his idea that the eye of the camera should mediate an intense feeling of the present (Weiss 1956:89).

During the interwar period, architects, doctors, journalists and psychologists had focused on the city as an organism, an "inner expediency". They had turned the city into a laboratory for a rational modernity. Any useless branches had to be cut off, just as in the plant kingdom, so that what was healthy could grow and strengthen.

After the Second World War, such conclusions were not negotiable. The European cities had shown another face; an arena for secret police in search of critics of the regime. Seen from the perspective of power, and mindful of the

totalitarian regimes of the Nazi period and the later post-war period in Eastern Europe, the difference between a city and a labour camp was insignificant. Short distances contributed to that, as did the possibilities for the enclosure of the population, and with that continuous surveillance, the lack of escape routes, the media, propaganda and a system of street addresses. In general, the humanistic idea was easier to implement in the home and more difficult in the workplace. Later during the post-war period, dormitory town planning gathered the experiences of the darker years in Europe to put an emphasis on smaller "neighbourhood units". New housing areas that were built as small urban communities on the outskirts of the cities – with shops, schools and public institutions, dominated during the 1960s and 1970s.

## Changes in Working Conditions

Consumption was given a different slant when supermarkets started to spring up around towns and cities at the beginning of the 1960s. Journeys to work came into being. Many people lived a long way away from their workplaces and travel on a daily basis became time consuming.

The economic intensity that had been uncompromising during the 1950s and 1960s gave rise to the protest movements of the 1970s. Harsh criticism was directed against motoring and air pollution, town centre commercialisation and "gentrification", i.e. that housing for the lower social classes was pulled down or converted to provide more room for the well-to-do middle class. Cities gained their protest singers and superstores their commercial music. Bicycles were painted by hand. The password of the 1970s was *tools for transformation* and alluded to user-friendliness and a politics of activity and social fellowship.

At the beginning of the 1970s, criticism against the ideas of mass production became almost total; one of the linchpins of the industrial city. Disturbances at the end of the 1960s and employees' demands for reforms in 1968 had brought about a different view of people's work. At the same time it was a revolt that could not be

enacted anywhere other than in the city. Class theories taken from the ideas of the history of civilisation gave European ethnology new perspectives. Culture was a stabilising order that the individual attached him/herself to through socialisation processes controlled by outside powers; a way of living that was conditioned by his/her role as a creature of class.

It is sometimes said that the social visions of the 1980s seemed to be sealed in black cabin bags. That is an exaggeration, but a lot had changed since the 1970s. The grassroots were in jeopardy and the fight against social segregation was no longer on the agenda. The architecture of the 1980s aimed at showing work in progress; those who passed the big glass windows of the city centre areas could look straight into shiny polished work environments with their white desks. Insurance companies became just as transparent as ladies' hairdressers. People moved around like spectators in the galleries – and could see themselves reflected in the glass panes.

Conservative welfare models and the establishment of the European free market in the 1980s introduced strict economic measures for the development of cities. Society's disorders were seen as a result of a costly public sector. Vulnerable minorities and marginal ethnic groups no longer attracted society's concern; the labour market itself started to have cultural overtones. Ethnic groups in the workplace started to be graded according to an imagined scale of loyalty; national characteristics and countenances again started to be of interest.

## The New Monumentality

The recession at the beginning of the 1990s showed that market forces would deepen the crisis in Europe. Professional finance analysts' interest in deregulation affected the cities and confronted the politicians with difficult decisions. As the market "as such is amoral", political intervention was called upon to manage such debatable market-oriented phenomena as drug-dealing and prostitution. The New Age Movement emerged to address a wide range of issues. Cuts in public spending imposed a moralising

view on citizens. Industriousness and stable family relations were important factors, and in the background an image of "the Others" was outlined as parasites of the welfare state. The homogeneous class structure was decomposing, and the new solidarity – with the home as starting point – contributed to the commercialisation of the public milieu. The result seemed to be a predictable "death of the classes". Robert Venturi gained great success among cultural scholars when he emphasised the industrial parenthesis (Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour 1977). Han talked about architecture and "the new monumentality", which meant that the city wasn't only built to be big and impressive, but long and low. The discussion can continue for an eternity for a flexible adaptation of capitalism's ideas as the basis of planning the city. Instead of point-by-point positioning, people were expected to look for freedom by being on the move, and the city was dominated by a demand for space and above all temporary solutions that make it possible to leave every single place without any worry. What is interesting is that it is not the places but transport systems that become fundamentally important for people on the move. The speed theoretician, Paul Virilio, also had something to say about that when he described monumental impact in the city as invisible. Having an overview of the city no longer calls for the presence of towers, but a functional and efficient electronic network (Morris 1992:4).

