

## **Chapter 11 – City Spaces: Urban Structure**

### **Urban Structure and Land Use**

- Traditionally, the very centre of the city has been the principal hub of shops and offices, together with some of the major institutional land uses
- **Central Business District** – The central nucleus of commercial land uses in a city
- Always contains the densest concentration of shops, offices, and warehouses
- CBD typically is surrounded by a zone of mixed land uses: warehouses, small factories and workshops, specialized stores, apartment buildings and older residential neighbourhoods
- **Zone in transition** – area of mixed commercial and residential land uses surrounding the CBD
- As cities have grown larger and become more complex, this simple stereotype has had to accommodate additional elements
- Secondary business districts and commercial strips have emerged in the suburbs to cater to neighbourhood shopping and service needs
- Industrial districts have developed around large factories and airports, and in larger metropolitan areas, edge cities have emerged as new suburban hubs of shops and offices that overshadow the CBD
- **Edge cities** – nodal concentrations of shopping and office space that are situated on the outer fringes of metropolitan areas, typically near major highway intersections
- **Gentrification** – the movement into older, centrally located working-class neighbourhoods by higher-income households seeking the character and convenience of less-expensive and well-located residences
- While gentrification can displace original occupants, it can also result in the physical renovation and upgrading of housing

### **Territoriality, Congregation and Segregation**

- **Congregation** – the territorial and residential clustering of specific groups or subgroups of people
- It is a place making activity and an important basis for urban structure and land use
- Particularly important in situations in which there are one or more distinctive minority groups
- **Minority groups** – Population subgroups that are seen- or that see themselves – as somehow different from the general population
- Several specific advantages of congregation exist for minority groups
  - Congregation provides a means of cultural preservation. Allows religious and cultural practices to be maintained and strengthens group identity through daily involvement in particular routines and ways of life
  - Congregation helps minimize conflict and provides defence against “outsiders”
  - Congregation provides a place where mutual support can be established through minority institutions, businesses, social networks and welfare organizations
  - Helps establish a power base in relation to the host society. This power base can be democratic, organized through local elections, or it can take the form of a territorial heartland for insurrectionary groups.
- Not always voluntary; host populations are also impelled by territoriality, and they may respond to social and cultural differences by discrimination against minority groups

- Discrimination can also have a strong territorial basis, the objective being to restrict the territory of minority groups and to resist their assimilation into the host society
- Resistance can take a variety of forms
  - Social hostility and the voicing of “keep out” attitudes are probably the most widespread
  - Exclusion and prejudice in local labour markets
  - Manipulation of private land and housing markets
  - Steering of capital investment away from minority areas
  - Institutionalization of discrimination through the practices and spatial policies of public agencies
- **Segregation** – The spatial separation of specific population subgroups within a wider population
- Varies a great deal, both in intensity and in form, depending on the relative degree and combination of congregation and discrimination
- Geographers have identified three principal situations based on indexes of segregation:
  - Enclaves – Tendencies toward congregation and discrimination are long-standing but dominated by internal cohesion and identity
  - Ghettos – Long-standing but also the product of discrimination than of congregation
  - Colonies – May result from congregation, discrimination, or both but in relatively weak and short-lasting ways

### Competing for Space in North American Cities

- Individual households and population groups compete for the most socially desirable residences and neighbourhoods
- All land users compete for the most convenient and accessible locations within the city
- Geographers draw on several different perspectives in looking at these aspects of competition among urban land users
  - An economic perspective based on the concept of accessibility
  - An economic perspective that emphasizes the functional links between types of land uses
  - A sociocultural perspective that examines the congregation and segregation of groups of people
  - A historical perspective that emphasizes the influence of transport corridors
- All based on the geographical study of locational analysis
- In economies of societies where people compete in some way for resources (tangible or intangible), then the use of space becomes allocated according to some principle that flows from that type of economy or society
- **Accessibility and Land Use**
  - Utility of a specific place or location refers to its usefulness to particular persons or groups
  - Price they are prepared to pay for different locations will be a reflection of this utility
  - Utility will be a function of accessibility
  - **Isotropic Surface** – A hypothetical, uniform plane – flat and with no variations in its physical attributes
  - At most times, we assume that wealthier households trade off the convenience of

accessibility for the greater utility of larger amounts of (relatively cheap) suburban space

