SPACES OF UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA:
LANDSCAPING THE CONTEMPORARY CITY
by
Gordon MacLeod and Kevin Ward

ABSTRACT. Some of the most recent literature within urban studies gives the distinct impression that the contemporary city now constitutes an intensely uneven patchwork of utopian and dystopian spaces that are, to all intents and purposes, physically proximate but institutionally estranged. For instance, so-called edge cities (Garreau, 1991) have been heralded as a new Eden for the information age. Meanwhile tenderly manicured urban villages, gated estates and fashionably gentrified inner-city enclaves are all being furiously marketed as idyllic landscapes to ensure a variety of lifestyle fantasies. Such lifestyles are offered additional expression beyond the home, as renaissance sites in many downtowns afford city stakeholders the pleasurable freedoms one might ordinarily associate with urban civic life. None-the-less, strict assurances are given about how these privatized domiciliary and commercialized ‘public’ spaces are suitably excluded from the real and imagined threats of another fiercely hostile, dystopian environment ‘out there’. This is captured in a number of (largely US) perspectives which warn of a ‘fortified’ or ‘revanchist’ urban landscape, characterized by mounting social and political unrest and pockmarked with marginal interstices: derelict industrial sites, concentrated hyperghettos, and peripheral shanty towns where the poor and the homeless are increasingly shunted. Our paper offers a review of some key debates in urban geography, planning and urban politics in order to examine this patchwork-quilt urbanism, In doing so, it seeks to uncover some of the key processes through which contemporary urban landscapes of utopia and dystopia come to exist in the way they do.

Utopian thinking: the capacity to imagine a future that departs significantly from what we know to be a general-condition in the present. … In the peculiar form of dystopias, utopian thinking may alert us to certain tendencies in the present, which, if allowed to continue unchecked and carried to a logical extreme, would result in a world we would find abhorrent.

(Friedmann, 2000, p. 462)

In today’s cities … Residents from all social groups have a sense of exclusion and restriction. For some, the feeling of exclusion is obvious, as they are denied access to various areas and are restricted to others. Affluent people who inhabit exclusive enclaves also feel restricted; their feelings of fear keep them away from regions and people that their mental maps of the city identify as dangerous.

(Caldeira, 1999, p. 135)

The city of physical proximity and institutional estrangement

In his rallying call to envision possibilities for a more equitable, just and ecologically sustainable urban future, David Harvey contends that most of what passes for city planning has been inspired by utopian modes of thought (Harvey, 2000). This is evident in projects ranging from Plato’s Republic to those of the twentieth century that owe much of their character to pioneering thinkers such as Ebenezer Howard and Le Corbusier. Antagonistic to the extremes of wealth and poverty punctuating the emerging metropolis, Howard (1902) envisaged an alternative good life achievable through the formation of garden cities: small-scale communities embedded in a decentralized society itself traceable to the anarchism of Kropotkin. For Howard, the Garden City offered a ‘peaceful path to real reform’, superseding the ugly vagaries of capitalism not least through the establishment of ‘pro-municipal services’ (Fishman, 2002). Utopian planning was also to find a powerful expression in the modernist paradigm, most notably through Le Corbusier’s Radiant City and the CIAM movement (Sandercock, 1998). According to Teresa Caldeira (1999, p. 127–8), the motivation behind this form of utopia was clear: ‘the erasure of social difference and creation of equality in the rational city of the future mastered by the avant-garde architect’.

Howard and Le Corbusier thus offered truly comprehensive programmes of radical reform, which, in alliance with ambitious projects of political and economic restructuring, endeavoured to promote urban settlements founded upon the prin-
ciples of social solidarity rather than segregation (Fishman, 2002). To be sure, the possibilities of incorporation inherent in such programmes were never completely fulfilled. Moreover, the ‘street-level’ modernism instituted by practitioners such as New York’s Robert Moses soon encountered criticism for imposing a ‘functional homogeneity’ which some contend helped to destroy the vitality of difference intrinsic to a healthy urbani

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Spaces of utopia I: Producing and consuming the transforming urban economy

The transformation of urban political priorities: from municipal managerialism to ‘developers’ utopias

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the eventual erosion of the Fordist ‘boom’ was to leave a particularly devastating impact on the urban landscapes of North America and Western Europe (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Rampant deindustrialization allied to a steady drift of high-income taxpayers to suburban ‘bourgeois utopias’ (Fishman, 2002) placed enormous fiscal stress at the front door of many city halls. These conditions were exacerbated by a relative decline in national/federal support for provincial government and a festering ideological aversion to an urban ‘way of life’ on the part of electorally significant groups (Harvey, 2000), all of which was to compel virtually all city regimes to reconsider their social bases of support and their modes of regulation (Esser and Hirsch, 1989). In short, the Keynesian ‘managerialist’ commitment to provide welfare, public services and collective consumption to local citizens via a healthy local and national tax base, which had predominated for much of the postwar era, was severely compromised as urban governments were forced to engage in a demunicipalized and more ‘entrepreneurial’ approach designed primarily to revive the competitive position of their local economies (cf. Saunders, 1986; Harvey, 1989a).

In short, cities, or more accurately, city authorities, were impelled increasingly to compete with each other for a whole range of investments. As part of this so-called ‘new urban politics’ (Cox, 1993), virtually all cities and towns have witnessed their ambitious mayors and political elites engage in the sycophantic courting of private investors. This has helped to mobilize a plethora of public-private partnerships and growth coalitions, which, in turn, have poured massive amounts of public money into a range of speculative endeavours designed to improve the physical and aesthetic landscapes of their downtowns (Logan and Molotch. 1987; Zukin, 1991, 1995; Short et al. 1993; Fainstein, 1994). On a superficial level there is little to dispute the success of this strategy for urban renewal. For, thanks to the efforts of such coalitions and, in the USA the establishment of Business Improvement Districts, numerous deindustrialized eyesores and obsolete waterfronts have been scrubbed clean, purified, and dramatically reinvented in the form of what Harvey (2000) calls ‘developers’ utopias’.