## City Person

From some points of view, living in a city is a truly modern phenomenon. European history provides us with many examples of "cityness" that translate into materialised objects and the consumption of goods. Many attempts to understand the city have been made in terms of their general appearance and their *raison d'être*. The concentration of technology and economic opportunities in world cities comprised the general features of an accelerating growth of transnational economies at the end of 20th century. Hence, the concept of *city* implies the notion of an urban community by virtue of "some

legal or conventional distinction" (*Encyclopædia Britannica* 2005).

The permanent revolution was perceived as a high speed journey towards a higher civilisation, similar to the Fordist vision of the early production environments of the 20th century. The outlines of modern progress and the journey are still in place. The grand narrative of modernity is still at work and landscapes of power and repression continue to be created.

Every minute the city produces an enormous amount of facts about health, social welfare, unemployment, medical care, schools, the flow of transport, and the financial affairs of companies and the public sector. Information is dependent on computer technology and is so extensive that many avoid it. The city's official information is also often stamped with the hallmark of monotony. It is a city person's nature to evade information they find uninteresting. Both consciously and unconsciously, they take a stand against information and shun advertising texts in the tube, shop windows and frontages. They economise with impressions because they gain no pleasure from what they see and read in their own significance, and find that they can get along with the help of cultural simplifications. It's the city person's prerogative to choose information that matches their interests. The city person prepares for events and goes into social situations that they have no control over in terms of a clear escape route. The majority of people that move around in unfamiliar neighbourhoods are aware of the emergency procedures. The forms of contemporaneity, convergence and encounter force the need for cultural checklists for quick meetings at the supermarket checkout, on the bus or at a restaurant. Ritual reality happens on a plane other than the planned city. This is the complex of problems that several cultural scholars have found interesting. "Cityness" is something that is happening now, in the present, that develops without people noticing it and is changed as a social reality. Many cultural scholars are inspired by Henri Lefebvre and start out from the double process of industrialisation and urbanisation, or with reference to the city's social life, explosion and implosion. "Cityness" can be

the implosion, a compress of feelings that can unfurl and be pulled in again, depending on the social situation.

Most cultural scholars would agree that culture means the knowledge that people use when facing the realities of daily life. Its meaning is affected by a cultural understanding of humanity, sometimes affected by a more philosophical view on humanity's uniqueness as a creator of a human world in order to use it for her own benefit. There is also an emotional side to culture, which has to do with the fabric of perceptions, fantasies, desires and fears that have become very noticeable in recent theoretical discourses. When recognizing the city from this perspective – in terms of multiculturalism – there might be a need for detailed descriptions and further analyses of the routines of the city, concentrating on social meetings, faces and the daily exhibition of codes and styles in the street. Street ethnography is a very promising methodology, as it depicts the symbolic landscape of transforming the city into rituals and social actions. In effect it says that "games are not always played in order to win", but the processes of categorization are continuing and the world is changing – like an urban version of *schismogenesis* that Gregory Bateson explains in terms of cultural change from within (Bateson 1972).

At a distance, the city looks like a functioning whole. The perspective gained from great altitudes, maps and the interest for observation towers indicates how the city is often treated as an anatomical illustration in the world of notions – a homogenous creation that lends itself to the drawing-table. The perspective based on a closer view of the crowded street offers a challenge. A long accustomed habit of cultural scholars has been to position perspectives in opposition – high versus low, the elite versus the commonplace and seeing versus doing. But the notion of the planned city's impact on consciousness should not be over emphasised. De Certeau's return to the street after having visited the observation tower's symbolic planning position also represents the new conditions of research. The concept-city was on its way out during the 1980s and with it an urban sociology

that subsequently reached its climax in Europe shortly after World War II.