- The urban land-use model is often referred to as a trade-off model

- **Functional Clustering: Multiple Nuclei**

- The multiple-nuclei model of urban land use is based on the observation that some activities attract one another, while others repel one another
- Without denying the concentric patterns that result from principles of distance, accessibility and utility, geographers recognize that certain categories of land use are drawn together into functional clusters, or nuclei, while others tend to repel one another
- Economic relationships draw manufacturing, transportation and warehousing together
- Activities need to be in proximity to one another so that each can function as effectively and efficiently as possible
- Functional relationships exist between these land uses and blue-collar housing, which tends to result in their mutual attraction
- Urban land is usually spatially segregated, with nodes of nuclei of different groupings of land users
- All the different types of businesses usually repel each other due to their purposes of land, separating each sector for each different type of business

- **Social and Ethnic Clustering: Social Ecology**

- Based on an ecological perspective developed by Chicago School sociologists Park and Burgess to explain references to cities in the US whose rapid growth has been fuelled by streams of migrants and immigrants with very different backgrounds
- Based on the idea of city neighbourhoods being structured by the “invasion” of successive waves of migrants and immigrants
- For example, when immigrants first arrive, they usually have little money with them, and hence they cluster around areas of cheap accommodation
- By congregating together in these areas, immigrants accomplished several things
  - Able to establish a sense of security
  - Continue speaking their native language
  - To have familiar churches or synagogues, restaurants, bakeries, butcher shops, taverns
  - Support their own community newspapers and clubs
- Ethnic communities lasted one to three generations, after which they started to break up
- Increasing numbers of them were able to establish themselves in better jobs and move out into newer, better housing.
- As the first wave of immigrants moved out, their place in the transitional zone was taken by a new wave of migrants and immigrants
- The city became structured into a series of concentric zones of neighbourhoods of varying ethnicity and status
- Same situation can occur in other cities, where rapid growth is fuelled by streams of migrants and immigrants from very different backgrounds
- **Invasion and succession** – A process of neighbourhood change whereby one social or ethnic group succeeds another
- Displaced group, invades other areas, creating over time a rippling process of change

throughout the city

- Within each concentric zone, there exists a mosaic of distinctive neighbourhoods throughout the city

- **Corridors and Sectors**

- This is referred to as an historical model
  - Known as the Hoyt “sector” model
- In cities where growth has been less dominated by successive waves of different immigrant ethnic groups, neighbourhood pattern are often structured around the development of two different types of district
  - Industrial districts
  - High class residential districts
- Both tend to grow outward from the centre of the city, but for different reasons and in different directions
- Industry tends to follow transportation corridors along low-lying, flat land where space exists for large factories, warehouses and railway marshalling yards
- High-status residential districts, conversely, tend to grow outward from a different side of town, often following a ridge of high ground
- Outward growth creates another sectoral component of urban structure
- Social status of the sector attracts middle-class housing which creates additional sectors of growth, thus completing the city's overall structure

### Canadian Cities

- **Difference**

- When compared to the average American city, Canadian cities
  - are more compact in size
  - have a higher density in population
  - have far fewer inner city zones of poverty and contain far lower levels of poverty overall
  - have greater levels of public transit provision and use
  - have greater levels of public investment in infrastructure and facilities
  - have more dispersed immigrant populations
  - have more powerful and less-fragmented municipal governments
  - represent an even larger share of the country's population than that found in the US
- History and politics contribute significantly to the contrasts between Canada's and the United States' urban centres
- Canadian city developed as part of an economy that was dependent and export-driven
- American urban system grew from a locally run economy, producing food and manufactured goods for its own needs
- Canada required only a handful of administrative and port centres, which continue to predominate in our country and its urban systems
- Political differences contribute most significantly to the differences between urban settlements in the two countries
- The government and public sector have always been deeply involved in urban affairs