Examples include mixed-use business, housing and leisure spaces such as Canary Wharf in London and Edinburgh’s Financial Exchange; ‘festival marketplaces’ such as Fanueil Hall in Boston; waterfront pleasure domes in rustbelt cities such as Baltimore, Maryland and Newcastle, UK; ‘Disneyfied’ leisure zones such as Times Square in Midtown Manhattan; and upmarket shopping districts such as Covent Garden in London and the Italian Centre in Glasgow (Crilley, 1993; Zukin, 1995; Harvey, 2000; Merrifield, 2000). Jon Goss (1996) also instructs us about how the ‘festival marketplaces’ that have mushroomed across the US urban landscape offer a ‘regionally sensitive adaptation of an “ideal market form”’, which, by mixing outdoor and indoor spaces, offers an ambience purported to encourage social interaction and the re-integration of the city and market (Goss, 1996, p. 221). For Goss, courtesy of its restored physical location, architecture, interior design, and retail concepts, the festival marketplace contrives to recover a nostalgic sense of history and of a lost civic urban ideal. By deploying this ‘mythical spirit of the marketplace’, developers – who often assume the mantle of ‘popular visionaries’ – are:

reshaping the inner city as a stage and staging urban life as a drama of conspicuous consumption. … The festival marketplace [being] a phantasmagoria of capitalist production that marks the threshold to a dream world of utopian images and imaginings of a mythical natural urbanism3.

(Goss, 1996, pp. 235, 240)

Furthermore, along the increasingly labyrinthine necklace of globalizing cities, a more generalized post-Fordist attention to urban ‘lifestyle’ has helped to precipitate a range of alluring consumption spaces – nouvelle cuisine restaurants, boutiques and art galleries – alongside instantly recognizable coffee bars (Starbucks being emblematic). For Pine and Gilmore (1999) these trends are indicative of an emerging ‘experience economy’, all of which has helped to ‘aestheticize’ the visual consumption of public space, although ironically this has been accompanied by an escalating private sector control over these very spaces (Zukin, 1995, 1998).

Moving away from downtown Mecca, the traditional out-of-town or suburban shopping mall has
itself undergone a conversion. Crawford (1992) offers an evocative account of how many mega-malls endeavour to represent 'public life in a pleasure dome'. Indeed in their most recent manifestation suburban shopping centres have become 'heterogenous consumption spaces' (Zukin, 1998, p. 830), where the incorporation of 'theme parks, rides and amusements and multi-screen or multiplex movie theatres' has led to a diversification in, and intensification of, the consumption experience. Moreover where developers introduce globally celebrated iconography - such as that associated with the Disney Corporation – the utopian moment is accomplished: for 'Disneyland is the Holy See of creative geography, the place where the ephemeral reality of the cinema is concretized into the stuff of the city' (Sorkin, 1992b, p. 349). For Boyer, however, these centres of spectacle have the powerful capacity to erase the distinctions between the carefully orchestrated spectacle and the emerging dystopian cityscape 'outside':

The awareness of highways in disrepair, charred and abandoned tenements, the scourge of drugs, the wandering homeless, deteriorating transport networks – all are erased and ignored in the idealized city tableaux set up before the spectator’s eyes and presented as an entertaining show.

(Boyer, 1992, p. 191)

Consumption and entertainment are thereby folded together. And while such themed spaces are owned and controlled by an institutional power often orchestrating a tightly regulated definition, appropriation and control of territory (Goss, 1993; Hannigan, 2002), they also offer a ‘set of living, embodied geographies which provide a new source of value through their performative push’ (Amin and Thrift, 2002, p. 125). The diffusion of these ‘cathedrals of consumption’ (Ritzer, 1999) across the metropolitan cityscape raises a whole host of questions for scholars of planning, architecture, sociology, political science and geography. Certainly, it would seem to be the case that much of their commercial success is down to the way in which the act of buying connects to the ‘pleasure of the spectacle in secured spaces, safe from violence or political agitation’ (Harvey, 1989b, p. 271). But if, as Christopherson (1994) and Bauman (2000) argue, the very ‘practice of citizenship’ is now interwoven more deeply into the habits and practices of privatized consumer behaviour enclosed within such utopian palaces5, then we have a responsibility to examine the extent to which this is leading to new sociologies and geographies of exclusion. We return to this below.

**Edge City: A 'new Eden' for economic development?**

The suburbanization of America was commonly reasoned to be a residential and retail phenomenon: a combination of low-density housing and regional shopping malls transforming what had previously been agricultural or undeveloped land (Jackson, 1985; Crawford, 1992). While not necessarily repeated to the same extent across the global north, suburban forms punctuated the metropolitan landscapes of most nations throughout the post-war period. In the USA however, this growth was to be unsettled quite dramatically during the 1980s as a new wave of property development saw massive amounts of office space camping out in the suburbs. The pre-eminent thinker on this urban/suburban/ex-urban form is Joel Garreau (1991), who, in his introductory remarks to *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* went so far as to argue that:

> We Americans are going through the most radical change in a century in how we build our world, and most of us don’t even know it. From coast to coast, every metropolis that is growing is doing so by sprouting strange new kinds of places: Edge Cities. ... Most of us now spend our entire lives in and around these Edge Cities, yet we barely recognize them for what they are. That’s because they look nothing like the old downtowns; they meet none of our preconceptions of what constitutes a city. Our new Edge Cities are tied together not by locomotives and subways, but by freeways, jetways, and jogging paths. Their characteristic monument is not a horse-mounted hero in the square, but an atrium shielding trees perpetually in leaf at the cores of our corporate headquarters, fitness centres, and shopping plazas. Our new urban centres are marked not by the penthouses of the old urban rich, or the tenements of the old urban poor, but by the celebrated single-family home with grass all around. For the rise of the Edge City reflects us moving our jobs – our means of creating wealth, the very essence of our urbanism – out to where we’ve been living and shopping for two generations. The wonder is that these
Perhaps the key axiom here is that the edge city represents a self-contained employment, shopping, and entertainment node permitting millions of contemporary Americans to live, work and consume in the same place: a concept that unequivocally differentiates it from the traditional suburb and which renders it at least functionally a city (Beauregard, 1995). Garreau (1991, pp. 6-7) establishes quite exacting criteria for the edge city: (1) at least 5 million square feet of leasable office space – the workplace of the information age; (2) 600,000 square feet or more of leasable retail space; (3) more jobs than bedrooms; (4) its identification as a ‘place’; and (5) that it was nothing like a ‘city’ as recently as thirty years ago. With around 200 in the USA – more than four times the number of comparably sized old downtowns – edge cities now contain two-thirds of America’s office space. Classic examples include sunlit regions such as Orange County, south of Los Angeles and Boston’s Route 128, though they can also be found increasingly in frostbelt metropoles such as Pittsburgh and Cleveland.

In harmony with the US Constitution and – perhaps more pertinent to its selective translation into 1980s Reaganomics – ‘individualism’ and ‘freedom’ are the shibboleths of the edge city, not least in that, free from the grime and the social and political inertias associated with past investments, they possess a ‘clean slate’ permitting households and investors to explore novel modes of living and working (Beauregard, 1995). And, drawing liberally on the frontier metaphor and a discourse of entrepreneurship, Garreau (1991, pp. 13, 8) himself describes edge cities as a release ‘from the shackles of the nineteenth-century city’ and the ‘crucible of America’s future’. He also contends that in contrast to the traditional suburb, the edge city permits the ‘empowerment of women’, particularly in relation to the balance between work and home, while their diffusion across metropolitan America also appears to be running concurrent with the rise of a black suburban middle class.

