INTRODUCTION

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We are in the midst of the Third Urban Revolution. The first began over 6,000 years ago and saw the first cities in Mesopotamia. These new cities were less the result of an agricultural surplus and more the reflections of concentrated social power that organized sophisticated irrigation schemes and vast building projects. The First Urban Revolution, independently experienced in Africa, Asia and the Americas, ushered wrenching social changes, new ways of doing things and new ways of experiencing, seeing and representing the world. The Second Urban Revolution began in the eighteenth century with the linkage between urbanization and industrialization that inaugurated the creation of the industrial city and unleashed unparalleled rates of urban growth. From 1800 to 2000 urban growth has been one of the most significant features of global demographic change.

Like these previous episodes of city-building, the Third Urban Revolution is a complex phenomenon that began in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It is marked by a major redistribution of economic activities following a putative global shift as manufacturing declines in importance in the West and new centres of industrial production emerge elsewhere. This is mirrored in the global growth of services – especially advanced producer services – which have become the cutting-edge of rapid urban economic development. Consequently, urban landscapes have become revalorized and devalorized at an often bewildering pace: central cities have characteristically become sites of new urban spectacle; inner cities are pockmarked by sites of gentrified renaissance as well as rampant poverty and criminality; inner suburbs show the first inklings of decline; ex-urban development continues apace as gated communities and mixed-use developments sprawl into the former countryside. Urban growth seems inexorable around the world, just as urban decline seems unavoidable throughout the globe. Moreover, the city is the setting, context and platform for new forms of identity construction, with cities long-structured around masculine production making way for spaces where new forms of identity can be forged in a kaleidoscope of (re)invented and (re)discovered identities. Cities are thus associated with diasporic and hybrid identities in which ethnicity and race categories become blurred; sexual identities whose coordinates disturb established notions of sex and gender; and urban subcultures

for whom the streets throw up a range of lifestyle possibilities oriented on urban consumption and style. Accordingly, the city remains a furnace of individual creativity and innovation, with music, art and culture, literature, fashion, media, science and technology indelibly associated with the contemporary city.

The city accordingly serves as the eye of a veritable hurricane of economic change and social dislocation. At times, it certainly feels like we are in a hurricane: witness violent riots (such as the riots in Paris's suburbs in the autumn of 2005 or the Sydney beach riots earlier that year), spectacular acts of terrorism (9/11 in New York or 7/7 in London) or the steady drumbeat of civic disobedience (such as the anti-corruption sentiment in urban China and in Budapest, Hungary). Yet, for most of us, most of the time, the city seems a quite banal space, a scene of calm activity as people get on with their everyday lives, working, playing and loving in ways that embody and articulate – as well as resist and silence – dominant narratives and broader socio-economic forces. The fact that cities are so rarely the focus for insurrection, rebellion and disobedience is quite remarkable given the sheer diversity of life which congregates within them, and it is this capacity of the city to function in the face of complexity and contradiction that is perhaps the key urban question of our (global) times.

Hence, we are in the throes of a revolution that we are only just beginning to see, name and theorize. The new lexicon which has emerged to describe cities – for example, as 'post-modern', 'global', 'intransitive', 'networked', 'hybrid' – offers some purchase on the rich complexity and deep contradictions of the Third Urban Revolution, but much remains to be said and done before we can make any sense of the new forms of urbanism which characterize the twenty-first century. Luckily, urban studies can draw upon a rich tradition of scholarship that has sought to delineate and describe the city, and there is within this literature a rich legacy of concepts and theories that provide a springboard for exploring the geographies, histories, economies and socialities of the contemporary city. This book thus offers a number of 'cuts' through the contemporary city, considering how different aspects of city life have been conceptualized, quantified and qualified by generations of scholars so as to identify specific themes and languages which appear to offer us the basis for constructing an urban theory fit for contemporary times. Each chapter thus looks back at a body of work, dissecting it to draw out a number of key ideas that hold relevance in the contemporary content. *The Sage Companion to the City* thus represents a forward-looking collection designed to put down some signposts as to where urban studies may be heading – yet in doing so also offers a critical reflection on where it has been.