The emphasis on reading faces, movements and bodies, and with directions as to an important “facialisation” in the encounters between people, creates new possibilities of assembling a new ethnography of the city (de Certeau 1984; Deleuze & Guattari 2003:63). It can create new possibilities for a cultural research that has partly turned its back on the material, clothing and consumer habits in preference to studying people and the city as a mixed “semiotic of meaning and subjectivism, paranoia and monomania, interpretation and passion”. The modern person is pushed into their existential reproductions, goes backwards towards the future and keeps a check on the make of car they used to like and formulates the dialects of the consumer landscape. But at the same time, they are interested in reading faces as something more than just their shapes; an expression of people, categories, those in power and frames of mind.

## Right to the City

The question of the right to the city was made topical by Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre 1968). The critics appear again today; it is often sociologists and cultural scholars who say that the traditional urbanity has been neglected. Artistically designed consumption streets dominated the metropolises of Eastern Europe following the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Memories of Stalinistic architecture and Soviet times were not at a premium, although interested parties are to be found even in these fields. That is not to say that anything was changed. Cities have always been in process of dissolution and genesis, but the ardour of transformation in Eastern Europe increased after the Velvet Revolution. The production of goods gradually disappeared from the city when factories were dismantled and replaced by information companies. The city appeared as a more refined place of desires; an ecstatic circulation of goods. It was a phase in modern society where capitalism’s aesthetics were united with the patterns of consumption. The consumption landscape led to new

routines, interests, meeting places and forms of integration. The theme can be recognised in the writings of Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard 1988a:125; Baudrillard 1988b:23).

The image of the information industry’s success has dominated the theory of cities in recent decades. There is reason to investigate which research perspectives disappear and which representations fade into oblivion. *Mixing* is one such representation; the city that has always been a place of encounter between strangers. Other representations include *smoothing*; the city with its lifestyle improvisations, black economies and survival strategies. An interpretation may suggest that the smooth spaces arising from the city belongs to a world wide organisation. The counterattack is “sprawling, temporary, shifting shantytowns of nomads and cave dwellers, scrap metal and fabric, patchwork, to which the striations of money, work, or housing are no longer even relevant” (Deleuze & Guattari 2003:481). Cultural free states are proclaimed and demarcated, sociologists interest themselves in tribalisation – a false concept in this context because it is about a culturalisation on all levels. The city has proffered hiding places to persecuted groups for centuries, not least in London, Berlin and Vienna, and separatism in cities has been known since antiquity. Images of a multicultural city are given plenty of space in the media. It is the cultural diversity and segregation that characterises our time and gives perspective to the concept of postmodernity:

“Postmodernity may be interpreted as fully developed modernity; as modernity that acknowledged the effects it was producing throughout its history, yet producing inadvertently, by default rather than design, as *unanticipated consequences*, by-products often perceived as waste; as modernity conscious of its true nature – *modernity for itself*” (Bauman 1992:149f).

Power to exercise control in the city must be defended with rules. Even though the old still rules worked they still had to be replaced by new ones. Administration of rules shifts to an “exercising of will”, which means that both the

superior and the subordinate constantly find themselves within the limits of the system.

Power over the cities appears in new guises in the 2000s. Globalisation has meant that it has become more mobile and thus more difficult to localise. In spite of this, the majority of people are convinced that strong forces rule their lives. Pictorially we can liken people's identity to a particle in a magnetic field that takes up new positions as the energy is changed. The collective loyalty, a mutual understanding between individual and society, necessary to the success of the permanent revolution, has not appeared once and for all, but instead the actual energy in the feeling of society varies with time. There are influential nations, companies and political organisations, but none has the authority to reign supreme over the system with global cities. In this post-political world, to refer to Fredric Jameson, it isn't possible to discriminate between advertising, private initiative and the market's production of originals (Jameson 1994:183).

## Migration

In a world dominated by fast transport and the abolishment of distance, this cultural change was also perceived as motion. With their centres, districts, reserves and colonies, cities were captured in movements of varying direction. Only in the material world could culture stand still and be liberated from the quality that speed creates. Many of the concepts connected to cultural encounters, such as acculturation, disintegration, evolution, innovation, integration, devolution, revitalisation and survival, are related to movement. The idea of a union of cities, and attempts to neutralise the significance of culture and liberate people from their restrictions to place, had other consequences. Sometimes people have talked about the "ritual unconsciousness" that characterised the modernisation of Europe during the post-war period. Spaces for new creations also appeared. When the unspoken becomes more important than words, demonstration, play, theatre, light paintings, flowers and texts and moments of "cityness" are activated.