In contrast to the inner city, the homeless are ‘not found sleeping outside the centres of commerce’ (Garreau, 1991, p. 52), while the poor, unemployed and poorer sections of the racial minorities are conveniently shielded from view. Moreover, physical deterioration is rare, the tax base is growing, schools are decent and crime normally small-scale. It is with all these physical and social forces in mind that Garreau (1991, pp. 14-15) heralds edge cities as ‘the most purposeful attempt Americans have made since the days of the Founding Fathers to try to create something like a new Eden’ and that it squarely addresses ‘the search for Utopia at the Centre of the American Dream’.

And yet edge cities are not entirely devoid of problems. Traffic congestion hinders mobility, housing is expensive, low-wage workers are hard to find, and political bodies lag behind in providing public infrastructure and services (Beauregard, 1995), not least in that they rarely match political geographical boundaries and are bereft of a charismatic mayor or politically led growth machine to press their case. Garreau too acknowledges how edge cities often lack soul and a sense of community and history; their ‘livability’ being compromised by the lack of ‘high culture’, street life and social diversity one customarily associates with urban civil society (cf. Sennett, 1990). In fact ‘about the closest thing you find to a public space – where just about anybody can go – is the parking lot’ (Garreau, 1991, p. 52). Critics also claim that the few African-Americans or Latinos who reside in edge city neighbourhoods are segregated by race and income while, not surprisingly, these emergent ex-urban spaces are punctuated with gated high-security communities, shadow governments and restrictions designed to enhance property values (Beauregard, 1995). All of this quite conveniently takes us on to the subject of how certain classes are endeavouring to set up home in the emerging patchwork urban landscape.

**Spaces of utopia II: Living the urban renaissance**

As alluded to above, the suburb has long been proclaimed as the foremost expression of a ‘bourgeois utopia’ (Fishman, 2002). The late nineteenth and twentieth century was to witness a stampede of the upper and middle classes to suburbia, viewed as an ‘aesthetic marriage of town and country’ embodying a new ideal of family life that rendered the home a more sacred refuge than any public place of worship. One by-product of this was that suburbia soon became premised on certain principles of exclusion: work from residence, middle-class villas and semis from the mass dwellings of the working class, women from downtown and hence the world of power, all reflecting ‘the alienation of the middle classes from the urban-industrial world they themselves were creating’ (Fishman, 2002, p. 22). In
more recent times, though, a range of domiciliary spaces would appear to be challenging the traditional suburb as the archetypal utopia. In this section, we focus on three notable trends endeavouring for an ideal existence and which replicate the logic (if not necessarily the specific geographies) of exclusion inherent in suburbia.

Gentrification: A ‘blueprint’ for city living?

Largely abandoned to the working class amid postwar suburban expansion, relinquished to the poor and unemployed as reservations for racial and ethnic minorities, the terrain of the inner city is suddenly valuable again, perversely profitable.

(Smith, 1996, p. 6)

Since Ruth Glass’ (1964) seminal text, gentrification has long fascinated the minds of urban scholars. It refers to a process ‘by which poor and working-class neighborhoods in the inner city are refurbished by an influx of private capital and middle-class homebuyers and renters’ (Smith, 1996, p. 32). While the physical and social impacts of gentrification are most unashamedly exhibited in global cities, it has now touched most urban areas in developed countries, particularly as they have experienced a displacement of manufacturing jobs by those in producer services and the cultural industries. Alongside this empirical significance, though, Hamnett (1991) sees valid theoretical reasons to take gentrification seriously. For it challenges traditional theories of urban sociology, not least the Chicago School, which explicitly foreclosed the possibility of a ‘return to the city’. It has also become a key theoretical battleground between those underscoring shifts in the structure of social production (Smith, 1979) and those who emphasize agency, culture and the pioneering role of the ‘new middle classes’ (Ley, 1997).

None-the-less, following Zukin’s (1989) magisterial lead in unravelling the rise of gentrification in SoHo, Manhattan, which carefully considered the point at which capital and culture intersect, recent accounts acknowledge how economic and cultural factors are mutually constitutive in shaping the sociologies and geographies of gentrification (Lees, 1994; Smith, 1996; Robson and Butler, 2003). Scholars are also identifying the respective roles of gender, race and sexuality in shaping gentrification’s locally specific weaves (Jacobs, 1996; Knopp, 1998; Bondi, 1999). As part of this fruitful integration of economy and culture, concerns about architectural restoration become intertwined with those about the transformative role of inner urban residents and ‘celebrities’ vis-à-vis their cultural habits, tastes and aesthetics. Indeed, Zukin (1998) talks of a critical infrastructure of consumption, indicating how key cultural intermediaries increasingly define acceptable codes of conduct and ‘good taste’ in a variety of contexts including TV programmes on food and home improvements, Sunday supplements and various lifestyle magazines. And while such fragrant media do all they can to invite the opportunity of mass gentrification, many of those investigating the possibility of life in the revived inner city can testify to the limited availability of such opportunity. Class difference and the stench of money power permeate every pore of the new political economy.

Gentrification has also assumed a political salience. For example, in the UK, the widespread cachet now associated with ‘urban living’ aligns it very much with the politics of ‘Blairism’; particularly when one recalls how the imagery and electoral appeal of Thatcherism was so deeply implanted in the leafy English shires. More significantly it has permeated the sphere of urban policy. Lees (2000) has identified how two important reports that span the Atlantic – Towards an Urban Renaissance (DETR, 1999) commissioned by the UK government’s Urban Task Force, and The State of the Cities (HUD, 1998) by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s – have each sought to interweave urban regeneration policy with gentrification and environmental renewal. Assuming the identity of urban livability/sustainability, gentrification is prescribed as the ‘medicine’ for the ills of urban Britain and America. In effect, we are witnessing visions for a future urban utopia: a blueprint for the creation of an environmentally sustainable and culturally enriching experience in the city. Such trends prompt Sawyer (1999, p. 307) to claim that ‘the only way cities can compete with suburbia nowadays is to turn themselves into the same experience’.

All of this raises interesting questions about how, at a time when national states are further disowning themselves from the responsibility of public housing, they are looking to foster a partnership-led process of gentrification to magic an urban renaissance. Certainly if anyone today were to repeat Daniel Defoe’s journey across Britain, as they entered each city space – from Islington to Inverness – they would hit upon endless signifiers proudly
displaying the benefits associated with ‘life in the heart of the city’. A recent visit to Leeds revealed local developers to proclaim how ‘loft living has come to town’. Indeed as Neil Smith has recently contended, enveloped in the sugar-coated language of ‘regeneration’, gentrification is uncritically being recast as a positive and necessary environmental strategy:

Not only does ‘urban regeneration’ represent the next wave of gentrification, planned and financed on an unprecedented scale, but the victory of this language in anesthetizing our critical understanding of gentrification in Europe represents a considerable ideological victory for neoliberal visions of the city.

