Introduction

Key Concepts in Urban Geography

Defining cities, defining the Urban

Urban geography as a sub-discipline

The concepts

1. Location and Movement
   - Centrality
   - Global cities
   - Transnational urbanism
2. Constructions
   - Nature
   - Materiality
   - Infrastructure
   - Architecture

3. Envisioning and Experience
   - Diagrams
   - Photography
   - Body
   - Virtuality
   - Surveillance

4. Social and Political Organizations
   - Segregation
   - Urban politics
   - Community

5. Sites and Practices
   - Consumption
   - Media
   - Public space
   - Commemoration

Chapter 1. Location and Movement
**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Location and Movement**

- **Centrality:** The inward focus of the city and urban region.
  - The return to the centre: revalorising the ‘zone-in-transition’
  - Is centrality still important in cities?

**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Location and Movement**

- **The Chicago School:** The city grows from the center outward.
  - Burgess, McKenzie, Park, and Wirth (1925), the Chicago School, explain their theory, as “The typical processes of the expansion of the city can best be illustrated, perhaps, by a series of concentric circles, which may be numbered to designate both the successive zones of urban extension and the types of areas differentiated in the process of expansion.” (Park and Burgess, 50, 1925)

**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Location and Movement**

- **The L.A. School:** The city grows from periphery.
  - The L.A. School’s urban theory (Scott & Soja (1996), Soja (1996) & Deer (2002)) is based on the statement “it is no longer the center that organizes the hinterland but the hinterland that determines what remains of the center.”
  - The L.A. School’s differentiation from the Chicago School, by explaining economic theory as **Keno Capitalism**, a checkerboard explanation of how investment touches down in urbanized areas—in any location and at any time.
  - The L.A. School also claim there is a shift from “a modernist to a postmodern city” and Los Angeles is the best example of the postmodern city. Soja (1989 Postmodern Geographies) states ‘What better place can there be to illustrate and synthesize the dynamics of capitalist spatialization? In so many ways, Los Angeles is the place where ‘it all comes together.’
Key Concepts in Urban Geography  
Location and Movement

- The L.A. School: The city grows from the center outward.

This assertion that it all comes together in L.A. has been criticized by other urban theorists, (Amin and Graham (1997) and Amin and Thrift (2002)). Amin and Graham explain, "If it 'all comes together in Los Angeles, the implication is that all cities are experiencing the trends identifiable in Los Angeles and that we do not really need to understand these processes." (Amin and Graham 417, 1997)

- Amin and Thrift provide a means of how we can understand the city and the lost of centrality. They explain, that "contemporary cities are certainly not systems with their own internal coherence. The city's boundaries have become far too permeable and stretched, both geographically and socially, for it to be theorized as a whole. The city has no completeness, no centre, no fixed parts. Instead, it is an amalgam of often disjointed processes and social heterogeneity, a place of near and far connections, a concatenation of rhythms; always edging in new directions." (Amin and Thrift, 8, 2002)

- Lefebvre states, "The fact that any point can become central is the meaning of urban space-time." (Lefebvre, 116, 1970) He continues, "Virtually, anything can pile up, a festival unfold, an event—terrifying or pleasant—can occur. This is why urban space is so fascinating; centrality is always possible." (Lefebvre, 130, 1970)

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Key Concepts in Urban Geography  
Location and Movement

- Centrality: An individualized centrality?
  - Brooks states "each individual has his or her own polycentric node"
  - Jackson states "The real shift, however, is the way in which our lives are now centered inside the house, rather than on the neighborhood or the community.... Residential neighborhoods have become a mass of small, private islands; with the back yard functioning as a wholesome, family-oriented, and reclusive place." (Jackson, 280, 1985)
  - Fishman states, "For most Americans, the real center of their lives is neither an urban nor rural nor even a suburban area, as these entities have traditionally been conceived.... The true center of this new city is not some downtown business district but in each residential unit. From that central starting point, the members of the household create their own city from the multitude of destinations that are within suitable driving distance." (Fishman, 185, 1987)

- Centrality: How does this related to Hartford?
  - Is Hartford a central place?
  - Do you live in Hartford?
  - Work in Hartford?
  - Shop in Hartford?
  - Socialize in Hartford?
  - Is the Hartford metropolitan region centrality focused?
  - What are the central places in your everyday life?
    - Where do you live?
    - Work?
    - Go to school?
    - Socialize?
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

Key Points

- Centrality: The inward focus of the city and urban region.
  - Central business districts have been an important part of traditional approaches to urban geography, as seen in models of urban structure and theories of location.
  - There are subtle differences within such central areas, between high-rise office clusters, ‘zones of transition’ between service and manufacturing neighborhoods, retail streets and apartment blocks.
  - The 1980s witnessed the beginnings of a rediscovery of city center living, characterized by apartment living and new social groups adding to a so-called ‘urban renaissance’. However, critics have pointed to processes of displacement and gentrification, and the power of property developers and corporate leisure groups in shaping urban politics downtown.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

- Mobility: Movement of people, information, materials, goods, and waste.
  - Cities buzz with movement: The flow of traffic, the back and forth of commuter trains, the screech of trams, the pulsing of millions of phone calls through copper and fibre optic cables, the step, step, step, of thousands upon thousands of people going about their business, the sway of bodies moving to a popular song in a late night bar or club. And this is to say nothing of the flow of food, drink, water and other provisions that provide cities with the basics of life. Nor of the counter movement of solid and liquid wastes that the modern cities produce each day. In fact, once you start thinking about cities as entities that are constantly in movement, the list of things that this movement—this mobility—includes is near unending. (Latham, 27)
  - Quantitative geography and transport geography
  - The mobility paradigm
  - Automobility and other mobilities
  - Central propositions of the mobility paradigm

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

- Mobility: Movement of people, information, materials, goods, and waste.
  - Quantitative geography and transport geography
    - “Quantitative geographers developed a range of analytical models from simple locational analysis and gravity models, to linear programming and factor and network analysis to explore these spatio-temporal dynamics. And, they demonstrated that taking into account both the fact that economic activity has a geography location, and that this activity is dependent upon the complex spatial-temporal coordination of labour, materials and energy, profoundly altered social science’s understanding of how economies function.” (Latham, 28)
  - The mobility paradigm
  - The quantitative geography and transport geography leaves out a great deal of movement that takes place within cities: circulation of water, waste; non-human habitant, wildlife, pets, livestock; non-travel movement, street cruising in cars, Sunday strolls, dog walking, jogging.
  - The mobility paradigm is about the buzz of movement in the city.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Mobility**: Movement of people, information, materials, goods, and waste.
  - **Automobility and other mobilities**
    - “One of the definitive objects of contemporary industrial society, the automobile is a mode of personal transportation, a signifier of status, an aesthetic statement, a symbol of individual freedom and the ultimate consumption good, as well as being a ubiquitous presence in contemporary cities.” (Latham, 30)
    - But the automobile is also rather more than just a technological object, or a symbol of a certain kind of society. In a very real sense, the automobile defines the patterns of social organization and interaction that characterize contemporary urban life: the automobile has become in a quite concrete sense a whole way of life.” (Latham, 31)
    - “To take the automobilization of urban life seriously, therefore, requires the recognition that the success of the automobile is based on the intricate network of relationships that the automobile draws around it.” (Latham, 32)

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Mobility**: Movement of people, information, materials, goods, and waste.
  - **Automobility and other mobilities**
    - **Infrastructure ecology of the automobile**: roads, gas stations, repair shops, dealerships, parking lots and garages, traffic controls, towing/recovery, to name a few.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Mobility**: Movement of people, information, materials, goods, and waste.
  - **Automobility and other mobilities**
    - **Socio-legal ecology of the automobile**: insurance companies, government laws, traffic police, parking wardens, etc…

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Mobility**: Movement of people, information, materials, goods, and waste.
  - **Automobility and other mobilities**
    - **Personal/emotional automobile**: Jack Katz…To disrespect someone’s road space is to disrespect in some very sense their personal space
    - Robyn Dowling has described how for many suburban women, car ownership has not only become pivotal to the way they manage the daily working and childcare routines, but the car and its interior space have come to embody the sense of care and love mothers have for their children. They come to embody a widely recognized element of ‘good mothering’.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

Mobility: Movement of people, information, materials, goods, and waste.