- The US favours fragmented and less powerful municipal administrations because Americans place a high value on individual rights, freedoms and local autonomy
- Canada's more expansive social welfare net has meant that far fewer people experience poverty and homelessness than in the US
- This is reflected in the relative lack of inner-city "urban blight" areas in the country which is very common in American cities and one that had fuelled an exodus to the suburbs
- Relative lack of large areas of poor or dilapidated inner-city housing in Canada has also reduced the opportunities for the large-scale urban redevelopment or "gentrification of such areas
- Existence of fewer and less-fragmented municipalities in this country makes local government a much more effective agent in the battle against pockets of deprivation
- Canada's universal health care system and provincial and territorial commitments to education also result in more equitable distributions of institutions and schools throughout our cities
- Provision of government-subsized public transit systems has encouraged large numbers of people to live close within the confines of the Canadian city
- Canadian cities are generally more dense and compact than their American counterparts, where controls are seen as restrictions on individual property rights and public spending as inhibiting free competition
- The increasing cutbacks in government spending that occurred in Canada in the 1980s and 1990s and the growing implications of the NAFTA have begun to remove the causes of the differences between Canadian and US cities
- The growth of food banks and an increasing incidence of poverty across Canadian cities may indicate that in the future, our cities may more closely resemble those of the current US
- Portland, OR have implemented a strategy to combat homelessness that has been able to place 1200 people into permanent housing and reduced homelessness statistics by 39 percent
- **Change**
  - Forces of the baby boom and post-WWII economic boom spurred the development of the Canadian suburbs to their present position as the place where the majority of Canadians live
  - Growth in both the number and size of households, the ability of Canadian to purchase new homes, and the desire for a lifestyle that was both modern and healthy, created an urban form that has scarcely abated since the 1950s
  - Greater availability of space and the relative cheapness of land at the city's periphery have maintained this form's attraction for young families, and suburbia has increased its own attractions for many Canadians
  - Critics have observed that increasing suburban sprawl has created its own environmental and social problems
  - Loss of surrounding agricultural land and the high amounts of energy consumption necessitated by long commutes to areas of low population density meant that the environmental impact of the suburbs is large

- The physical separation of work and home was based on a 1950's set of social relations that saw "work" as a man's space – a public domain – and "home" as a woman's place
- Massive loss of manufacturing jobs that occurred as part of the economic restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s might have led to an abandonment of the inner city, had it not been for the almost simultaneous development there of quaternary industry
- Research by Prof. David Ley of the University of British Columbia looked at major Canadian cities and their loss of jobs between 1971-1991
- In those 20 years, there was a net loss of almost 230000 nonquaternary jobs in the inner-city areas of the six states
- Process has been aided by a number of factors, such as city authorities encouraging the conversion of rental properties and vacant lots to condominiums, the attractiveness of smaller accommodations for households made up of single people and the trendiness of inner-city living resulting from postmodernism's emphasis on heritage
- Average household levels in Canadian inner-city areas have seen very little decline when compared to equivalent US statistics
- Displaced poorer families is not as evident
- Broad description cannot hope to capture all of the differences and complexities of Canadian urban life
- Each city is a unique place with its own character

### **Sense in the City: An Alternate Approach to Urbanism**

- Sight – Planners, architects and urban theorists in general consider sight to be the most important sense that people use in experiencing the city
  - Look of the city, design of its buildings, and its overall aesthetics are usually evaluated solely in visual terms
  - Darkness forces us to experience the city in wholly new ways and to open up unused parts of our perception to the full range of urban experience as noted below
  - City lighting is often promoted on the grounds of public safety, but the excessive levels of "light pollution" now found in many Canadian cities could be interpreted as an attempt to turn night into day because that is the urban environment in which we are conditioned to feel most comfortable
- Smell – Types of smell, and strong smells in general are often associated with a rural and not an urban world, yet it is quite apparent that in both the cities of the preindustrial core and in today's developing world that a whole realm of odours and perfumes are to be encountered
- Sound – The noise of many modern Western urban environments has conditioned us to accept a cacophony of sound as typical of our everyday life in the city
  - If it is too quiet, the concern is that nothing is happening and personal entertainment devices step in to amplify the individual's auditory stimulation
- Touch – The "tactile" environment is engaged when we experience the various textures of the surfaces of the city, which can range from the steel frames of office door handles to the softer surfaces of lawns in urban parks
- Temperature – This deals with our perception of temperature in the city, and illustrated this with the effects of heat in the summer and snow in the winter

- We have become socialized not to sweat in the urban office, or to notice that it is summer outside