The 1950s reinforced the impression of rapid development – sometimes much too rapid. The work of sweeping away all traces of cultural prejudices aimed at dismantling the old society in order to level the ground for innovation and, in a broader sense, to teach the inhabitants to formulate their desires. This process became a reality for the millions of labour migrants that were recruited to the high-technological countries from the European periphery with dreams of a better life and a brighter future. State organisations were responsible for recruitment on the assumption that they would return home after a time of earning good money. It naturally followed that their civic rights would be limited. When it later appeared that they preferred to live on the periphery of the city, a European approach developed, based on a single-minded policy of trying to send immigrants back to their native countries. This official immigration policy was probably one of many factors that contributed to the racial riots that occurred in England at the beginning of the 1960s. At the same time, the conservative revival in Central Europe got new wind in their sails. In Switzerland, the state started to conduct campaigns against immigrants in 1964. The debate on "Überfremdung" – too many immigrants – was thereby sanctioned by the highest political decision-making body.

Signs of an increasing xenophobia appeared towards the end of the 1900s and spread to all levels of society, including the lower levels. Friction in the labour market increased. European cities were developed in other ways than during the large waves of technical and industrial innovation that characterised the post-war period. The culturalisation of cities and their inhabitants, the way of ascribing qualities and avoiding a social and economic understanding, mythologized the unequal distribution of welfare.

A prerequisite of immigration policy in the cities of Europe and the political administration of cultural minorities was the notion of one of the parties culturally amalgamating with the other – assimilation. Considering that Western society was readily described with the aid of metaphors collected from the natural

sciences, offshoots from the apprehension of the 1700s on economic development according to nature's textbook, a similar system of ideas didn't seem strange in the context of cultural research. There was no hesitation in the idea that people were adaptable and could be moved like seedlings between greenhouses. Another was structural balance, originally one of functionalism's leading ideas. In the planning of city development it was important that different groups should be able to live in peaceful coexistence. This is how the concept multicultural came about. During the 1970s, multicultural was developed into a model of political democracy; a strategy for society's rapid change.

The term multiculturalism suggests that contemporary urban cultures somehow co-exist in a condition of mutual respect and possible equality. This remains far from being the case, although the role played by different ethnic groupings in shaping the development of cities across Europe has been immense. We see ample evidence of this in the essays included in this issue of the journal. For example, we learn about the changes that are occurring in cities as far apart as Barcelona, Berlin and Moscow. The term cosmopolitanism is also introduced in a number of the essays to describe the social and cultural infrastructures of many European cities. We believe that there is virtue in rescuing the term cosmopolitanism from its connotations of urban elites. In his original work on Rovere, Merton (Merton 1948) contrasted "locals" and their essentially narrow and instrumental concerns with "cosmopolitans" who lived in the "big society", as this description fitted that of the essentially urbane intellectual at ease in a number of societies. The social anthropologist, Ulf Hannerz (Hannerz 1980), has pointed out the elite dimensions of cosmopolitans in several of his works and has very successfully clarified the tensions between globals and locals on the world scene. The passage through a Nazi ideology – when the term became associated with Jewish groups and expanded into the understanding of *Entfremdung* – shows that, under certain circumstances, cosmopolitans challenge the other side of the coin, namely of

being somebody in terms of a fixed national identity. The image is often conjured up of the middle-class European intellectual in the inter-war period moving easily across borders and between languages.

## Mixing Together

Multiculturalism as a term poses problems. It is discussed in many – if not all – the essays that make up this issue. In the European tradition, minority cultures were readily apprehended from an essentialistic viewpoint. American cultural scholars, such as the prominent figures of symbolical interactionism, Cooley, Mead and Dewey, put the emphasis on the social construction of deviation in a continuous present, its change and affluence. Interaction, situation and context were more important to them as instruments of analysis. Theories concerning the cultural organisation of diversity and multiculturalism had their foundations in functionalism. To put it crudely, multiculturalism, like so many other terms (such as community and social capital) is used in sociology in particular and the social sciences in general, and has connotations of "good" about it. It summons before us a notion of a socially, culturally and above all ethnically mixed society in which these different groups rub along together quite happily. It is almost as if the celebration of these differences enables us to overlook both the existence and practice of inequality between them. Multiculturalism can either mean that each group simply minds its own business and has little to do with the other, or that they participate in a common experience whilst drawing on their own cultural heritages in order to shape that experience. At worst, the notion of multiculturalism is a mask for good old-fashioned racism. There are examples of this across Europe today – not least in multicultural Britain where the British National Party has been remarkably successful in some of its cities in putting forward its own version of "separate but different". Elsewhere, however, there remains a notion of a "host society" into which all incomers are eventually expected to "assimilate". Scandinavia is a particularly good example of this perspective.