- Central propositions of the mobility paradigm: "The central point to the mobility paradigm is that it is both possible and productive to interpret cities as organized through multiple forms of movement, rhythms and speeds." (Latham, 33)
- "We can summarize the mobility paradigm into eight key propositions:
  1. The world is defined by motion and fluidity, not primarily by stasis.
  2. The world is made up of heterogeneous multitude of time-spaces.
  3. The social sciences need to become post-humanist—made up of non-human and human actants.
  4. Social theory/science needs to move beyond the nation state. Social theory should not be based on the assumption that the nation state is the natural home of society.
  5. To understand society, social scientists need to focus on social practice.
  6. To understand society, social scientists need to focus not just on rationality, but also on the affective dimensions of life.
  7. Society needs to be understood through and through as social-technical. The world of technology is not something outside of ‘the social’. It is implicated fundamentally in the social world’s unfolding.
  8. The principal task of social theory as a kind of metaphor making. So in pace of metaphors like structure, agency, etc., mobility research is organized around metaphors of flow, fluidity, network, scapes and complexity.

Key Points

- Mobility: Movement of people, information, materials, goods, and waste.
  - Movement is one of the defining elements of urban life.
  - Quantitative urban geography and transport geography provided one of the earliest and most intellectually adventurous approaches to studying cities and mobility.
  - Quantitative transport geography, for all its strengths, provides only a relative narrow, instrumentally oriented, account of the movement that structure city life.
  - The mobility paradigm is an interdisciplinary collective of researchers attempting to reconfigure the social sciences (including human geography) through placing movement and mobility at the center of the social science’s definition of society.
  - Automobility offers an exemplary case study of what the mobility paradigm involves. It shows that the automobile is more than just a technological object – it is in a very real sense ‘a whole way of life’.
  - Rather than being defined by specific themes or research objects, the mobility paradigm is better thought of as a connected series of presuppositions about how to approach social scientific research.

Global Cities: Globalization and control and command centers.

- “The growth of globalization as a field of research has been felt across many of the social sciences…yet the nature of this beast has been difficult to pin down, particularly when it is applied to cities.” (Latham, 35)
- “There are two schools of thought on the nature of global cities: One is based upon scale, networks, and hierarchy. The second sees globalization as a process, disputes an easy identification of cities as objects and emphasizes flows and movements between actors operating in the spatial formations that we know as cities.” (Latham, 36)
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Global Cities**: Globalization and control and command centers.
  - Cities and global economies:
    - "World cities are eliminating the power of the state, they are part of a global restructuring which is 'rescaling' power relations, in which states will change and adapt ... The 'renegotiations' going on between London's world role and the nation's economy, between New York's world role and the U.S. economy, and with all world cities and their encompassing territorial 'home' economies, are part of a broader change affecting the balance between networks and territories in the global space-economy. (Beaverstock, 2000 in Latham 2009)

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Global Cities**: Globalization and control and command centers.
  - From world city to global city
  - Cities and global economies
  - Global city discourses
  - Disease, religion, fashion, art
  - Positionality

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Global Cities**: Globalization and control and command centers.
  - Global city discourses
    - There is another way of considering this, which is to see global cities as self-generating discourses.
    - In other words, once mayors, policy consultants, firm strategists, academics, journalists and others involved in knowledge circuitry agree upon the idea of a 'global city', then the term acquires a practical significance.
    - Policymakers identify 'global competitive' sectors; land use planning decisions are driven by a 'global agenda'; the fear of foreign competitors can be raised as a means of justifying controversial policy options.
    - The Mayor of London (2000-2008) constantly emphasized the need for skyscraper office buildings because of the imagined challenge from Paris and Frankfurt.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Global Cities**: Globalization and control and command centers.
  - Disease, religion, fashion, art
    - "However, it should be noted that an over-concentration on financial services may obscure the many other relationships that bind cities, or sites within cities together.
    - SARS epidemic – The peculiar geography of SARS – with a concentration of clusters in Southeast Asia but with an outlier in Toronto – highlights the increasing trade and travel links between Chinese cities the primate Canadian metropolis.
    - It is well-established that religion is a great shaper of the world, and that the 'world religions', particularly those of Islam and Christianity, have very significant effects on social practices, cultural values and legal norms of nation-states. The Roman Catholic Church links Rome to cultures and places around the world.
    - A further example is that of fashion, and particularly that of high fashion. As with religion, certain key cities have historically dominated this movement.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

• **Global Cities:** Globalization and control and command centers.

  – Positionality
    • Finally, a powerful critique of the global cities literature has emerged from geographers charting the global South. Writers such as Robinson (2000), Gandy (2005a), and Simone (2004) have argued that urban theory-building has ignored the specific conditions of African cities, or – worse still – have even eroticized their urban experience.
    • The effects of this... is to pathologies such cities as being poor, and requiring external help, ignoring the potential to redistribute wealth (which is concentrated in certain zones within African cities) internally within cities.
    • As Shatkin (1998) has argued, seeing certain cities and nation-states as being irrelevant to global cities research due to very low levels of foreign direct investment is to ignore the increasing integration of cities such as Phnom Penh or Nairobi within the world economy.

Key Points

• **Global Cities:** Globalization and control and command centers.

  – The debate has often focused around economic globalization, potentially neglecting the importance of cities as importing and exporting artefacts in fields such as fashion, art, architecture, and religion.
  – Critics have suggested that the global city term focuses attention on key financial centers, to the neglect of underdeveloped, yet incredibly populous, urban areas around the world.
  – The terminology used in the debate if fundamental. It is not clear that ‘city’ is an appropriate term with which to frame the debate, with many theorists preferring to speak of ‘sites’ of networked activity.

• **Transnational Urbanism:** A term originally coined by the American anthropologist Michael Peter Smith (2001). It is an attempt to think through the ways in which cities are evermore defined by all sorts of connections to faraway places. More specifically, it is an attempt to think systematically about the ways such long distance — often trans-border — connections are increasingly organized through people leading lives that are lived in ‘two places at once’, lived both ‘here and there’.

  – Transnationalism and the transnational
  – Transnational cities, transnational social morphologies

• **Transnationalism and the transnational:** Scholars use the term to refer to institutions and forms of relationships that spanned national borders and in some ways transcended the nations. In the 1990s they began arguing that the concept of transnational offered a productive way both for addressing the ways in which the world was becoming increasingly globally interconnected, while at the same time acknowledging that the nation-state still remained an important part of this globalizing world.

  – Students of contemporary transnational migration argue that contemporary forms of migration are in important ways qualitatively different from earlier patterns.
    • First, the kinds of connections in the contemporary 'transnational moment' are profoundly different to those available to previous generations of migrants.
    • Second, the intensity and duration of the level of connection is much greater than previously.
    • Third, contemporary migration is taking place at a time when many migrants not only come from countries with a well developed national identity but also with a well defined desire to maintain their sense of identity.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Location and Movement

- **Transnational Urbanism**: A means of thinking through the ways in which cities are evermore defined by all sorts of connections to faraway places.
  - **Transnational cities, transnational social morphologies**: What does all this mean for how contemporary cities should be understood? According to Smith (2001) and other scholars of transnationalism the emergence of complex networks of transmigration matters for how cities should be understood for at least three reasons:
    1. It matters because cities are where the great majority of contemporary migrants live.
    2. It matters because the presence of transmigrants profoundly shapes the dynamics of much contemporary urban life. They influence labour markets, politics, the nature of a city’s international connections, to say nothing of its culture and public life.
    3. It matters because cities are the central ‘sites for concentrating the social, physical, and human capital used to forge other types of [transnational] socio-economic and political projects across borders’.

Key Points

- **Transnational Urbanism**: A means of thinking through the ways in which cities are evermore defined by all sorts of connections to faraway places.
  - Cities are defined in all sorts of ways by their connections with distant places.
  - Globalization is not just the product of large, powerful, and highly visible actors, disadvantaged and seemingly powerless individuals and groups also produce it from below.
  - Transnationalism is a concept that seeks to make globalization conceptually manageable. If focused on the concrete practices that allow social, economic, and political relationships to be stretched across national borders.
  - Trans-migrants of all social backgrounds construct intricate social, economic and political networks that knit together places over often very substantial distances.
  - These transnational social morphologies profoundly shape the dynamics of the cities that they encompass.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

- **Nature**: The Natural Environment—Landscapes: At first glans the concept of nature (and the natural seems to suggest something opposed diametrically to the urban: if the former conjures up a vision of untrammelled, primal wilderness untouched by human agency, the latter connotes all that is modern, artificial, and socio-technically constructed. As such, the urban world seem to be defined in terms of what the natural is not. But such a strict opposition is far to simplistic, not least because it is often difficult to delimit the imaginative and material boundaries between what is understood as natural and what is understood as urban.
  - Imagining nature in the city
  - Material urban natures
  - More-than-human urban geographies
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

- **Nature**: The Natural Environment—Landscapes
  - **Imagining nature in the city**
    - One way to begin working through the complex relation between ideas about nature and theories of the city is to consider how such ideas have influenced a specific set of theories about what cities are and how they work.
    - The Chicago School informed directly by ideas from biology, ecology, and from studies from evolution...the city could be understood as a kind of 'social organism', composed of 'natural areas' or 'ecological units', each of which was characterized by a distinctive and relatively stable mix of inhabitants.
    - Ideas about the nature of cities not only inform academic theories. They have also influenced attempts to plan, design, and engineer urban space. The dramatic acceleration in the rate of industrialization and urbanization during the nineteenth century precipitated pressures for the reform and redesign of urban space.