(Smith, 2002, p. 446)

Celebrating a new urbanism

Now fully formalized through a Charter (Kellbaugh, 2002), the new urbanism was born in the USA amid escalating concern over the ecological impact and purportedly soulless nature of suburban sprawl and edge cities vis-à-vis traffic congestion, commuting time-geographies, the commercialization of public space and the lack of a community spirit. New urbanist architects and planners claim to counter this, reasserting a neotraditional sense of place and community through the construction of new urban villages and small towns. McCann (1995) identifies two schools of planning that have been incorporated selectively into such neotraditional developments: urban aesthetics, whose advocates view certain urban forms to facilitate social life more readily than others, and the social utopianism of the late nineteenth century whose protagonists, like Howard, endeavoured to construct utopias befitting the industrial age. Interestingly, two of new urbanism’s leading aficionados, Duany and Plater-Zyberk, are keen to portray neotraditional developments as sanctuaries from the disorderly users of the city, residents become active participants in the civilising of urban/suburban space (see Burs, et al. 2002). However, it is these institutional forms that raise alarm bells among critics. McCann (1995) informs us how new urbanists are happy to draw selectively on Howard’s utopian ideals without ever considering his fundamental belief in the social ownership of land. He makes the related claim that the rhetorical appeal to community is aimed at ‘certain sections of the middle class who seek exclusivity in their housing developments and are willing to pay for it’ (McCann, 1995, p. 226). Sociologically, then, the new urban movement appears to lack any reflexive analysis of its own assumptions about class, gender and race while it also appears to run counter to much contemporary thought in urban planning which advocates a fostering of liberal tolerance through social mixture (Young, 1990; Sandercock, 1998). And in its practical materialization, it would seem to be premised upon the rhetoric of place-based civic pride for a select few while abandoning the rest to their ‘underclass’ fate (Harvey, 2000).

‘Voluntary ghettoization’: gated communities and privatopias

It seems indisputably the case that many efforts to contrive urban utopias are prompted by an intensifying concern on the part of individuals and families to insulate themselves from the threats to physical, financial and emotional security often associated with contemporary city life. While this de-
fence of lifestyle and privilege is evident in the gentrifying inner city and in urban villages, it is most palpable in the Common Interest Developments that increasingly adorn the landscapes of vast metropolitan regions such as Los Angeles, São Paulo, Johannesburg and Kuala Lumpur (Davis, 1990; Caldeira, 1999; Webster, 1999; Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002). Typically these are advertised as a ‘community’ where residents own or control certain common areas and shared facilities and amenities while simultaneously having ‘reciprocal rights and obligations’ enforced by a private governing body or ‘community organization’ (Soja, 2000).

The endeavour to fully ‘enclose’ such communities from the sullied ‘city outside’ reaches its zenith in the so-called Gated Community. Two of its leading academic authorities identify three variants: (1) Lifestyle Communities, often geared towards retirees or enthusiasts of specific leisure pursuits such as golf; (2) Prestige Communities, which are largely for the rich and famous; and (3) Security Zone Communities, less exclusively the preserve of the wealthy, and variously located in the outer and inner city and built primarily out of a fear of crime and ‘outsiders’ (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). Invariably such ‘communities’ – but particularly those in wealthier neighbourhoods – are gated in a double sense: physically in the form of high walls, fences, moats, guarded gates and security cameras, and on occasion via the boast of an ‘armed response’ (Davis, 1990); and institutionally through tight regulatory practices, where residents’ associations often dictate the age range of residents, hours and frequency of visitors, house decor, size of pets and number of children (Judd, 1995). Davis’ highly evocative account of Los Angeles informs us how:

traditional luxury enclaves such as Beverly Hills and San Marino are increasingly restricting public access to their public facilities, using baroque layers of regulations to build invisible walls. ... Residential areas with enough clout are thus able to privatize local public space, partitioning themselves off from the rest of the metropolis, even imposing a variant of neighborhood ‘passport control’ on outsiders.

(Davis, 1990, pp. 244–6)

Within such ‘privatopias’ (MacKenzie, 1994; Dear, 2000) security has become a ‘positional good’ often relating to the protection of equity, not least in that ‘gatedness’ can dramatically elevate the exchange value of homes (Davis, 1990). The very aesthetics of security have also assumed an immense significance: gated estates offering not only new technologies of security but also of image, with Tudor, Mediterranean, Medieval and Modern styles frequently coexisting ‘in a mishmash of colliding architectural genres, such that style becomes the vehicle for denying the violent context of the city (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002, p. 201). Relatedly, the advertisements for such gated enclaves are unequivocal in presenting isolation – or what McLaughlin and Muncie (1999, p. 117) term ‘voluntary ghettoization and self-segregation’ – as offering a utopian world of absolution and security, clearly distinguishable from the hostility of city life beyond the perimeter fence (Caldeira, 1999).

Some gated developments in the USA have actually attained the status of independent townships. California’s 471 municipalities include three gated cities, and others enjoy the right to levy for civic services, including policing and communal services such as schools (Platt, 2001). And although it may have properly kick-started and really taken off in the USA, gatedness is also to be found in liberal cities such as Vancouver, certain mainland European metropoles and picturesque traditional cities such as Lancaster, England (Webster et al. 2002). Indeed in Britain, developers are unable to keep up with demand for both suburban and city centre gated estates (Platt, 2001; Webster, 2001). This rush towards a security-obsessed fortress mentality is no doubt being precipitated by the fact that such ‘communities’ become a powerful symbol for being protected and buttressed within an idyllic, high-quality environment while ‘being outside’ evokes a dystopian world characterized by exposure, isolation and vulnerability (Judd, 1995).

Spaces of dystopia: from malign neglect to a revanchist urbanism?

In the punitive city, the post modern city, the revanchist city, diversity is no longer maintained by protecting and struggling to expand the rights of the most disadvantaged, but by pushing the disadvantaged out, making it clear that, as broken windows rather than people, they simply have no right to the city.