*Chicken Tikka Masala* is now acknowledged as one of Britain's choicest dishes, having been invented in the UK rather than India. The effect of half a century of sustained immigration into Britain is now accepted in many of its cities as a fact of life, and is perhaps indicative of the somewhat contradictory nature of British multiculturalism. A common notion conjured up among members of the majority concerns a population open to believing the worst of different ethnic and religious groups.

Even in multi-cultural Europe different ethnic groups tend not to mix, and often live separate lives in different parts of the city and nation. Sheila Patterson's book, *Dark Strangers* (1965:19), analyses the process of "absorption" into the "host" society in the following terms:

"In a homogenous and peaceable society, as opposed to a conquest society, social relations are harmonious and voluntarily ordered amongst the great majority of the society's members. Migrant groups entering such a society usually expect and are expected to develop more or less favourable relationships with their hosts. Such terms as 'adjustment', 'accommodation', 'integration', and 'assimilation' represent the goals recognised by both sides. 'Absorption' is the overall term for all stages of adaptation and acceptance used by S. N. Eisenstadt in his studies of Israel" (Patterson 1965:19f).

There is a hierarchy of absorption, from accommodation, via pluralistic integration, to its most complete phase of assimilation. Similar mappings can be found in Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Germany and elsewhere across Western Europe, which indicates that ethnicity has become much more fluid than it was. It used to be said that you could identify the latest ethnic group in town by the nationality of the taxi driver who drove you into Manhattan from Kennedy Airport. The same might now be said about much of Europe. Again, however, the picture is complex; Margaret Byron, for example, demonstrates in her essay in this collection that it is the group of migrants with the highest qualifications (Black Africans) which has the highest rates of unemployment.

The European labour market is facing a period of change and adjustment. The situation is not only characterised by complexity and national legislation, but also by the intervention of cities in economic policy. This is not so much the case in some areas of Europe where the situation in general is partly dominated by strong welfare traditions (such as in Scandinavia, Germany, Italy and France) (Esping Anderson 1990) and to a certain extent also because some countries, such as Britain, still have to subscribe to the provisions of the European Union's social chapter in full. Paradoxically, these constraints have increased the incentive to engage informal workers who can be hired for less and fired more easily as and when conditions demand.

Superficially, multiculturalism points to a society that is increasingly at ease with itself and in which "new" identities are being forged around the enjoyment of consumption. It can, however, also be some kind of a cover-up between the "have nots" and the "have lots" – those who earn a lot and those who earn very little, those with and without pensions, those with and without access to welfare, those with a settled or marginal status as immigrants, those who have a legal status and those facing precarious and undocumented realities etc. (Bales 2000). There is a strangely lulling effect in the warm glow of being called a "multicultural society". The consequences of a major (and seemingly inevitable) economic downturn and rise in unemployment remain to be seen. It seems likely that there will be a steep decline in discretionary spending on consumption in the leisure and entertainment sector which will hit casual and migrant workers particularly hard. At the same time, there will be greater competition for the jobs that are available, including those currently undertaken by informal workers. The potential for conflict and a definition in inter-ethnic terms is great. The unwillingness and increasing inability of state welfare regimes to deal with these problems will undoubtedly lead to greater pressure for active discrimination against non-citizens. There is already some evidence of this in the way in which some countries in the EU have excluded some of the new member states from the provisions of free labour mobility. In

Denmark, the government has already begun a policy of official discrimination against those migrants who have “refused” to integrate and become assimilated Danes. There is a potential across Europe for such policies to become mainstream in the event of either a serious economic downturn and/or an increase in Islamophobia or further major terrorist incidents in key European cities.

In a sense, ideas of being Italian, British, French or Spanish have always been tied to “others” in that it was an awareness of imperial power that made these countries great in the eyes of many of their citizens who had “served” their countries in some respect or other. The lack of a colonial history paved the way for other migration patterns in Scandinavia. Sweden, where it seemed that the “million homes” programme to build new high rise homes on virgin land in the fresh air and countryside around Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg was eschewed by young Swedes and became home to refugees from the world’s conflicts simultaneously. This is graphically symbolised by the number of satellite dishes sprouting from the high rise flats in such places as Fittja on the outskirts of Stockholm as they pick up Kurdish broadcasts from native Anatolia, whilst the carefully restored traditional Swedish farmhouse that forms the community centre remains largely unused.