- **Municipal parks are the most visible expression of how ideas about the physical, social, and moral benefits of contact with nature were translated into the design and transformation of the city.**
  - **Central Park (1858) New York – Fredrick Law Olmsted**
    - By combining elements of the pastoral landscape and picturesque...Olmstead’s aim was to provide the inhabitants of New York with access to nature without having to leave the city.

- **The question of how to best design cities in order to best incorporate the elemental benefits of nature continued to be central to urban planning and design in the twentieth century.**
  - While very different, the respective utopian visions of architects like Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright were both concerned with engineering urban space in ways that offered new possibilities for integrating the natural and the artificial.
    - **Le Corbusier’s 1922 Ville Contemporaine**
      - “At the center were skyscraper...which, Corbusier emphasized, were intended as offices for the elite cadres: industrialists, scientists, and artists; 24 of these towers would provide for between 400,000 and 600,000 top people’s jobs at 1,200 to the acre, with 95 percent of the ground area left open. Outside this zone, the residential areas would be of two types: six-story luxury apartments for these same cadres, designed on the so-called step-back principle (in rows) with 85 percent of the ground space left open, and more modest accommodation for the workers, built around courtyards, on a uniform gridiron of streets, with 48 percent left open.” (Hall, 224, 2002)
Key Concepts in Urban Geography

Constructions

• Frank Lloyd Wright’s 1925 Broadacre City
  • "Broadacre, of course, would be a city of individuals. Its houses would be designed: ‘not only in harmony with greenery and ground but intimate with the pattern of the personal life of the individual on the ground. No two homes, no two gardens, none of the farm units on one – to two, three – to ten acres or more; no two farmsteads or factory buildings need be alike...imagine man-units so arranged that every citizen as he chooses may have all forms of production, distribution, self-improvement, enjoyment within the radius of, say ten to twenty miles of his own home. And speedily available by means of his private car or public conveyance. This integrated distribution of living related to ground composes the city that I see embracing this country.” (Hall 313-14, 1988)

Key Concepts in Urban Geography

Constructions

• Ebenezer Howard’s 1902 Garden and Social City
  • “As more and more people moved out, the garden city would reach its planned limit; then, another would be started a short distance away. Thus, over time, there would develop a vast planned agglomeration, extending almost without limit; within it, each garden city would offer a wide range of jobs and services, but each would also be connected to the others by a rapid transit system...thus giving all the economic and social opportunities of the giant city. Howard called this polycentric version Social City.” (Hall, 93-5, 2002)

Key Concepts in Urban Geography

Constructions

• Nature: The Natural Environment—Landscapes
  • Material urban natures: Urban natures are imaginative, but they are also profoundly material involving the ordering, circulation and manipulation of things like food, building materials and electricity. When considering materiality of urban natures, two traditions of thinks are particularly important:
    • The first is a Marcian-influenced critique of the economy in which cities are understood as site for the conversion of...nature untrammelled by human activity into...nature transformed worked upon, manipulated, commodified in a process that generates radically uneven and contested geographies.
    • The second and related set of intellectual resources for thinking about materiality of urban natures is concerned with amplifying its hybrid quality: that is, with the way in which the nature of urban space is a kind of co-fabrication between human and non-human agencies...cities can be understood as cyborg environments – complex assemblages of the natural, the technological and the social.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography

Constructions

• Nature: The Natural Environment—Landscapes
  • More-than-human urban geographies
    • Animals are particularly important insofar as they complicate the conceptual and material distinction between the natural and the urban.
    • Animals remain part of the diverse natures of which cities are composed. Through domestication they have become an integral part of the social, emotional and economic life: at the same time, a range of semi-wild or feral species have begun to become more visible in cities generating new kinds of urban ecological niches.
    • The presence of zoos illustrates how the natures on display in the city...
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

Key Points

• Nature: The Natural Environment–Landscapes
  – The concept of nature has multiple meanings.
  – Different ideas about nature have shaped both ideas and theories about cities
    and attempts to redesign the physical spaces of urban life.
  – Nature is no longer understood by geographers as ontologically pure: rather, it
    tends to be conceived in terms of a set of hybrid relations between physical and
    imaginative, human and non-human processes.
  – Cities are therefore no defined against nature, but are locations where hybrid
    natures are produced and transformed with particular intensity and complexity.

• Materiality: the stuff (physical things, objects, and structures) of which
  the urban environment consists.

  – Questioning materiality
  – Re-materialising urban geography?
  – Materiality in process
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

• How do we understand phenomena and processes—images, sounds and signs; various kinds of experience such as dreams, desires, and memories—as urban materiality?

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

Materiality: the stuff (physical things, objects, and structures) of which the urban environment consists.

• Materiality in process: Materiality is best thought of as a process from which identifiable discrete objects may emerge to take on a certain degree of consistency.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

• Materiality: the stuff (physical things, objects, and structures) of which the urban environment consists.
  - Materiality has often been under-conceptualized within urban geography.
  - Any definition of materiality must not reduce it to brute matter, but recognize that there are many ways in which it can be theorized.
  - Urban geographers and other are beginning to develop an understanding of materiality as a dynamic process rather than a static thing.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

• **Infrastructure**: Roads, utilities, and structures. The ability to construct and provide infrastructure—roads, IT cables, electricity, gas pipes, water, sewer, etc.—bears a close relation to the economic prosperity of a place. For geographers, one of the most interesting aspects associated with infrastructure is the distanciation it affords. The relationships often associated with technological change, from the telephone (an early facilitator of long distance friendships), to the internet (now heralded as completely deconstructing established ideas of public and private, home and the nature of community itself) are seen as drivers of socio-spatial change.

  - Cities, infrastructures and the nation-state
  - Splintering urbanism
  - Cyborg urbanism

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

• **Infrastructure**: Roads, utilities, and structures.

  - Cities, infrastructures and the nation-state: Underpinned by a popular culture of travel and mobility, highways, railways, airports and bridges have long had a powerful hold on urbanized national territorial imaginings. In addition to these innovations, which allow for the faster movement of people, there is also the infrastructure which move things—water, oil, dams, telephone, electricity, and internet.

    • These are of major concern to geographers, as infrastructure effectively shrinks distance, compressing time and space. Given recent concerns about the arrival of a new phase of globalization, it is also important to consider how by shrinking distance, nation-states can be seen as territorially more cohesive,

    • How does infrastructure create territorial cohesion for governments/countries?

    • Airports, rail networks, energy, internet?

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Constructions

• **Infrastructure**: Roads, utilities, and structures.

  - Splintering urbanism: Places are not contiguous zones on two-dimensional maps…this means that rather than understanding the composition of different places through solely looking at a map, they need to be seen as having spatio-temporal dimension. This fits in with ideas of relational geographers, who understand cities by the intensity of their interconnectivity. Cities based on four pillars:

    1. Sociotechnical processes: where everyday practices are made possible by a range of technical practices so mundane as to be taken for granted in the west. (washing, cooking, going to the toilet, putting out the rubbish, etc.)

    2. These are based upon a set of material infrastructures—sewers, pipes, cables, roads—which link people and things together.

    3. Such networks are costly to build and maintain, involve large capital investments, and represent long term accumulations of finance, technology, know-how, and geopolitical power.