(Mitchell, 2001, p. 71)

As suggested in the quotation above and in the concluding sentence to the previous section, one notable thread running through the recent critical urban
By: Mike Davis

Title: Los Angeles’ fortified urbanism

Date: 1992

Abstract:

Mike Davis’ writings (1990, 1992, 1998) offer a bracing image of Los Angeles as an archetypal postmodern dystopia (cf. Dear, 2002). He has little doubt that the rush by the city’s bourgeoisie to insulate itself behind gated communities and enclosed office, shopping and leisure quarters represents a spatial logic of the growing social polarization that prevailed throughout the 1980s. And in his essay, ‘Fortress LA’ (1992), Davis dramatically illuminates a contrast between spaces such as the luxurious California Plaza frequented by office workers and affluent tourists and Fifth Street only a few blocks away, where, through a self-professed ‘containment’ strategy, the city authorities are engaged in a merciless struggle to make public spaces as ‘unlivable’ as possible for the homeless and the poor. The outcome of this is that the neighbourhood around Fifth Street is being systematically transformed into an outdoor poorhouse.

Indeed, beyond LA’s affluent fortified enclaves, the tendency has been to integrate urban design, architecture and the police apparatus into a ‘single comprehensive security effort’ (Davis, 1992). Primary features include ‘bumproof’ bus benches designed to deny the homeless the tactic of sleeping, overhead sprinkler systems in public parks programmed to drench unsuspecting sleepers during the night, and the closure of many outdoor public toilets. According to Davis, this is a deliberate strategy to make public spaces as unsafe as possible for the homeless and their supporters to create safe encampments, leading to a situation where homeless people flee the streets and find refuge in the city’s institutions and infrastructures. The result is a dystopian cityscape where public and private spaces are compartmentalized and segregated.

Davis argues that this process is not isolated to Los Angeles but is a trend that is evident in cities around the world. He cites examples from cities in Europe and the United States to illustrate how the privatization of public spaces and the criminalization of poverty are part of a broader trend towards a postmodern dystopia. The result is a society where social and spatial inequalities are perpetuated and exacerbated.

Conclusion:

Davis concludes that the process of privatization and the criminalization of poverty is a result of the neoliberal agenda, which prioritizes private property and economic interests over the needs of the homeless and the poor. He argues that this is a moral and social injustice that must be challenged. The solution is not to accept the现状, but to actively resist and challenge the forces that are driving this trend. The future of our cities and our society depends on our ability to do so.
aged the desirability and necessity of social solidarity in enacting the spatiality of the city? As we know, one theme that appears consistently in contemporary urbanism relates to ‘security’ – whether emotional, physical or economic – and how, in negotiating the contemporary city, there is a fundamental imperative to establish and preserve it. The work of Steven Flusty (1998, 2001) is most instructive in explaining both the rationale and the practice of this security-obsessed urban vernacular. Flusty (2001, p. 659) introduces the concept of ‘interdictory space’, which is designed to ‘systematically exclude those adjudged to be unsuitable and even threatening ... [or] people whose class and cultural positions diverge from the developers and their target markets’.

Interdictory space is thereby selectively exclusionary space and is exemplified in the architectural and institutional organization of gated communities, corporate plazas and many downtown shopping malls. Malls are often physically enclosed, turning their backs on the streets outside, although ironically many are also being authorized to re-create ‘the street’ and some organic civic milieux (Goss, 1993). None-the-less, their ‘publicness’ is always shaped by intensifying pressures to maximize the profitability of retail space, often leading to a penal exclusion of street people, political campaigners, independent artists and buskers, all of whom may be deemed to compromise the strict ethics of ‘consumerist citizenship’.11 In terms of the phenomenology of practice, then, while perhaps offering a design-specific haven for some, the interdictory shopping mall is very likely to be a truly dystopian place for others who are physically or institutionally excluded or indeed those who feel marginalized from the brisk rhythms of consumerism.12

Now well established as a vital strategy to maintain the value of erstwhile derelict zones that have been ‘purified’ (Doron, 2000), Flusty argues that the discourse and practice of interdiction has been recently modified. The early 1990s saw interdictory spaces to be simultaneously a regrettable necessity for countering crime and a potential threat to civil liberties (Fyfe and Bannister, 1998; Soja, 2000). Now, however, they have assumed a ‘banality’, tacitly regarded as a mainstay of the urban environment and ‘quaintified’ as a positive cultural presence, perhaps even a source of fun (at least for those who correspond to the segments of the population being profitably catered for). For Flusty:

Inflated fears of the public sphere, even the most local, impel the naturalization of interdictory space and the complementary quaintification of its material. In the process, spatial interdiction comes to entail more than just the exclusion of multiple populations and a wide range of associated social practices. The naturalization and quaintification of interdiction entails taking such exclusions for granted. And as a further result, questions of interdictory space’s sociospatial injustices and resultant social dysfunctions are pushed ever further into the realm of the inconceivable.

(Flusty, 2001, p. 661)

As the following sub-section demonstrates, urban and suburban interdictory spaces are being supplemented increasingly with authoritarian legal measures and policing tactics designed to regulate the very spatial practices of the displaced urban poor.

Re-regulating the poor: towards a revanchist city

Neil Smith’s excavation of New York’s changing political economy has led him to define it as a revanchist city13. Smith’s (1996) arguments originate from his rousing account of the bourgeois crusade to stretch the gentrification frontier of Manhattan’s Lower East Side and the repressive state tactics deployed to ‘win back’ Tompkins Square Park: a public space reasoned to have been stolen from gentrifiers and ‘the public’ by the homeless and other victims of real estate displacement. Smith sees this event as signifying the onset of a stern anti-homeless and anti-squatter movement that expressed the ethos of a revanchist city. Attacks on New York’s homeless people rapidly gathered momentum just as shanty towns grew up in railway stations. And most shockingly, in the early 1990s the ‘Mole People’ were discovered: whole communities of homeless previously ‘unknown’, including several encampments under bridges and in underground transportation and utility tunnels.

The presence of these ‘dystopian’ spaces was of great concern to the incoming mayor, Rudolph Giuliani. But following his 1994 election and faced with a £3.1 billion budget deficit, Giuliani revealed his bona fide concern – the purification of the city’s image and the maintenance of its increasingly fragile bourgeois economy – when he chose to cut public services with the explicit intention of encouraging the poorest of the city’s population to move out of the city (Smith, 1996). Moreover, amid his un-
swerving preoccupation to tame ‘disorder in the public spaces of the city’, Giuliani ordered NYPD officers to pursue with Zero Tolerance those groups viewed to be a genuine threat to the ‘quality of urban life’. With gentrification continuing apace and the city bereft of a plan for relocating its evictees, ‘minorities, the unemployed and the poorest of the working class are destined for large-scale displacement. Once isolated in central city enclaves, they are increasingly herded to reservations on the urban edge’ (Smith, 1996, p. 27).