Placing urban studies

Though scholars have reflected on the role of cities since the First Urban Revolution, it was not until the rapid urbanization and industrialization of the Second Urban Revolution that the city began to be taken seriously as an object of study. The dramatic growth of cities, propelled by and organized around production,

bought together individuals from disparate backgrounds in ways never experienced before. New building methods, urban technologies and innovations in transport rapidly transformed people's relationships with their surroundings – and one another – to the extent that *urbanism* began to be defined as a distinctive way of life. The sheer pace of change, and the need to develop a mental sensibility that could deal with the experience of being surrounded by strangers led some of the leading sociologists of the day (e.g. Durkheim, Simmel, Weber) to identify new phenomena that were innately urban (such as the adoption of a blasé outlook, indifference to strangers, a preoccupation with appearances and a dissolution of kinship ties). Furthermore, stark social and economic juxtapositions (e.g. over-crowded working-class terraces nestling alongside the spectacular residences of the *nouveau riche* bourgeoisie) raised new questions about the inequalities wrought by urbanization, with some notable commentators (not least Marx and Engels) rallying against the sheer inhumanity and inhospitable nature of city life.

It was from this foment that urban studies began to emerge as a distinctive disciplinary endeavour, albeit one that sat uneasily across the natural and social sciences. Individually and collectively, however, historians, sociologists, economists and political theorists began to note the new social spaces emerging in cities as traditional communities based on blood and kinship began to be replaced by more functional (and *organic*) forms of sociality. They noted the formation of ethnic enclaves, 'skid row' areas, zones in transition as well as elite residential tracts and affluent urban estates. More practically minded writers in the fields of architecture and town planning contributed to understandings of these new urban landscapes, making suggestions as to how cities could be modernized to enhance them aesthetically and socially. Such ideas clearly chimed with debates in geography, where environmental determinism was a popular perspective within a discipline largely preoccupied with regional description. Yet it was the Chicago School of Sociology (under Robert Park and Ernest Burgess) that was to give urban studies its most visible articulation, with a slew of exhaustive urban ethnographies and pioneering studies completed up to the 1940s. Mapping the extraordinary diversity of life within North American cities, the Chicago School identified the city as a unique organism whose life cycles demanded to be studied, noting the human adaptations occurring as the city itself reorganized.

One of the legacies of the Chicago School – the notion of teleological models describing the distinctive social areas and sectors of the city – was subsequently to inspire geographers and sociologists to develop theories of the city predicated on notions that land values decreased with distance from the city's most accessible point (i.e. the centre). Refinements of this notion over time led to increasingly sophisticated attempts to model the city, with innovations in computation and statistics allowing the development of models offering a better approximation of the city's form and function. Geography's new attempt to rebrand itself as a spatial science in the 1950s and 1960s (with the associated borrowing of ideas from mathematics, economics and even physics) witnessed ever more elegant and predicative models of urban land-use. Moreover, at the same time that geographers were

shedding light on the internal dynamics of cities, economic geographers were developing Christaller's central place theory to speculate as to the way inter-city relations bequeathed national urban systems characterized by specific distributions of cities and people across space. Through engagements with economic theories of bid-rent and profit maximization, urban studies thus began to develop sophisticated ideas about the role of cities in organizing production and consumption across different nation-states.

The 1960s, however, also bought new urban phenomena to the fore, with the worsening 'inner-city' problem in US and European cities flagging up the stark racialization of the city. Cities also became the focus of anti-war and anti-nuclear protests, and, in the face of such social unrest, questions began to be raised about the social relevance of urban studies and the contribution of academics to alleviating urban poverty and inner-city decay. In this context, a new generation of scholars sought to develop a radical critique of capitalist urbanism, developing Marxist theories of the city that emphasized the active role of the city in producing and sustaining capitalism by assuaging class conflict and aiding capital accumulation. In turn, it was suggested that the city could become a site from where the oppressed could challenge the banality of everyday urbanism and overthrow existing orders: the idea that the city could be turned against the powerful became a strong motif. Boundaries between activist and academic thus became blurred, and some urbanists became pivotal in encouraging insurrection (the French Marxists Henri Lefebvre, Manuel Castells and Guy Debord, for example, were directly implicated in the student riots of 1968).