    4. Networked technologies are fundamental to understanding the contemporary urban experience, its sensory conditions, its visual conditions and sense of spectacle; in short, they contribute fundamentally to urban culture.
**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Constructions**

- **Infrastructure**: Roads, utilities, and structures.
  - **Cyborg urbanism**: There remains questions of how individuals are ‘plugged’ into the webs and networks of infrastructure services. “If we understand the cyborg to be a cybernetic creation, a hybrid of machine and organism, then urban infrastructures can be conceptualized as a series of interconnecting life-support systems.” (Gandy, 2005).
  - These possibilities of enhancing human capability are taken to extreme, perhaps, in the technologically enhanced soldier of the 21st century.
  - At a simpler level, everyday life, from pace-makers through to interaction with computers can be considered as an extended human.
  - A key issue is thus the visibility of such infrastructures—many are often visually excluded from the eyes of the consumer.
  - It is important to think through the nature of infrastructure as being taken for granted, but absolutely fundamental in the constitution of modern urban life. Modifications to human capabilities offered by networked technologies, infrastructure offers a key to understanding urbanization of cities and their wider territories.

**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Constructions**

- **Infrastructure**: Roads, utilities, and structures.
  - **Cyborg urbanism**: There remains questions of how individuals are ‘plugged’ into the webs and networks of infrastructure services. “If we understand the cyborg to be a cybernetic creation, a hybrid of machine and organism, then urban infrastructures can be conceptualized as a series of interconnecting life-support systems.” (Gandy, 2005).

**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Constructions**

- **Architecture**: Buildings, structures, and design – The study of buildings and their social meanings has been a popular academic pastime and architectural history has a long history within universities and usually seeks to explain the motivations of particular architectural movements and building types. However, many of these studies are concerned with the building alone, in isolation from its location in the urban landscape.
  - Geographers consider both the building itself and but also its implication in wider social networks involved in its production and also its use.
  - **Landscapes of power**
  - **Rational geographies of architecture**
  - **Global and local architectural form: the skyscraper**
  - **Everyday landscapes**
**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Constructions**

- **Architecture**: Buildings, structures, and design.
  
  - **Landscapes of power**: In the 1980s and 1990s scholars began to consider the social and political production of urban space and to analyze the many forces that structure the built environment, from architects to financiers to politicians to property developers.
  
  - Thus, processes of urbanization that build and tear up the capitalist city are ‘a space envisioned and conceived by assorted professionals and technocrats: planners, engineers, developers, architects, urbanists, geographers and others.’

  - The solid monoliths of statues, museums, government buildings and the wide open ceremonial squares and parade grounds are animated and choreographed in particular ways.

  - So it is important to avoid assuming that such landscapes are not powerful in themselves, by mere virtue of their height or design, but rather that social actors perform that power.

- **Rational geographies of architecture**: Expressive architectural design has taken on an important commercial logic in recent years. With cities riven by deindustrialization and government unwilling or unable to raise taxes to bail them out, urban managers such as mayors, chief executives or head planners have come to treat the city as a corporation seeking to gain market ‘niche’ in competition with other entrepreneurial city rivals.

  - This has brought with it the demand for the service of architects perceived to be possessive of a strongly identifiable visual design or ‘signature’.

  - Given that images of cities are constantly be produced, distributed and consumed, in magazines and newspapers, on television programs, on postcards and souvenirs, such buildings can help to identify and ‘mentally map’ places within everyday knowledges.

  - The growing trend in understanding urbanization as a relational process requires a view of specific, material spaces as being switching points or containers of people and technologies that are inter-connected with other similar spaces many miles distant.
**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Constructions**

- **Architecture:** Buildings, structures, and design.
  - **Global and local architectural form:** The skyscraper. Skyscrapers act as central symbolic structures, as landmarks, which orient citizens. They come to symbolize the changing histories of cities, just as cathedrals and castles dominate cities of past time.
  - Within such buildings, the rather crude ‘global-local’ construct recurs frequently as practitioners and critics alike seek to interpret the uneasy interplay of standardized building production systems, centuries of indigenous design history and relatively distinct modes of living and working.
  - While the skyscraper technology is predominantly exported by western firms, the design process may be significantly influenced by context-specific factors, be they climatic, aesthetic or cultural.
  - Socially, it opens up questions about the nature of transnational flows.
  - Collectively perceived as a skyline, it defines cities in a representational frame.
  - Its sheer verticality raises questions about urban futures, but also demands an attention to the invisible cities of service areas and underground transport.

- **Everyday landscapes:** Commercial or state-sponsored monuments are visually arresting and can threaten to occlude a discussion of the private, or domestic, particularly in terms of home and housing.

**Key Points**

- A tension between materiality and representation has characterized how geographers have thought about buildings for some time, but increasingly there are moves to synthesize and reimagine the connections.
- Geographers have been interested in explaining the mobile and relational production of architecture, and the technological systems that underpin its design, construction and maintenance.
- Perspectives from landscape geography have shifted from a fixed accounting of visual artifacts to a deeper, archived-based interpretation of the social, economic and political processes that shape the built environment.
Chapter 3. Envisioning and Experience

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

• Diagrams: A pictorial and geography means of describing – Many students first encounter urban geography through particular line drawings or diagrams. Most learn about the spatial pattern of cities through Harris and Ullman’s (1945) classic article on concentric zone, sector and multi nuclei models of urban growth. Diagrams are important within urban geography, but how can we reimagine diagrams?
  – Defining diagrams
  – Diagrams and urban geography
  – Reanimating diagrams
  – Making more of diagrams

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

• Diagrams: A pictorial and geography means of describing
  – Defining diagrams: What is a diagram? At its simplest, a diagram is a schematic presentation of a certain set of processes in the world.
  – Rather than look for a simplified definition of what a diagram is we might be better served by defining it in terms of what it does and, more specifically, what it allows urban geographers to do.
    1. Diagrams offer an important technique of abstraction—providing a way of extracting from the dynamic flux of urban life a schematic presentation of certain elements of life in the form of points, lines or sections
    2. Diagrammatic representations are techniques of analytical simplifications and selectivity: they allow for certain urban processes to be isolated, even of only partially and temporarily.
    3. Diagrams allow for the possibility of generalized comparison between or within different urban spaces or urban processes.
    4. Diagrams have a projective quality: they allow for the imaginative or calculative anticipation of what might happen in the future based on identifiable tends or processes in the past.
    5. Diagrams (with maps) are very much part of the public face of...geography. They convey information in ways that go beyond some of the limitations of text.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

• Diagrams: A pictorial and geography means of describing
  – Diagrams and urban geography: Given their usefulness it is hardly surprising therefore that diagrammatic representations of cities have become central to how urban geography is understood. While the technical capacity of urban geographers to represent cities has improved, the very role that such representations play in the process of understanding cities has come under increased critical scrutiny.
  – The critique of representation has a number of elements:
    1. There has been a sustained attempt to explore the role that representations of the city have played in shaping the material production and imaginative understanding of urban space.
    2. Geographers have challenged claims that representations of urban space are ever neutral: they are instead active participants in relations of power.
    3. As part of the wider emergence of non-representational theory, key figures within the discipline have argued that much of what happens in cities does not rely upon representation at all—to claim that much of urban life does not involve representation does not mean that diagrams are unimportant: rather, it means thinking of diagrams less as static snapshots-like images that freeze process, but as presentational techniques that perform (and do) various kinds of work.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

• Reanimating diagrams:
  These ideas about the diagram have been taken up by geographers such as Amin and Thrift (2002) in an attempt to rethink the relation between power and the city. For such geographers the concept of the diagram is appealing in the sense that it does not reduce power in the terms of an ideological or material structure through which order is imposed from above: rather, diagrams are productive and therefore powerful insofar as they infiltrate and order a range of practices at the micro-scale.
  • Think of the role that engineering and architectural diagrams play in the construction of buildings and roads or, on a larger scale, the planning of urban areas. These diagrams are not simply a set of objects and agencies to go through a series of transformations such that a building or set of buildings emerges.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

• Key Points
  – As a schematic presentation of process, the diagram has and continues to be central to the production and reproduction of urban geographical knowledge.
  – While the diagram has traditionally been understood as a representational technique, more recent work within human geography has focused on diagrams as per-formative devices – devices that perform certain kinds of work.
  – In turn, drawing upon such work, it is possible to reaffirm the creative element of the diagram when thinking about urban space.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

• Photography: Visual images of cities – How do we come to know cities without having physically experienced them? Visual images of cities can travel to us through television, the cinema and photographs, which are then distributed through various forms, such as cinema multiplexes, DVDs, the internet, newspapers, magazines, postcards and websites.

• However, it is perhaps not images of cities as a whole, but parts of them – such as buildings, streets and bridges – that are most widely known and come to represent the city as whole. Can you name the following cities:
  - Opera House?
  - Eiffel Tower?
  - Big Ben?
  - Golden Gate Bridge?
  - Empire State Building?
  - Rocky’s Staircase?