Harvey (2000) uncovers similar processes in Baltimore, where in its effort to colonize the city centre, a Downtown Private-Public Partnership has implemented proposals for a ghettoized ‘campus for the homeless’ suitably hidden from the city’s frontal regions. Mitchell (1997) too informs us how anti-homeless policies have multiplied across America’s urban landscape in an attempt to ‘cleanse’ public spaces of homeless people by banishing them to the interstitial margins. But the revanchist ethos also encompasses a whole raft of state policies that are wedded to a neoliberal anti-welfare ideology and, amid the heightened insecurities of the new economy and risk society, a purported ‘compassion fatigue’ on the part of the middle class vis-à-vis the plight of the dispossessed (Mitchell, 2001). Exploiting this, Giuliani endeavoured to cut welfare, to discontinue the construction of public housing, to augment anti-immigration legislation, and to wage an ideological and financial attack on the public university system. It is in these senses that revanchism:

blends revenge with reaction. It represents a reaction against the basic assumption of liberal urban policy, namely that government bears some responsibility for ensuring a decent minimum level of daily life for everyone. That political assumption is now largely replaced by a vendetta against the most oppressed – workers and ‘welfare mothers’, immigrants and gays, people of color and homeless people, squatters, anyone who demonstrates in public. … Blaming the victim has been raised from a common political tactic to a matter of established policy. … This visceral revanchism is no automatic response to economic ups and downs but is fostered by the same economic uncertainties, shifts, and insecurities that permitted the more structured and surgical abduction of the state from many tasks of social reproduction. Revanchism is in every respect the ugly cultural politics of neoliberal globalization. At different scales it represents a response spearheaded from the standpoint of white and middle-class interests against those people who, they feel, stole their world (and their power) from them.

(Smith, 1998, pp. 1, 10)

All in all, this punitive urban vernacular signals a notable step beyond the ‘malign neglect’ that characterized the liberal era towards an active criminalization of urban poverty and a war against welfare (cf. Wolch and Dear, 1993; Mitchell, 2001). Moreover, when blended with the rapid diffusion of ‘interdictory’ privatopias and fortified cathedrals of consumption, this assault on the poorer sections of cities would seem to herald an exclusionary14 version of citizenship and an erosion of spatial justice (Holston and Appadurai, 1999; Flusty, 2001).

**Representing, practising, and transgressing urban ‘dead zones’: unsettling utopia/dystopia**

Through numerical dominance, through street police and private guards, through the very confidence with which [Anhanganbau’s business and professional classes] walk, ‘they attempt to erase the traces of others’; but the other stories still live on, to emerge in other places, at other times.

(Massey, 1999, p. 160)

Scholars such as Davis, Flusty, Smith and Mitchell undoubtedly offer valuable and extensive insights into the changing urban topography and of the uneven impact of contemporary political economic restructuring on the cityscape. So far in this paper, however, we have indicated how their readings of socio-spatial restructuring herald a horribly regressive future where the impoverished and dispossessed are passive victims of the fortified/revanchist city. Agency would appear to be the preserve of developers, political elites, well-heeled consumers, or those retiring to the self-serving gated community. We surmise, however, that it may well be the writings of these said scholars that Amin and Thrift (2002, p. 128) are targeting in their claim that ‘[C]ertain doomsaying academics have made pessimism into a high art form’. In Amin and Thrift’s estimation, the imagery and the prose being deployed in much contemporary scholarship are each so highly evocative that they could deny us the possibility to locate ‘countervailing tendencies’ and to

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identify how some groups contrive and practice effective ‘spaces of escape’ (see also Keil, 1999; Soja, 2000).

Gil Doron (2000) raises analogous themes in contending that the discourse and practice of planning has long been preoccupied to define, name and represent certain spaces in the urban built environment as ‘wastelands’, ‘derelict areas’, ‘dead zones’, and ‘urban voids’. These are neither slums with impoverished but defined communities nor open public spaces but refer to areas such as disused harbours and train yards, closed industrial yards, or empty spaces and empty lots. From the perspective of those interest groups eager to further commodify urban land use, such spaces may represent dead zones. However, as Doron points out, they are certainly not dead from the phenomenological perspective of the urban wildlife, social groups and artistic communities who occupy such spaces. In other words, for some groups not incorporated as part of the contemporary ‘imageable city’, the urban spaces popularly represented as dystopias may actually be practised as essential havens, transgressive lived spaces of escape, refuge, employment and entertainment. Thus:

"Planners and architects … puritanically blind themselves from seeing that the prostitutes, homeless, street actors or street sellers are the ones who transform the street from traffic channels (human or vehicles) to a living-working space, to a space of performance and festivity, to a place to be in and not only to move through, and 24 hours a day." (Doron, 2000, p. 254)

Such acts of transgression – whereby the use value of public or private spaces is transformed through recurrent practice or design modifications – are classically deployed in the act of squatting (Chatterton, 2002). And Neil Smith (1992) is not entirely silent on such spaces of escape. For his analysis of the so-called Homeless Vehicle offers an intriguing example of the subversiveness of mobility deployed by homeless people to contest the efforts of New York’s growth regime to sanction their erasure from the city’s public spaces. Lees (1998) too has examined how by sleeping in certain strategically significant spaces, Vancouver’s ‘Granville Street kids’ dramatize the right of the poor not to be isolated and excluded. And while such acts of transgression and strategies of visibility do not necessarily overwhelm the economic, political and moral doctrines embodied in revanchist regimes, they do offer illustrations of the struggles and socio-spatial dialectics through which contemporary spaces of utopia and dystopia are practised and enacted.

Doron’s work also does much to demonstrate the hermeneutic and material force of language in ‘naming’ space. Moreover, it serves to highlight the problematic relationship between representation and practice at the heart of recent work in the development and deployment of non-representation theory (Thrift, 2000; Lees, 2001; Amin and Thrift, 2002). Similarly, the use of language such as ‘deprivation’ to describe the conditions of ‘peripheral’ housing estates can lead academics and governmental professionals towards a process of ‘othering’ whereby they become partially blinded to many of the lived social and economic relations that form the heartbeat of such neighbourhoods. For example, Mooney and Danson’s (1997) work reveals how in contrast to their popular depiction as isolated landscapes of despair, Glasgow’s ‘peripheral’ housing estates generate considerable community participation with large numbers of the population in regular formal employment, their contribution to Glasgow’s economy thus being far from ‘peripheral’. All of this leads us to argue for the need to examine city restructuring more earnestly at the (street) level of dynamic social relations (see also Newman, 2000).

Approaching utopia, dystopia and a patchwork urbanism

A crucial question … is how to include the ethnographic present in planning, that is, the possibilities for change encountered in existing social conditions.