This attempt to situate urban studies within an explicitly politicized theoretical context thus brought urban scholars into dialogue with political scientists, and generated some powerful critiques of urban governors. The 'new' urban sociology of the period hence injected a political urgency into urban studies, and stimulated varied attempts to theorize the role of the city in mediating capital–labour conflicts at scales from the individual household to the entire urban-region. Yet at the same time, many urban researchers rejected structural or Marxist readings to focus on people's more or less rational decision-making processes, foregrounding questions of perception, choice and behaviour as they impinged on housing choice. People-centred theories of how cities are made through agency rather than structure thus posed a challenge to radical Marxist thinking, while feminist writing on the gendering of cities ultimately suggested class might be just one of many factors which determine the shape and structure of the urban landscape. Questions of identity and difference were thus a preoccupation for many, with issues of race, sexuality and culture becoming more important as a 'cultural turn' became evident across the social sciences in the 1980s and 1990s. Related to this was the notion that modern, industrial cities had been superseded by a post-industrial city, a more flexible, complex and divided city than its predecessor, with the ordered and production-based logic of the industrial era giving way to a more invidious mode of social control based on people's role as consumer-citizens. The result is a 'post-modern' city of different ethnic enclaves, consumer niches and taste communities, spun out across a decentred landscape where the boundaries between city and country are often hard to discern.

The apparent complexity of the contemporary city, and the obvious limitations of existing urban theories to explain its forms, has hence challenged any notion that urban studies has progressed towards a more complete or better understanding of how cities work. New ideas about complexity and contingency thus abound, with some post-structural theorists insisting that we remain sensitive to the particularity of each and every urban event, and avoid doing violence on cities. Though difficult to define, post-structuralism's emphasis on questions of language, representation and power points to a different way of understanding the production of space, involving the entwining of immaterial and material forces. Notably, many of the key proponents of post-structural thought – Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Irigaray, Baudrillard – sought to offer accounts open to the messiness of life. Foucault, for example, developed a critique which destabilized the authority of the scholar and posed important questions about the power of disciplinary (and disciplined) accounts of the social world. Critical of the totalizing discourse characteristic of social science, Foucault argued for the recovery of *subjugated* urban knowledges (those disqualified or dismissed by the powerful and authoritative).

In the wake of such Foucaultian critique, it has been difficult for urban researchers to argue that they have a privileged gaze, or offer urban models that hold in each and every instance. Anxieties about common academic tropes of urban representation – maps, models, statistics – have hence ushered in experiments in new forms of city writing, with 'views from above' being joined by a diverse range of embodied 'views from below' as urban scholars explore the potential of street poetry, art and performance to speak to the experiences of different urban dwellers. Moreover, the materiality of the city itself is now frequently understood to encompass representations of the city which have a force and life of their own. Metaphors of the city as text abound, with 'readings' of cities based on a range of different sources and sites (including the urban landscape itself, which has been considered ripe for iconographic and semiotic deconstruction). The whole notion of what a city is – a dense, heterogeneous collection of people – has also been revised as notions about the agency of cities are widened to encompass the role of new technologies and media (not least the Internet). For many commentators, virtual cities are now as valid an object for study as 'real cities'.

Urban studies has hence undergone a number of broad 'sea changes' in the last 150 years, with new ideas, theories and approaches emerging at specific moments, shaking scholars out of any complacency that they have answered the 'urban question'. Yet throughout, urban studies appears to have remained fixated on a number of world cities – London, Paris, New York, Berlin, Los Angeles – to the detriment of studies of smaller and more 'ordinary' cities (as well as those beyond the West). Equally, urban studies has tended to be associated with academics working within higher education, the majority of whom are white, middle-class and heterosexual, and consequently locked into specific ways of 'viewing' the world. Though becoming more open to ideas of difference over time, the result is that urban studies has often failed to capture the sheer diversity and

excessive liveliness of cities. It is this that constitutes one of the principal challenges that lies ahead as scholars seek to further their understanding of cities after the Third Urban Revolution.

Urban prospects

How are cities to develop? What are the prospects for hope or abjection in the future? Urban studies has long had one eye on the future of cities, typically outlining how conditions and processes of the present might be shaped in the future. A number of commentators in this collection offer their views, hopes and fears for the cities of the future and in doing so often suggest critiques of the present. Predicting the future is difficult and can often go spectacularly awry. Before exploring some brief thoughts on the future of the city it is worth reflecting on the purpose of looking forward in these ways.