• To consider the significance of photographic imagery and practice within contemporary urban life further, a useful categorization of the spatial sites of visual imagery is provided by Gillian Rose (Visual Methodologies, 2007). She differentiates between:
  - the site of production of an image (which can range from a film studio to a location set to a home computer),
  - the site of the image itself (its formal compositional properties such as color, size of its subject matter, its framing, etc.), and
  - the site where the audience sees the image (understood as an artifact which moves about in space, such as in a magazine, on a postcard or in an art gallery).

• This opens up an important way of considering the social meaning of images, made more important because of the widespread use and distribution of photographic (and cinematic) technologies, which effectively ‘globalizes vision’.

• Photography and the city: it is important to consider not only what the photograph represents two dimensionally, but also where how (and on what type of object) the image is processed and travels.
  - Tracking the object that carries the image is a good way of assessing the image’s significance.
  - Postcard are a particularly interesting example of how specific parts or essences or ‘myths’ of cities are framed and distributed to wider audiences, tending to play on the stereotype of a place, often skewing the interpretation to a particular historic, political or sociological context.
  - They are, of course, consumable images for the tourist, whose travels are supposedly reflected in these mass-produced visual souvenirs.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

- Photography: Visual images of cities.

- Screenscapes – Geographers have become interested in how to capture a sense of mobility in the urban landscape; or, on the other hand, to represent fixity within the moving image.
  - American cities in particular are commonly represented cinematically and televisually which…contributes to ‘a conceptualization of the cityscape as a screenscape.’
  - The city is often used as a plot device and a backdrop for movies. For example, establishing shots not only indicate the theme, but also work towards providing the identity of the city without dialogue.
  - Film can also stereotype and create mythical identities of cities.

- Location filming – Location is an important concept in urban geography. However, to suggest that films and television programs may be made ‘on location’ open up a number of questions concerning the reality of images.
  - For example, the filming of Entrapment adjacent to Kuala Lumpur’s iconic Petronas Towers and cutting in scenes and frames of underdevelopment filmed 100 miles away.
  - This is a standard trick in the film-making business. Other cities, such as Toronto and Sydney, have also been used as stand-ins for American cities, such as New York.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

Key Points

- **Photography:** Visual images of cities.
  - There is no set way in which to think about still and moving photography and cities. Improving camera technology, trends in popular culture and the ease of distribution of images on a global scale, makes photographic practice a central aspect of contemporary visual culture.
  - Photography as a practice can also be understood as the manipulation of images. However, while geographers have tended to deal with real and representational spaces as completely separate entities, they have become interested in their interplay.
  - Film and television not only impact cities by the way of their visual representations, but also have an economic and social impact, particularly through tourist practices.

- **Body:** The ways of moving, walking, resting, touching, gesturing, sensing, feeling, and perceiving they afford us.
  - **Conceptualizing bodies:** Key here is the relation between the body and activity of thinking. In much of western philosophy the body is defined as supplementary rather than integral to the activity of thinking. If the body can be divided like this without any effect on the mind, it must, therefore, be made of a different kind of substance.
  - **Embodying urban politics:** Traditions of think about the body have relevance beyond the realm of philosophy. They have also informed attempts to theories the political, and the kinds of space, including the city, in which politics takes place. Indeed, understanding of what constitutes a political entity are often framed in corporeal terms: the idea of the body politic exemplifies this.
  - **Embodying urban experience:** Foregrounding the body is also important because it provides a way of thinking about and thinking through the spatial aspects of urban experience. A concern with how cities affect experience emerges as a key problematic in the writing about urban modernity.
    - For instance, in the late nineteenth century, a particular kind of urban experience came to be symbolized by the *flaneur*: a figure who drifted or wandered at leisure through the crowds of the city, taking particular pleasure from experience of sensuous immersion in these crowds, while simultaneously remaining detached from the throng in a mode of speculative analysis.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

**Body:** The ways of moving, walking, resting, touching, gesturing, sensing, feeling, and perceiving they afford us -

- **Affective bodies and urban space:** Cities are obviously sites for the generation of all kinds of affective experience, differentiated by age, gender, class, ethnicity, etc. Affective experience consists in part of distributed atmospheres and intensities of feeling that circulate through and register differentially in bodies and agencies of various kinds.
  - For example, the importance of fear has become only too readily apparent in the wake of the event of September 11th 2001 and the subsequent 'war on terror', whose key sites of intervention have been cities.
  - The fact that the materiality of urban space can be reconfigured – through new security measures, spaces of detention etc. – in the face of such potential threats surely makes it all the more necessary that urban geographers continue to develop their understanding of the multiple ways in which the affectivity of cities comes to matter.

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Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

**Key Points**

- **Body:** The ways of moving, walking, resting, touching, gesturing, sensing, feeling, and perceiving they afford us.
  - Bodies are at the center of how urban spaces is experienced, yet much of western knowledge has excluded the body from the business of thinking of urban space. The influence of this can be seen in much of urban planning and governance through the effort to regulate and control bodies and forms of embodied conduct.
  - The body is a key site at which the politics of urban space is registered, reproduced, and contested.
  - Urban geographers and other have recently foregrounded affectivity as an important element in understanding the relation between bodies and cities.

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Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

**Virtuality:** The virtual city.

- The concept of the virtual is often linked closely with the digital, and the virtual city is often understood as an almost-but-not-quite-real environment facilitated by digital information technologies. Viewed this way, the virtual city is a kind of parallel urban world, a 'city of bits' rather than bricks (Mitchell, 1995), accessible through screens, navigable via keyboards and consoles, and qualitatively different from the real urban environment of houses and streets.
  - The concept of the virtual needs to be differentiated into at least three distinct but related meanings:
    - Imaginative virtualities
    - Digital virtualities
    - Temporal virtualities
  - Virtual urbanities
Virtuality: The virtual city.

Imaginative virtualities: What does it mean to claim that the virtual is an element of the imaginative dimension of urban space?

A useful point of departure is to consider the experience of reading a literary account of the city and to consider the nature of this kind of experience.

The reader’s experience of this city is not of an actual place even if some locations and sites in the account might refer to real places: nor does the reader actually occupy the spaces described in the text.

This world can be considered virtual because it can be experienced but not in the same ways as an actual, physical city.

Similarly, memory has something of the virtual about it. The memory of any given space is virtual for the simple and obvious reason that no actual physical city is reconstructed in our head. In a manner similar to what happens during the reading of the literary account of a city, memory is generative of an experience akin to being almost but not quite there – the imaginative virtual.

Digital virtualities: The key point here is that the revolution in information technology did not so much usher in the space of the virtual: it provided instead for the digitalization of the virtual as an already existing element of urban experiences.

This provides a more qualified and nuanced approach to understanding the geographies of the digital virtual, of which at least four aspects have received particular attention.

The first concerns the manner in which digital information technologies refigure the spatial relations between and within the city. Here the emphasis is on how the acceleration, increased quantity, and improved quality of information transmission facilitate new ways to organizing and connecting urban economies—the informational mode of development.

A second way in which the spatiality of the digital virtual has been explored is through inquiry into the distinctive kinds of spaces of experience it facilitates.

Temporal virtualities: Many products, such as derivatives, are not simply virtual in the sense of being imagined and/or digital. They are virtual in the sense that the process or events that determine their value have not yet happened: these processes or events are indeterminate futures. They can be called the temporal virtual.

How can we distinguish between the present as something real, and both the past and future commonly understood to be no longer or not yet real?

A solution to this question is to claim that present, past and future are all real, albeit in different ways! What defines the difference between them is that the present is actual while both past and future are virtual, where the latter is taken to mean real without being actual.

So rather than a kind of window moving along a continuous time-line, through which we take snapshots for future reference of a present that is always passing into the past, the present is an ongoing process of the actualization of virtuality in which the past and future are always folding into one another.
**Key Concepts in Urban Geography**

**Envisioning and Experience**

**Virtuality**: The digital city.

- Amin and Thrift are arguing that our sense of the spatio-temporal reality of the city cannot be defined in terms of an endless series of snapshot-like present moments.

- For Amin and Thrift then, the reality of urban space consists of multiple pasts and futures differentially actualized in the present in unpredictable and open-ended ways.

- For instance, it might mean that the challenge of urban theory is not to get at or build a conceptual model that corresponds to an actual city: the challenge is to develop ways of thinking urban space in terms of a dynamic mix of virtuality and actuality.

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**Surveillance**: ‘Big Brother’ and the city

- In 1984, George Orwell portrayed a relentlessly bleak vision of future society, where an omnipresent authority — ‘Big Brother’ — watches the community via cameras placed throughout the city.