As has already been indicated, the new “multiculturalism” seems very different from the migration that took place in the 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, in some European cities there is now what might be termed an infrastructure of difference which has enabled this inflow to take place with relatively little sense of cultural disruption. The essays in this collection address the general theme of ethnicity and contemporary European urbanism in many different ways in a wide variety of cities and city pairings. What they have in common is a wish to explore the role that a contemporary merging of ethnicity and culture is having on the new urbanity that is now widely accepted as driving the new Europe. The effect is far greater than might be predicted from the relative social powerlessness of many of the

bearers of these cultures. At the same time, existing urban processes continue to ensure the marginality of these groups. This latter point is well demonstrated in Miralles-Guasch and Cebollada-Frontera’s essay regarding access to transport in metropolitan Barcelona. They show that there is an interaction between three groups – the young, women and recent migrants – in being unable to access private car transport which is becoming increasingly important despite Barcelona’s well-deserved reputation for having built an efficient system of public transport. In a city which is probably more famous for its *Ramblas* than any other, the number of journeys by car is on the increase while those undertaken on foot is going down. Barcelona is also, like many large Spanish cities, no newcomer to in-migration, having hosted huge inflows from Andalusia during the post-war decades. In the 1980s, many refugees from South American dictatorships ended up in Barcelona. It is, however, only just beginning to come to terms with the new migration from the African continent, many of whom are illegal immigrants lacking both appropriate papers and an understanding of Spanish and Catalan culture.

In similar vein, Margaret Byron looks at what has been a longstanding flow of migration from the Caribbean to France and Britain, and how this has changed over the decades as a result of the change in labour market conditions in both those countries and, in turn, how this has affected senses of identity and citizenship. A labour force that was once directed into national reconstruction is now expected to perform a very different role in a neo-liberal, post-industrial environment.

Three essays focus on the ways in which new concepts of ethnicity are affecting London: two of which (Shaw and Karmowska and Eade) focus specifically on the Spitalfields area of London. Despite being located less than 300 metres from the City of London (Europe’s richest region), until a few years ago Spitalfields remained resolutely ungentrified. Both essays point to the way in which regeneration and gentrification have taken place in the context of white residential gentrifiers and Bangladeshi

restaurateurs trying to gain maximum benefit from the area. As Shaw and Karmowska show, on at least one occasion this led to the two groups coming to blows at a meeting trying to agree a development strategy. All three essays (the two already mentioned and Evans and Foord's), however, look at the way in which ethnicity now informs not only the meaning that is inscribed into many parts of London (and other British cities) but also (difficulties notwithstanding) what lies at the heart of many of the regeneration strategies which enthusiastically celebrate the "rich mix" provided by these areas with their globally connected but economically deprived populations. The Shaw and Karmowska essay develops this theme further by making a comparison with the former Jewish ghetto of Cracow in Poland.

Two essays take Sweden as their subject matter: Högdahl's account of the ethnicization of the Möllvången district of Malmö and Ericsson's account of life in two of Sweden's ethnoscares. Högdahl sees how Möllvången's acquisition of immigrant-status has combined with that of being increasingly seen as a local skid row. She draws out complex lessons about the ways in which the minority groups and resident "drunks" negotiate their day-to-day existence, which she is also able to compare to the Long Lanes area of Cape Town. Ericsson looks at the ways in which many of these areas of Swedish cities acquire a reputation which is much more fearsome than the reality of everyday life, and how this affects all the groups who tend to operate according to the script supplied by the popular press and local social workers who bizarrely engineer moral panic. This contrasts to the inhabitants' lived experience of the area. Per-Markku Ristilammi discusses the transformation of cities into a static brand for a global market. The New Economy's insistence on constant change, coupled to the need for brand stability, was skilfully merged into the image of a stable bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen. Attempts to create a branded regional identity for the Öresund region seem of crucial importance due to the fact that the cities belong to two different countries. Ristilammi finds a paradoxical formulation

of modern identity in the laying of the foundation of a specifically modern form of structured liberation. He argues that there is a need for metaphors that can challenge the monocultural vision of modernity. It is the multicultural that shows us a holographic future, and why it is so important to create symbolic spaces where the inhabitants of the region can be part of a project of mutuality.