Historically, urban studies has been shot through with concerns about the inequalities (social, economic, political or otherwise) within and between cities and the impacts of these on the lives of individuals and communities. As this introduction points out, the 'relevance' or 'applicability' of urban studies has varied through time but there has been a strong tradition of developing knowledges that can be used to make urban life better. There are many examples of scholars from this tradition becoming active in the improvement of cities, whether through activism (as protestors, advocates or squatters) or through professional practice (as planners, architects, advisers). The main reason that we, as urban scholars, might wish to look to the future of cities, then, is to hope that we might be able to make them better places. This raises crucial questions of the various channels through which this might be achieved.

Urban scholars might shape the cities of the future in at least three ways. First, education is not simply a process that students go through to make them more employable (although this is how it is increasingly seen by a number of central governments and, indeed, universities). Rather education is something that can develop citizens and encourage them to become active in the shaping of their lives and the lives of their communities (however the latter might be defined). Education raises awareness and prompts enquiry that can ripple out beyond the classroom walls long after the assignment deadline date. We live on an urban planet, and urban studies should recognize its important role in equipping students to become responsible citizens and life-long learners. Of course, students are not passive recipients of urban knowledge, and develop their own ideas about how they might live in a more sustainable and social responsible manner. Yet the role of urban scolars in opening the eyes of students – and wider soeicty – to the possibilities of the city should never be underestimated.

Second, as we have noted, urban studies has a long tradition of direct engagement, either through activism or practice. This is a tradition that has not died out. A number of scholars have left the classroom and taken to the streets either through

protest or through community activism of various kinds. Despite the many constraints, this activity endures and flourishes. There are many urban studies courses around the world, for example, that seek to take students, and academics, out of the familiar comfort zones of the classroom and the library and to place them at the heart of real cities and real urban problems. Many urban scholars are involved in grassroots activism, mobilization and protest; others have taken roles as councillors, politicians or formed pressure groups, agitating for change through more formal processes.

Finally, urban studies scholars produce knowledge that is not purely 'academic'. Rather, it is knowledge that is 'useful' and might be used by those outside the academy who are involved in developing, managing and running cities. It is here, though, that the prospects for the influence of urban studies scholars seem less encouraging. The dialogues between policy-makers, practitioners and urban studies scholars seem particularly barren at the moment, with the former not recognizing the worth of the latter's work and the latter probably being guilty of not seeking sustained and meaningful engagement with the former. Engaging with policy-makers and practitioners is a challenge that urban studies scholars should be prepared to meet to ensure the vitality of the discipline(s) into the future.

And what of cities themselves? What are their prospects? There are two ways that we might consider this. The first is to look back and ask what are the aspects of the city that have endured and what are the prospects that these might endure or change in the future? Poverty and inequality are two aspects that seem inevitable aspects of cities and city lives. It is difficult to imagine that they will vanish, or reduce significantly, in the future; indeed, most commentators suggest they seem to be getting worse. Environmental catastrophes, such as Hurricane Katrina's impact on New Orleans, brutally expose the inequalities of the city, given that it is the weakest and poorest who suffer most in times of urban crises. Yet perhaps such instances also provide an impetus for reorganizing the goods and bads of urban society between different racial, class and religious communities. No doubt patterns of inequality will shift as cities continue to change and develop. Whether they can ever be wished out of existence is another thing entirely given the capitalist city seems to thrive on inequalities.

Hence, one way of thinking about cities is to provide a dystopian reading of its inequalities and expose its pernicious social divides. Much urban writing – especially from the left – is of this ilk, and is fiercely critical of the city produced by capitalism, especially in its current neo-liberal guise. Yet there is also a tradition of urban writing that is more optimistic, and finds the seeds of change in a variety of everyday spaces and urban rituals of inhabitation. Such writing argues that the best place to think about the future of cities is not perched atop a skyscraper looking down (aping the 'plannner's eye view' of the city), but at street level, engaging with the everyday life of cities. The second way we might usefully think about city futures is therefore to look around us at emergent trends in everyday urbanism and imagine how these might be nutured and blossom into new urban formations.

Even so, such visions of the future of cities need to be tempered with the post-structuralist's wariness of over-arching grand visions or theories. Throughout this book the authors raise this concern and cite examples of the failures of past universal urban theories. Cities are hugely diverse entities, and are always more complex than the theories we develop about them.