- Today, surveillance technology is as rife and as stealthy as in Orwell’s vision. A range of recording devices put in place by governments, corporations and private citizens spans the city.

- However, unlike Orwell’s Big Brother, surveillance — especially state-sponsored surveillance — is not omnipresent.
  - Cameras in the city
  - Surveillance as biometric scanning
  - Surveillance and the captive consumer
  - Surveillance as entertainment
  - The militarisation of urban space
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

- **Surveillance: 'Big Brother' and the city.**
  - *Cameras in the city:* Much work has focused on the most ubiquitous and obvious type of surveillance technology within the city, CCTV (Closed Circuit Television), a topic of growing interest for scholars across a number of disciplines.
  - There are strong arguments which places these operations in the context of the interventionist 'police' state. By monitoring landscapes and their users, such as traffic and pedestrians, pavements and building interiors such as banks, airports, casinos, and hotels, CCTV has been accused of contributing to wider processes of social sorting within urban space, often justified through an appeal to citizen insecurity over terrorist threats.
  - While this technology might seem to be oppressive, some suggest that there is a positive side to the outward power surveillance technology has over its subjects.

- **Surveillance as biometric scanning:**
  - While surveillance is often used to signify 'sighting' individuals, it has a broader significance in terms of the governance of individual lives.
  - What began as fairly primitive attempts to capture the vital statistics of national populations have evolved dramatically alongside the computerization of records.
  - As Graham and Wood (2003) detail, the evolution of algorithmic CCTV (matching facial recognition software and movement recognition to criminal records databases, for example, biometric screening (to allow priority passage at airports for business travellers) and genetic surveillance (which will allow medical insurance industry to cherry-pick customers) will have significant repercussions for consumer and citizenship rights.
  - Surveillance gadgetry has become a new commodity, as coveted and convincingly essential to daily life as many other luxuries of modern living that are taken for granted.

- **Surveillance and the captive consumer:**
  - Surveillance in its broadest sense of being enacted daily in the field of consumption.
  - Retail theorists have long worked with the concepts of geocoding, the mapping of clusters of socio-economic characteristics through zip-code based data. This can also help businesses to ‘choose targets for coupon promotions, fund-raising appeals, political pitches, and also help national chains locate new stores.
  - Store loyalty cards allow retailers to link purchases with individual consumers, allowing both aggregate and individualized targeting of specific niche groups.
  - Surveillance here can be understood as a wide-ranging web of interlocking databases, which without constant government regulation, will increasingly penetrate individual lives, underpinning the contemporary shape of urban retail space, leading to a ‘consumer’ citizenship (based on one’s ability to pay for services), rather than a formal legal citizenship based on equality before the law.

- **Surveillance as entertainment:**
  - It can be seen that surveillance footage has become an increasingly cheap and popular staple of media entertainment, particularly in terms of filling the proliferation of commercial television channels.
  - Many of these shows are staged in public spaces, or else involve the filming of events that take place in public, meaning that while once confined to television studios, there are now seemingly limitless locations for the setting of such reality shows.
  - World’s Worst Drivers and Cops thrive on the coverage and resolution legal infractions that take place on public highways, in stores or on the street.
  - America’s Most Wanted promoted as an extension of the law by inviting viewers to help solve crime, provides dramatic reconstructions that allow viewers to ‘see’ the crime take place, offering an experience unavailable to consumers of either news programming or crime fiction.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Envisioning and Experience

• Surveillance: ‘Big Brother’ and the city.

Surveillance technology has always had a primal link with military operations. Increasingly, warfare has become urbanized, where the advanced ability to visualize territory – cartography – is fundamental to pinpointed military bombardments, usually key infrastructure.

- The militarization of urban space: Surveillance technology has always had a primal link with military operations. Increasingly, warfare has become urbanized, where the advanced ability to visualize territory – cartography – is fundamental to pinpointed military bombardments, usually key infrastructure.

- Because terrorist activity targets public life, this growth is ultimately most prevalent in public spaces. An example of such security measures are increased policing, K-9 bomb teams, sensors to detect chemical, biological, and radioactive materials, explosive trace detection devices that scan the air for traces of bomb materials, bomb-resistant trash cans, intrusion alarms and vehicle barricades.

- So, surveillance is a central practice in contemporary urban societies, and while it may aid a sense of citizen security – in the prevention of terrorism, for example, or a reduction in street crime – it also propagates other fears, particularly in terms of loss of individual liberty.

Key Points

- An interest in surveillance studies has grown out of urban terrorism, military warfare, and Michel Foucault’s work on governmentality.

- ‘Spatial accounting’ is a process of verbal discussion between camera operators and police.

- Surveillance has a significant role in the governance of individual lives such as crime prevention, internal security, and personal finance. It also raises concerns about the invasion of individuals’ privacy rights, not least in reality television programs.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography

Social and Political Organizations

• Segregation: The spatial issues of income and race.
  – Measuring segregation: Urban geography’s initial interest in residential segregation revolved around the question of how to measure and map ethnic residential segregation in urban areas. This work was driven by two concerns.
    • The first was to understand the dynamics behind the sub-division of cities into complex mosaics of land use.
    • The second concern centered on whether certain patterns of segregation might result in a number of unwished-for social outcomes, most noticeably that high levels of spatial segregation among certain ethnic or racial groups would hinder their ability to be a part of mainstream society.

• Parks are empty of houses, industry and (most) commerce, to create an oasis from the city that surrounds them.
• Highways exclude pedestrians and cycles, who cannot keep to the pace of cars and trunks.
• Cities are also segregated by social class, ethnicity and race. They are made up of an intricate mosaic of neighborhoods and residential areas, which with various degrees of subtlety divide out the wealthy from the comfortably well off, from the poor, the poor immigrant from the affluent immigrant…
  – Measuring segregation
  – Ghettos, slums and ethnic enclaves
  – Suburbia, walls, gated communities: ghettos for the privileged

• Measuring segregation
• Ghettos, slums and ethnic enclaves
• Suburbia, walls, gated communities: ghettos for the privileged

• Ghettos, slums and ethnic enclaves: Central to much work on segregation, especially in America, is the concept of the ghetto. The term ghetto originally referred to Jewish enclaves in medieval European cities physically separated from the rest of the city. Travelling to America, the term’s meaning shifted. Ghetto came to refer to any area dominated by a single ethnic group noticeably different from mainstream society—with the implication that this spatial concentration created a parallel society sharing few of the values and moral norms of mainstream society. Initially the term ghetto was not necessarily homologous with the idea of a slum.
  – And while ghettos were often characterized by high levels of poverty, they often also showed degrees of internal social organization hardly characteristic of slum life. Immigrant ghettos were not simply dumping grounds for society’s poorest and most vulnerable. They also provided essential support and aid for new immigrants to gain a foothold in American society.
  – The exception to the story of gradual ethnic minority integration was the African-American population. Like similarly economically disadvantaged immigrant populations, the African-American population was concentrated in older, inner-city neighborhoods.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Social and Political Organizations

• Segregation: The spatial issues of income and race.
  – Ghettoes, slums and ethnic enclaves:
  – Unlike immigrant groups, however, African-Americans faced extraordinarily deep-seated hostility and often outright violence and discrimination from the existing white population.
  – Intimidation, violent attacks, anti-African-American race riots, lynchings and the destruction of African-American property, in combination with the use of discriminatory legal instruments such as building covenants excluding African-Americans from settling in suburban housing developments, let to the creation of tightly delineated African-American areas that were indeed almost exclusively black.
  – What is striking – and distinctive – about the African-American ghetto is both the degree of segregation and the level of economic and social deprivation within them. The degree of segregation that defines the African-American ghetto is unique not just because it has much higher levels of concentration...their neighborhoods cluster together forming one large contiguous enclave, and these neighborhoods are concentrated in the central city.
  – The African American ghetto has come to be defined by high levels of unemployment, high levels of welfare claimants and, with that, very high levels of poverty.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Social and Political Organizations

• Urban Politics: The structure of political activity in cities – Urban politics has never been easy to define and most often has been defined by sociology, political science, urban planning, real estate finance and economic development. However, by using spatiality, scale, and place identity as key analytical concepts, geographers have provided a distinctive set of perspectives on how power is effectively urbanized.
  – The arrival of globalization has challenged the assumption that urban politics is determined by scalar hierarchies of size-based territorial states.
  – Cities are sites of networked practices which are distanciated, stretched over miles and miles, and may be conducted by people who have never met face-to-face, and with completely dissonant time horizons as to how long they wish to interact with a specific place or locality.
    – Cities as political actors: structure and agency
    – Place, identity and contestation
    – Mayors and the imagined geographies of cities
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Social and Political Organizations

- **Urban Politics**: The structure of political activity in cities.
  - **Cities as political actors: structure and agency**: One key question is that of who speaks for cities. Critical geographers have often argued that business lobby groups aim to paint a picture of a cohesive, unified city, masking the fact that hierarchical, exploitive working conditions may predominate in a locality.
  - More recently, such approaches have been criticized for being excessively localistic or voluntaristic, endowing local actors with excessive power or capacity to act.