"In our introduction to this paper, we suggested that the contemporary city might be assuming an increasingly fragmented geography characterized by a patchwork quilt of spaces that are physically proximate but institutionally estranged. It would certainly seem to be a near-dominant portrayal in much critical urban studies, and for the most part one with which we would concur. None-the-less the nature of this fragmenting collage and disintegrating urban ‘society’ immediately raises a fundamental question: how can we effectively describe, map and theorize the contemporary city? In a quite heroic endeavour, Ed Soja (2000) proffers the concept of the ‘postmetropolis’. Soja sees the modern
metropolis as characterized by a distinctive urban
centre surrounded by a sprawling suburban periph-
ery. In contrast, the emerging urban-regional land-
scape – pockmarked with green-field edge cities,
traditional suburbs, gated estates, revitalized down-
towns and gentrified enclaves – is thus punctuated
by a range of spatialities that are decentring the city,
forming an increasingly complex urban geometry.
Indeed such a decentred landscape contains much
that disturbs the ‘density of settlement’ we ordinar-
ily associate with cities (cf. Pile, 1999). Moreover,
and borrowing from the regulation approach, Soja
contends that this new regime of urbanization is
coupled with a new mode of social and spatial reg-
ulation enacted in part through:

the intensification of social and spatial control
brought about by new developments in the pri-
vatization, policing, surveillance, governance,
and design of the built environment and the po-
litical geography of cityspace. Responding to
what Mike Davis … has described as an en-
demic ecology of fear, the postmetropolitan
landscape has become filled with many different
kinds of protected and fortified spaces, is-
lands of enclosure and anticipated protection
against the real and imagined dangers of daily
life. Borrowing from Foucault, the postmetrop-
olis is represented as a collection of carceral cities,
an archipelago of ‘normalized enclo-
sures’ and fortified spaces that both voluntarily
and involuntarily barricade individuals and
communities in visible and not-so-visible ur-
ban islands, overseen by restructured forms of
public and private power and authority.

(Soja, 2000, p. 299; emphases in original)

At a variety of spatial scales, then, this splintering
urbanism sees an institutional reinforcement of the
boundaries between city and suburb, rich and poor,
north and south, all accompanied by new forms of
elitism and intolerance. To be sure, there is much
endeavour to construct urban and post-urban uto-
pias. But the self-enclosed and indeed self-exiling
utopias currently under construction are what Har-
voy (following the ideas of Marin (1984)) terms
‘degenerate utopias’: degenerate not least in that
they offer no critique of the existing state of affairs
on the outside (Harvey, 2000, p. 164).

And this gets us right to the nub of Utopia: for as Harvey (ibid.) asks: ‘can any utopianism of spatial
form that gets materialized be anything other than
“degenerate” in the sense that Marin has in mind?’

It is interesting and undoubtedly quite significant to
note how so many appeals for utopian urban orders
are ontologically fixed at a relatively small scale:
from Plato’s ‘democratic’ Athens of 5 000 inhabi-
ants, Howard’s garden cities housing 25 000, the
gated communities on the perimeter of US
metropoles, to the new urban villages being con-
structed in the centre of UK cities. All of this might
imply that we may wish to consign utopian think-
ing to the history books. However, in a stern de-
fence of utopian thinking, John Friedmann rebuffs
such negative assertion. According to Friedmann
(2000), if we begin with inherent limitations about
the possibilities of purposive action rather than
with images of desirable futures, then we deny our-
selves the utopian imaginations that might generate
the passion necessary for a social movement to en-
act those very imaginings. He then offers some stir-
ring imaginings for the ‘good city’ vis-à-vis theo-
retical considerations, rights, civility, social provi-
sion and good governance.

Leonie Sandercock (1998) stretches further in
her search for a postmodern utopia: a cosmopolis
where there is genuine connection with, and re-
spect and space for, the cultural ‘other’. In order to
envision this ‘construction site of the mind’, she
calls for contemporary planning theory to urgently
disavow modernism so as to confront the shifting
spatialities outlined above and to appreciate how
these are mutually constituted with a series of inter-
connecting social forces associated with globaliza-
tion, especially the rise of mass inter-urban migra-
tion of economies, ideas and people. For Sander-
cock, these complex human migrations are inter-
twined with struggles over space, particularly in
terms of who belongs where and with what citizen-
ship rights. Here she draws on Holston’s work on:

The spaces of insurgent citizenship [that] con-
stitute new metropolitan forms of the social
not yet liquidated by or absorbed into the old.
As such they embody alternative futures....
They are sites of insurgence because they in-
troduce into the city new identities and prac-
tices that disturb established histories’.

(Holston, 1999, pp. 158, 167)

According to Sandercock, planning professionals
have yet to confront these shifting socio-spatialities
and have, in effect, become preoccupied with ‘con-
trolling’ the citizenry. To this extent, the noir of
planning has become reactionary and complicit
with the dominant culture:
All too often, ‘we’ – planners responding to politicians – are engaged in an ongoing battle to keep ‘them’ ['others'] out of our communities. And we create and use planning legislation for this very purpose. … Such is our fear of the Other – a fear of those who are culturally different and of people whose symbolic and real presence speaks of economic instability – that we try to make them invisible, by removing them – legally, of course … – from our neighbourhoods, our communities, our parts of the city. And what we can’t do collectively, we try to make up for by individual security systems, patrolled neighbourhoods, gated communities.

(Sandercock, 1998, p. 21).

The content and nature of this highly stirring quote lead us to say something about dystopia. The portrayal of dystopian images, as Friedmann (2000, p. 462) indicates, alerts us to processes that, if disregarded, would lead to an urban future ‘we would find abhorrent’. However, and in a similar vein to Amin and Thrift’s swipe at ‘doomsaying’ academics, Merrifield (2000, p. 474) has intoned how so many critical urban scholars seem utterly compelled towards the very features they/hate and are battling to stamp out, such as homelessness. He cites Mike Davis’ work as an exemplar where the more Davis recounts Los Angeles’ ‘carceral city’, the more we are drawn towards its geographies and ‘mesmerized and fascinated by its dynamics, by its perversity and absurdity’ (Merrifield, 2000, p. 473). Here Merrifield is acknowledging how the repulsive and even the garish in city life may actually be quite titillating, simultaneously thrilling and appalling, while in the process we all hate ourselves for being thrilled! Interestingly, Merrifield then suggests how:

[People may] only invent utopias and not really want to live in them. [For] Living in them means the end of novelty, fantasy and curiosity; everything would become routine, never adventure, the death-knell to the human spirit.