### **Comparative Urban Structure**

- Fundamental forces – economic competition for space and accessibility, social and ethnic discrimination and congregation, functional agglomeration and residential search behaviour – can be traced in many of the world's cities
- This is particular to affluent core regions where economic, social and cultural forces are broadly similar
- Urban structure varies considerably because of the influence of history, culture and the different roles that cities have played within the world-system
- Cities create their own culture or “place”
- **European Cities**
  - Typically the product of several major epochs of urban development
  - The Eastern European city was grafted onto cities that had already developed mature patterns of land use and social differentiation
  - State control of land and housing meant that huge public housing estates and industrial zones were created in outlying districts
  - Public ownership of land meant that the economics of land-use competition could be ignored and cities could therefore be planned on a more centralized basis
  - Structure of the older city was altered apart from the addition of socialist monuments and the renaming of streets
- **Colonial Cities**
  - Those that were deliberately established or developed as administrative or commercial centres by colonial or imperial powers
  - Stereotypical colonial city reflects a fundamental division among three original functional components – colonial administration and commerce, military security and indigenous commerce and residence
- **Cities of the Periphery**
  - Cities of the world-system periphery, often still referred to as Third World cities, are numerous and varied
  - The experience of unprecedented rates of growth driven by rural “push” - overpopulation and the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas – rather than the “pull” of prospective jobs in towns and cities
  - The structure of peripheral cities varies according to three factors:
    - Relative levels of economic development, and the degree to which they have become industrialized and modernized
    - Regional cultural values, as for example, in the traditional layout and design of Islamic cities
    - Whether society is organized more strongly on class or ethnic divisions
  - Three common elements of the city structure are
    - A central concentration of modern commerce, retailing and industry

- A distinctive zone or sector of elite residential neighbourhoods
- Shanty or squatter neighbourhoods that fill in every available space between and around them

## Urban Form and Design

### Symbolic Landscapes

- Individual buildings and structures are so powerfully symbolic that they come to stand for entire cities
- Generic urban landscapes of different kinds of cities that are most interesting to geographers
- Some generic urban landscapes come to symbolize entire nations or cultures
- D.W. Meinig identified three types of cityscapes
  - New England townscape symbolizes a regional architecture with a reputation “of an intimate, family-centred, God-fearing, morally conscious, industrious, thrifty, democratic” community
  - Main Street of middle America represents the frontier to the “west” and the cosmopolitan seaports of the east; between agricultural regions and industrial metropolises and between affluence and poverty
    - Represents a landscape of property-minded, law abiding citizens devoted to free enterprise and a certain kind of social morality
  - California suburbia associates single family dwellings standing on broad lots and fronted by open green lawns is widely attached to an image of a particular lifestyle for middle-class, nuclear families: individualistic, private, informal, and recreation-and consumption-oriented

### Planned Urban Design

- Many ancient Greek and Roman settlements were deliberately laid out on grid systems
- Urban Design is often influenced by religion or culture, and is usually designed to be based around a certain flow of energy
- Roots of modern Western urban planning and design can be traced to the Renaissance and Baroque periods when rich and power regimes used urban design to produce extravagant symbolizations of wealth, power and destiny
- Dramatic advances in military ordnance brought a surge of planned redevelopment that featured impressive fortifications and strongholds
- Preferred architectural style for these new designs was the **beaux arts style**
- **Beaux Arts** – A style of urban design that sought to combine the best elements of all the classic architectural styles
- Idea was that the new building would blend artfully with the older palaces, cathedrals, and civic buildings that dominated European city centres
- The US created a similar movement with the City Beautiful movement, which began in the late nineteenth century
- It was an attempt to recreate cities in ways that would reflect the higher values of society, using neo-classical architecture, grandiose street plans, parks and inspirational monuments and statues



- This was to deliberately exploit urban design as an uplifting and civilizing influence while emphasizing civic pride and power
- **Modern movement** – The idea that buildings and cities should be designed and run as machines are
- Urban design was not to reflect dominate social and cultural values but rather help create a new moral and social order
- Modernist buildings sought to dramatize technology, exploit industrial production techniques and use modern materials and unembellished, functional design
- After WWII, the concept of urban design became pervasive, part of what became known as the International Style: boxlike steel-frame buildings with concrete and glass facades
- International Style was avant-grade yet respectable and comparatively inexpensive to build
- The International Style has often been the preferred basis for large-scale urban design projects around the world
- It has been criticized for their ability to take away the natural life and vitality of cities, replacing varied and human-scale environments with monotonous and austere settings
- Historic preservation has become an important element of urban planning in every city that can afford it
- **Postmodern urban design** – A style characterized by a diversity of architectural styles and elements, often combined in the same building or project
- It makes heavy use of symbolism, colour and decoration
- It uses an emphasis on decoration and self-conscious stylishness has made it a very convenient form of packaging for the new global consumer culture