The structure of this book

As we have outlined above, the *The Sage Companion to the City* is intended to be more than a retrospective wallow in the archives of urban studies. Looking forward, and working through some of the themes outlined above, this volume includes contributions by a selection of those working at the leading-edge of urban scholarship in the disciplines of geography, history, sociology and public policy. Eschewing a chronological or theoretically-structured approach, each chapter instead demonstrates how urban studies has engaged with a particular *theme* (or set of themes) that is at the heart of debates surrounding urbanism and urbanization. Each chapter accordingly showcases enduring concerns and more recent departures in urban studies, and includes extracts from both classic and lesser known texts to demonstrate the variety of theoretical and methodological approaches that have been adopted by scholars in urban studies. As such, each chapter provides a taster of an urban literature that is incredibly rich and varied, and the book is designed to inspire the reader to explore this varied literature.

Inevitably, there are many silences and gaps here, as urban studies is a broad cross-disciplinary endeavour that includes practitioners as well as academics, and our choice of contributors and chapters reflects our own preoccupations as Anglo-American geographers. However, the chapters are arranged into a number of sections, each of which covers particular themes current in urban studies and highlights the range of ways in which leading figures have responded to the challenge of studying these particular facets of urbanization. While there is some overlap and spillage between sections, each hopefully offers coherent reflections on a set of debates within urban studies. The first, *Histories and Ideologies,* explores some of the vexing issues surrounding the changing role of cities over time, not least their role as centres of religious, productive, scientific and cultural life. Questions of historicity are also addressed here through reflections on the role of memory in cities, and a particular focus on the city as a palimpsest on which successive generations have imposed their identities and ideologies.

In Section Two, *Economies and Inequalities*, we consider the work cities perform as well as the work that is carried out in cities. As generations of urban scholars have noted, cities often appear to be organized according to the imperatives of production and consumption, bequeathing spaces of investment and disinvestment which condemn some to a life of poverty or disadvantage. The contrast between the street spaces of informal labour and the corporate citadels of international finance is one clear manifestation of this, but so too is the segregation of consumer

spaces catering for different 'taste communities'. Questions of class and capital remain crucial, of course, but a consideration of how Marxist theories of capital accumulation are played out in globalizing and neo-liberlizing cities is a preoccupation for urban scholars – and a major theme in this section.

Section Three explores *Communities and Contestation*. The dissolution of kinship ties and the erosion of community was a much-noted phenomenon in early urban sociology, with the rise of the individual seen as a integral part of urbanization. Yet converse theories of residential clustering, association and cooperation have been posited, with scholars noting the positive role that neighbourhood formation has in promoting the political claims of marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities or gay and lesbian communities. On the other hand, agglomeration and residential clustering can create cities of segregation typified by mistrust, resentment and fear. Finding oneself in urban space is hence a process fraught with contradiction. In the section, therefore, a prime concern is with how the everyday task of getting by and getting along can reinforce dominant senses of who the city belongs to, where and how. On the other hand, it is by considering such questions of inhabitation that we begin to sense how the city is pregnant with possibility, a melting pot of different subjectivities and identities.

Our final section provides something of a summation. *Order and Disorder* is a section that captures the ambivalence of urban space and the maelstrom of change that typifies post-millennial cities. Attempts to impose an order on this obvious complexity are associated with the state and the law, and often tied into notions of criminality and immorality (that which is considered unfitting or 'out of place'). Yet ordering is not always oppressive, and often intervention is underpinned by a utopian vision or dream of what the city might be. Thinking through the play of forces that ultimately produces the 'urban order' allows us to reflect on both the city that has been and the city that might be. As our final contribution in this section stresses, we need to recognize that the city evokes nightmares of loss and disappearance deep-rooted in our collective psyche. Urban studies is perhaps also haunted by the legacies of previous times: in this section contributions unpick some of these legacies to pose some provocative questions about the types of city we want – as well as the types of urban scholar we wish to be.

Taken together, we hope the contributions to this volume provide a useful roadmap for those embarking on their first foray into urban studies. We also hope more veteran urbanists will take sustenance from what we have to offer. Of course, some will go away disappointed, and note the absence of commentary on Third World cities, or those in the post-socialist world. Others will lament the lack of space devoted to issues of urban design, planning and architecture, which also contribute to the rich tapestry of urban theory. Notwithstanding such predictable critiques, we offer this volume as a resource that will hopefully stimulate and provoke readers to develop their own take on the nature of cities.