(Merrifield, 2000, p. 479)

The courageous and varied arguments offered by Friedmann, Sandercock and Merrifield raise a host of questions about the ways in which we might seek to imagine, campaign on behalf of, plan, research, transform, live in, depart from, love and hate our contemporary cities. While further discussion on these themes stretches beyond the scope of this paper, we do wish to conclude with two issues we consider vital in defining and envisioning a progressive urban politics. The first concerns a relative ignorance of the state in much of critical urban studies. We are aware that many gated housing developments create a private world that shares little with its neighbours or the larger political system leading to a fragmentation that ‘undermines the very concept of civitas – organized community life’ (Blakely, 1997; cited in Platt, 2001, p. 22). We also know that certain neighbourhoods and economic regions discussed above are bereft of a mature democratic political milieu. As Michael Dear (2000) warns, this has permitted a form of ‘shadow government’ that can tax and legislate for issues such as policing. But it is rarely accountable through a democratic mandate and is often responsive largely to the whims of globally oriented wealth creation. Now while it may be tempting to interpret this as indicative of some ‘end of the state’, the state is far from absent in all this: its ideological arm orchestrating the legislation governing private property utopias just as its repressive arm simultaneously polices the dystopian spaces of the revanchist city. Similarly, the plethora of edge cities, interdictory leisure zones and fortified privatopias are all generating new physical and institutional scales of enclosure, new zones of governance (Baeten, this issue). None-the-less our political geographical appreciation of this emerging patchwork of the urban landscape remains feeble and demanding of urgent scholarly attention.

A second issue concerns the tendency to elide citizenship with particular territorial forms, most notably the nation-state. Caldeira (1999, p. 137; emphases added) offers some rethinking about the parameters of citizenship in cities and suggests that the ‘criterion for participation in political life could be local residence rather than national citizenship’. She then adds that this more locally forged mode of political identity could provide the opportunity for immigrant populations to become engaged more actively in progressively reshaping their everyday lives. A more radical approach would be to decouple citizenship from any one particular territoriality. It is here that Holston’s (1999) anthropological work on the widening gulf between formal and substantive citizenship proves most instructive (see also Yuval-Davis, 1999; cf. Marshall, 1950). He points to one possible way of seeing a new avenue for urban planning through ‘multiple citizenships based on the local, regional
and transnational affiliations that aggregate in contemporary urban experience‘ (Holston, 1999, p. 169). Here, there is no intention of necessarily privileging ‘the local’ in the formation of a progressive politics. Rather, it is about stepping outside of the state’s legal and political framework and daring to contemplate rights differently, in the context of the ‘social dramas of the new collective and personal spaces of the city’ (ibid, see also Amin, et al. 2000). To this end, then, while retaining some methodological and theoretical grip on the state, we must simultaneously reimagine new lines of political engagement beyond its very contours. Not to do so would be to foreclose future discussions on the definition of citizenship and deny us the opportunity to engage in a progressive remaking of the urban quilt.

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**Notes**

1. Although, ironically, most of his supporters saw it as a way in which capitalism could be preserved (Fishman, 2002).
2. A great deal of the most influential – and provocative – scholarship has emerged from cities in the USA, particularly New York and Los Angeles. And in a paper of this nature, there are obvious dangers of assuming generic change from such ‘paradigmatic’ cases (Thrift, 1997). We are thus sensitive to Amin and Thrift’s (2002, p. 5) charge that ‘evocation cannot always be a substitute for systematic analysis’. In order to illustrate the nature of contemporary utopias and dystopias we do draw on certain high-profile, symptomatic cases, but where possible we also illustrate with additional cases and, where appropriate, seek to draw out the practices and processes of socio-spatiality that help to fashion utopias/dystopias.
3. Festival marketplaces are profoundly ambivalent places, which, for Goss (1996, p. 221) in their rhetorical commitment to utopian values of urbanism open up opportunities for urban politics that critiques ignore. Thus even if contemporary working and marginal classes are conspicuously absent from the spectacle of consumption, the labour of their historical counterparts is aestheticized in preserved material culture, images of the working waterfront and employment of ‘street artists’ – the original ‘street people’.
4. In analyzing contemporary consumption spaces, there are obvious dangers of reproducing the excesses of Adorno’s critique of ideology and popular culture. However, and while not wishing to detract from their ideological influence, shopping malls don’t simply ‘bludgeon … consumers into unconsciousness’. Instead, and acknowledging here the practices and performances of agents, we need to be aware of how ‘consumers of the goods and services they are afforded by such spaces, … actively perform their presence in specific mobile milieus’ (Amin and Thrift, 2002, p. 124).
5. On this theme, Goss (1993) points to the ways in which planned retail space is increasingly colonizing other privately owned public spaces such as hotels, railway stations, airports, office buildings and hospitals, as shopping becomes the dominant expression of contemporary public life.
6. In his commentary on Garreau’s ideas, Beaugregard (1995) has also pointed out how Garreau is relatively silent about politics, except to point out that edge cities often span political jurisdictions and are thus governed by multiple bodies or exist in unincorporated areas.
7. Newspapers and ‘lifestyle’ magazines regularly glamorize the lifestyle of people living in either brownstone townhouses with their original panelling and wood-burning fireplaces, or in large factory lots (Zukin, 1998). This is classically illustrated in Jeremy Gates’ (2002a, b, c) regular features in Hello! Magazine.
8. In the early 1960s there were fewer than 1000 Common Interest Developments. But by the mid-1980s there were more than 80000, and about eight out of every ten urban projects in the USA are ‘gated’ (Blakely and Snyder, 1997).
9. Hook and Vrdoljak (2002) have recently indicated how the South African version of the gated community is referred to as the Security Park.
10. While a ‘fortified urbanism’ probably reaches its zenith in cities such as LA and Sao Paolo, recent developments in the centre of Manchester and other UK cities confirm how similar architectures run through the veins of Britain’s current ‘urban renaissance’.
11. Leasing agents even plan the mix of tenants and their locations within the mall, usually excluding repair shops, laundromats and thrift stores, each of which might ‘remind the consumer of the materiality of the commodity and attract those whose presence might challenge the normality of consumption’ (Goss, 1993).
12. Recent ‘slow food’ campaigns constitute an (albeit limited) attempt to counter the pace of existence forced upon those negotiating the consumerist city.
13. ‘Revanche’ is the French word for revenge, and Smith’s reference here is the ‘revanchist’ political movement which, throughout the last three decades of the nineteenth century, reacted violently against the relative liberalism of the Second Empire and the socialism of the Paris Commune.
14. The regularity with which we have thus far deployed the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ prompts us to pause briefly for reflection. As with all such binary oppositions and dichotomous modes of thought (Lees, 1998), there are dangers of presenting a blanket reading whereby all exclusions are bad and all inclusions are good. However, as Iverson’s (2002) study of the exclusion of men from McVers ladies’ baths in Coogee, a suburb of Sydney, indicates, inclusion and exclusion ‘need to be interrogated with respect to processes through which they are politically justified, thus enabling critical theorists to distinguish between different kinds of exclusion’.

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