- **Place, identity and contestation**: Giving cities the status of agents has been quite common, magnified in debates around entrepreneurialism. Here, territorial governments are seen as firms, engaged in an inter-urban competition with other city governments. These councils actively market sites, quality of life statistics, cultural facilities and labor skills to inward investors.

- There has been a strong emphasis on charting the impact such policies have on place identity, and particularly the impact of manufacturing decline on community politics.

- The problem with a rational urbanism is that the static, sedentary analysis of territory can be neglected. Theorists have sought ways in which the continuities and genealogies of place can be explored, which allow the specifics of place-based politics to be discussed, while still sensitive to the macro-systems that affect urban politics.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Social and Political Organizations

- **Mayors and the imagined geographies of cities**: The figurehead of city leadership is, of course, the mayor. As ‘first citizen’, mayors are often associated with political parties, yet many of the most successful mayors are often those who are able to speak ‘for’ their city.

- Mayors are often crucial in articulating the interests of their cities to external agents, be they national governments or major public and private investors. This relationship is cemented by a performative relationships to mayoral governance, encapsulated in three inter-related roles.
  1. Mayors ‘embody’ cities. Many are born in the city they represent. Here, they communicate with their voters/fellow citizens.
  2. They will act as animator of city space. Rather than pursuing an abstract notion of territory, mayors often strive for visibility in the everyday life of the city, especially at times of crisis.
  3. They are likely to provide some sort of narrative in their press conferences and public appearances about the immediate past, present, and future of the territory they represent, shaping and responding to a public discourse concerning crime, fear of terrorism, the economic climate, etc.

Key Points

- **Urban Politics**: The structure of political activity in cities.
  - Cities cannot be understood as cohesive entities, with singular, common interests. Rather, their governance and internal wealth distribution is highly politicized.
  - Urban theorists argue that there has been a transition in governance forms over the last 30 years, with a shift towards neo-liberal forms of urban governance, and a growing impact of transnationally networked elites such as property development firms on city politics.
  - Cities are represented and performed, and actors such as mayors have considerable power to communicate specific visions or discourses of what a city should be, has been and will be in the future.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Social and Political Organizations

- Community: What is community? Community is a word with a pleasant tone. It suggests friendship, connection, cohesion, mutual support. Cups of tea over the back fence, friendly gossip, neighbors looking for each other. Warm pints of bitter sipped around a pub fireplace, soccer mums cheering for their kids, PTA meetings, church events.
- Community conjures up images of a world in which things fit together. It is something that just about everyone is in favor of. And who could be against it?
- Yet for all its apparent simplicity community is one of the most ill-defined and argued about concepts within the social sciences.
  - What is community?
  - Community lost
  - Community saved, community liberated
  - Imagined communities, community and exclusion, light sociality

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Social and Political Organizations

- Community: What is community?
  - What is community? So, what, conceptually speaking is community? There are three principle ways in which the term is used:
    1. Community as place or neighborhood: In its most common usage community simply refers to the population – and the interconnections of that population – in a particular area.
    2. Community as a set of shared values, practices, and ways-of-being-in-the-world: Community as a set of common characteristics, social practices, values and beliefs, among a group of people. For example, ‘Muslim community’, the ‘gay community’, or the ‘elderly community’.
    3. Community as shared interests: A group of people that are defined by a shared set of interests. For example, sports, professional associations, video gaming, or Facebook.
Community: What is community?

- Community saved, community liberated: The problem with these accounts of modern cities as graveyards of community—popular and pervasive though they are—-is they are quite simply wrong. Modern, industrialized, societies, to say nothing of modem (or indeed post-modem) cities, are different to traditional societies (and cities) in all sorts of ways. But this does not mean that they are bereft of community.

- Jane Jacobs, the problem of cities is not whether they have community or not, but how the community that is there is organized.

- Community has been transformed and remade in all sorts of interesting wasy.

- Communities for many urbanites is defined through personal networks of friends, co-workers, neighbors and kin—networks that often do not have much spatial overlap.

Imagined communities, community and exclusion, light sociality:

Having discovered that community has not been lost, that it is not necessarily bound to place (and in fact may be entirely unbounded from place), what is left of community for urban geography to explore?

- Imagined Community, Mass Communication, and Mass Consumption
- Community, Exclusion, and the Good City
- Passion, Light Sociality and Everyday Connections

Imagined communities, community and exclusion, light sociality: Having discovered that community has not been lost, that it is not necessarily bound to place (and in fact may be entirely unbounded from place), what is left of community for urban geography to explore?

- Community, Exclusion, and the Good City: In contemporary cities these pre-existing modes of integration have been overlaid with a range of technologies of mass communication—newspapers, magazines, poster hoardings, cinema, radio, television—-that in all sorts of ways facilitate the imagining of community and connections.

- Newspapers and other forms of mass communication do much more than just facilitate the spread of information. The simple practice of newspaper reporting lends a certain weight to everyday urban experience—they are produced so regularly much of what they report focuses on the texture of everyday existence. Along with the sensational ruptures in everyday events—fires, accidents, criminality, exceptional luck or ill fortune—they narrate the ‘natural’ rhythms of a city—its festivals, sporting and political events, and so on.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Social and Political Organizations

Key Points

Community: What is community?

- Urban theory has long been shaped by the idea that cities are defined by an absence of genuine community.
- Scholars from sociology, anthropology, and geography have shown that community is not 'lost' in modern cities. Rather it has taken on a range of new forms.
- The media plays a central role in the construction of community in the contemporary city. It helps generate a sense of connection among otherwise diverse urban populations.
- The idea of a ‘community’ is not just about inclusion. It can also be employed to exclude those who are seen as different or other to the majority.
- Rather than focus on community, many urban geographers now prefer to consider the dynamics of social connection, or communion.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

• Consumption: Our behaviors of consuming – Consumption has emerged as one of the key concepts in the social sciences over the last two decades, spawning a vast literature and research agenda, and crossing disciplinary boundaries from sociology to economics, psychology to anthropology. Geographers have contributed to this debate in two main ways
1. The first is through the articulation of processes by which consumption is organized spatially.
   • While original urban settlements had a tight relationship to their surrounding fields and orchards for foodstuffs, the growing complexity of urban societies has long severed this relationship.
   • Local consumption does not return the city as a closed economic circuit. Geographers have become interested in the explanation of commodity chains, for example, or how items gain value and are materially distributed from raw material through to consumed products.
2. The second main approach is through an examination of the sites of consumption in cities. Here we limit ourselves to a discussion of the latter, given the importance of cities as important demand generators for goods and services, and also as sites for consumption as an experience.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

• Consumption: Our behaviors of consuming –
   • Spaces of consumption can be found almost everywhere in the city. Ironically, while the home is probably the most important site of consumption, there has been an overriding focus on public sites.
     – The commodity self
     – Retailing as urban experience
     – Foodscape

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

• Consumption: Our behaviors of consuming –
   • The commodity self: For a number of theorists, the self is expressed through the purchasing of commodities. Through advertising consumers are encouraged to think of commodities as central means through which to convey their personalities.
   • The idea of shopping as a social activity is a key part of this argument, ‘a form of leisure and pleasure and as a form of therapy … where commodities fulfill emotional needs’.
   • A key mechanism for relating to consumers is through the practice of advertising. The use of space and the choice of place are both crucial elements in advertising and consumption. Billboards, postcards, television screens, posters are located somewhere. Advertising in cities adds to the ‘visual mix’ of the urban landscape and according to some commentators ‘create the very fabric of place’.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

• Consumption: Our behaviors of consuming –
   • The commodity self:
     – The visuality of advertising has also been extended to other spaces of consumption, such as the shopping mall, theme park and heritage sites.
     – Spectacular leisure and consumption spaces such as Disneyland are centered around the consumption of things like food, souvenirs and ‘rides’. As well as objects, these sites are about selling ‘the experience’ and the brand. These sites of consumption are often designed to ‘create a placeless environment’, where consumers can leave reality behind and enter a carefully designed landscape of fantasy.
     – Other spaces of consumption include ‘cultural centers, cinema complexes. Sports stadia, shopping malls, restaurants, and art galleries’.
     – There is a ‘sociospatial relationship that exists between where households reside and those parts of their metropolitan areas that have been especially built or redeveloped to encourage people to visit so that they can buy and consume some of the many goods and services on sale there’.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

- **Consumption:** Our behaviors of consuming.
  - The commodity self:

- **Retailing as urban experience:** An important body of literature has developed around geographies of retailing. Two strands of consumption geographies – the spatially stretched networks of retail supply, the sourcing decisions of major supermarkets, the 'inconstant geography and spatial switching of retail capital', along with four key sites of retail consumption covered by geographers – the street, the store, the mall and the home.