Berlin is perhaps more symbolic than anywhere of twentieth century transitions from the wild and disreputable pre-Nazi days to the frontier of the Cold War and its subsequent denouement with the demolition of the Berlin Wall. Its emergence from this process as the capital of the new Germany is something that two essays (Färber and Gdaniec and Binder) reflect on, and in particular how it has been inflected by new concepts of ethnicity. Färber and Gdaniec do this by looking at an ethnic commodity – the shishna – and the symbolic importance that is attached to this in different parts of the city. They also draw a comparison between Berlin and Moscow and use the shopping mall to draw out some of the deeper significances of the city. Binder, on the other hand, looks at how two global issues (the war in Iraq and diplomatic festivals) have brought a sense of global cosmopolitanism to narratives of the "new Berlin".

A third essay with a German theme is Nora Räthzel's study of youth in Hamburg and the resulting ethnicised turf wars and their consequences for how the city, or at least parts of it, are experienced. Räthzel focuses on the common-sense view of youth in European cities and considers the significance of categories such as migrant and native when used in relation to each other. A comparison of two neighbourhoods leads to a revelation of striking differences.

This special issue has arisen as the result of a series of joint seminars conducted between the Department of Ethnology at the University of Uppsala in Sweden and the Department of Sociology at the University of East London, the Faculty of Social Sciences at London Metropolitan University and, more recently, the Department of Geography at King's College London. The first seminar took place in the shadow of

the millennium shift in Uppsala, the second in London in September 2001, and the third was a travelling seminar that wended its way through Sweden from Uppsala to Malmö and arrived in Copenhagen in May 2004. The geography and timing are not merely incidental, as it was this iteration between Sweden and London's East End that enabled the themes addressed in this issue to emerge. The issues addressed here are broad and cover much of the new Europe from Barcelona to Moscow. All the essays address the issue of ethnicity – something that we believe is shaping the European city more than anything else and which, in turn, is shaping the new Europe. We draw comparisons in this introduction between London and Sweden as a device for illustrating the dissonances as well as the similarities in the forces that are now shaping the understanding of contemporary European urbanization. We have deliberately eschewed the term multiculturalism in how we describe these processes, largely because we believe that it obscures the realities of the power relations involved. We suggest that the cosmopolitanism that is recorded in so many of the essays included in this collection – and which is affecting the development of so many European cities – comes from below and often finds itself in conflict with the national and middle-class cultures of established social groups. This came out quite clearly in our recent travelling seminar to Sweden in which the highly ethnicised suburbs appeared to be far more cosmopolitan than the quintessentially “local” city centres. This contradictory situation is perhaps best illustrated once again by reference to Britain and Sweden.

## Culture Analysis in Transformation

The question emerges as to what images are produced by cultural research into cities? It wasn't easy for cultural scholars to explore a city during a century of radical change and investigate its modern odours, notations, sounds and image fragments, because the fieldwork assignment was formulated in different ways both nationally and historically. European ethnology dissected into fragments,

while film and cinema audiences created an overall view. Ethnology was bound to national missions, museums and universities and created conditions for regarding folk culture in a similar way in different countries. European ethnologists tend to easily forget the spirit of the times. Perhaps it best comes to expression through literature, art and film. The spirit of the times contributed an understanding of cultural phenomena and brought them together in symbolic relationships and interactions. It also gave ethnology a place. The spirit of the times allowed the collective consciousness to function as a principle of unification.

The discussion on European ethnology and its transformation has been quite intensive during recent decades (Köstlin, Niedermüller & Nikitsch 2002). Here you also find advocates for a new cultural research that, among other things, explains what the future of city planning will look like – a question that is developed in order to avoid digging into the trivial technicalities. The trend of city planning that has come to be known as New Urbanism – that reduces the development of cities to a personal and artistic undertaking – has meant that questions concerning the city as an aesthetic object and as the trademark for the tourism and information market become ever more important: what gives the development process its drive and direction (Löfgren, Berg & Linde-Laursen 2000)? Will a European city ethnology continue to be rooted in the old society or will it dare to make prognoses, as Daniel Bell suggests, of a society that we haven't yet seen but that we can look forward to through interpreting the signs that are on offer. Will society of the future be aggressive, technocratic, masculine or culturalised to the point where technology and society can no longer exist as a uniting force field?

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