- **Foodscapes:** Of course, the commonsense meaning of consumption is often taken to be that of eating and drinking, and charting the spatiality of this process has been of growing significance for geographers.

  - In *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat* (1997), David Bell and Gill Valentine outline a number of scales where the consumption of food can be conceptualized. This runs from the body, to the home, the city, the region, the nation, and the global cuisines. They argue that eating out is a 'container of many social and cultural practices, norms and codes', from the formality of elite restaurants, through to the social rituals of café culture.

  - With all this focus on consumption, it is unsurprising that there is an increasing concern about how some people are overdoing it. The growing rates of obesity in western societies, particularly among the young, poses a major social challenge.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

- **Key Points**
  - **Consumption:** Our behaviors of consuming.
    - Consumption has been a major interest in the social sciences in recent times. Geographers are interested in the sites and practices where consumption takes place, how particular sites may encourage or facilitate consumption behaviors, and how particular social relationships may be located in particular sites.
    - Consumer landscapes are sometimes ‘disguised’ to frame the user as an ‘audience member’ rather than an economically targeted consumer. Practices of advertising encourages consumers to exercise their ‘self’ through their choice of commodities.
    - Eating in public spaces can be considered a ‘democratizing experience’ as opposed to an experience reserved for the wealthy. Food consumption is a complex mode of sociality, from commercial cultures which encourage over-consumption, to the informal intercultural exchanges that take place in cities.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

**Media:** TV, Radio, Newspapers, Blogs—conveying information, perspective, and images – Recent years have seen the expansion of different formats of media. The ‘free to air’ programming of national television stations has been challenged by various forms of cable and digital television. Talk-back radio allows audiences to air their view. The internet has allowed the proliferation of online stores, fan sites, and news channels. Even traditional print media, such as newspapers, now work between paper and electronic formats.

- **Geographies of image:** As the entry on photography suggests, pictures of things are important constituents of modern cities. ‘Geography of images’ suggests a focus on the circulation, travelling images, flows and distribution processes of the media.
- **Cultural economy and media production:** There is now a strong interest in the so-called ‘cultural economy’, where film, TV, radio, photography, advertising, and a host of other industries are major sources of jobs and revenue. Contemporary work ranges from policy analysis and planning to the cultural economy and economic development of cities, and of the importance of media infrastructure.
- **Media, audiences and place:** It has been suggested that new accessibility of media technology has an impact on social behavior—that technology reorganizes social settings, and that this will ultimately reduce the significance of geographical locations.

Perhaps most influentially, Richard Florida’s (2002) book The Rise of the Creative Class explores the idea that cities which house creative people are economically more successful and, indeed, can be regenerated through the creative activity produced by these people.

The city has featured as the stage on which mass media could flourish and serve as a way to encourage the development of popular culture in various ways.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

- **Media**: TV, Radio, Newspapers, Blogs—conveying information, perspective, and images.
  - **Travelling media**: from Hollywood to the multiplex. While the idea of ‘scapes’ are important in acknowledging the influence images have in constructing different media narratives, we must also consider the physical infrastructure – that is, the materiality and political economy – that allows images to be projected and consumed.
  - For example, the distribution and marketing process that allows Hollywood films to extend their global reach.
  - However, when a Hollywood film or TV show is made, how important are place-specific factors in the context of its production? For example, a movie may have been filmed in Toronto, but set in New York.
  - The film’s value is also tied to the people who feature in it. So, a big Hollywood star is more of an assurance to financiers than an unknown actor or actress. However, a star’s salary will be more costly to a studio than that of an unknown.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

- **Public Space**: The space used in common by the public – Public space has become one of the central battlegrounds within contemporary urban scholarship. Acknowledged by most urban theorists to be a key dimension of urban life, there is no simple definition of just what public space is, or indeed should be.
  - At the most basic, public spaces is simply that space used in common by the public. Things are complicated, however, by the fact that the term ‘public’ covers a range of different relationship.
  - In a more formal extension of this notion of the public, it can refer to the spaces that are owned and controlled by the state. Here the double meaning of the term is apparent, as while certain kinds of public buildings and spaces like public libraries, museums, parks, and so forth are in fact open to all.
  - In this case the public being referred to is in fact a legal entity, a notion of the public being conceptually homologous with the state and its citizens. The public-ness of these spaces is not about their use but rather their ownership by the public.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

• Public Space: The space used in common by the public.
  – Public space and the public sphere: If the notion of what is public, how something becomes public, and the essence of public-ness, is far from straightforward, until recently urban geography has rarely grappled with this ambiguity. Within urban geography, the conception public space as publicly owned, open to all, and somewhere where one may legitimately make political claims upon and through—what we might call the 'republican tradition' of public space, because it sees the cultivation of a vibrant urban public as central to democratic life—has dominated most theorizing of public space.
  – Consumption, urban spectacle, urban revanchism and the end of public space: If there is one thing that most urban geographers seem able to agree on it is that the traditional public spaces that animate the public life of our cities are in some ways in danger,
  – Processes such as inner-city gentrification, along with the emergence or revival of festival market places, street markets, farmers markets, hospitality strips, and all sorts of lifestyle-oriented urban regeneration schemes, had transformed and apparently enlivened whole areas of American’s larger cities.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

• Public Space: The space used in common by the public.
  – The end of public space? Really? This notion of the end of public space has real narrative drama—with the recognizable villains of self-interest urban elites, large corporations, and a democratically unresponsive neo-liberal state...
  – Yet it is an argument, or rather a set of arguments, that is in a number of ways quite deeply flawed. It is flawed because it is based on empirically thin accounts. While it is possible to find examples of all the trends that the decline/end of public space theorists recount, it is equally possible to find an equally convincing set of counter arguments.
  – By emphasizing an idealized notion of 'pure' public spaces any move away from this ideal marks a potential danger to city's public life.
Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

Key Points

- **Public Space**: The space used in common by the public.
  - Public space refers to spaces that are open to the general population (‘the public’). In an ideal sense this would mean public spaces are open to all. In actual fact, few public spaces fit this ideal.
  - Urban geographical writing on the public space has been dominated by the ‘republican tradition’. This views public space as primarily a space available for people to make political claims, and gain public recognition.
  - Many urban geographers argue that the public space of contemporary cities being eroded by the rise of consumerism, speciale-isation, of urban space, and a generalised fear of crime and difference.
  - This narrative of the decline or even death of public space presents a narrow, and frequently empirically thin, account of trends shaping the public spaces, and public cultures, of contemporary cities.
  - Through focusing on the mundane materialities that define urban life it is possible to discover all sorts of interesting and hopeful ways in which contemporary urban public spaces are being re-imagined and re-animated.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

**Commemoration**: Historical events, memories, and their places.

- **Memory politics**: Historians and political geographers are interested in how cities act as central points not only in national territories, but also in national narratives, in the continuous telling histories, expressed in the way history is taught at school, in the way politicians talk about history in their speeches, in displays at museums, and in the urban landscape.
- Though monuments may commemorate one particular event, over time they may be re-interpreted in other contexts and become important in terms of a transformative nature of political events. ‘Narratives in public sites…can be presented in images and displayed, condensed and congealed into monuments, represented in physical spaces or projected through storytelling’.

Key Concepts in Urban Geography
Site and Practices

- **Pilgrimage**: Iconic monuments such as the Taj Mahal are also sacred, or religious places, for worshippers to come and pay their respect. Graves, or memorials for the dead are also in this category.
- Gilbert Rodman demonstrates how the power of the Elvis myth rests in part upon his fans’ pilgrimage to Memphis, the plethora and range of merchandise bearing his image, intellectual and tabloid interest in his life and death, and culture which has arisen from this elements combined. Rodman suggests that Elvis’ death heralded a notion of fame by association in the form of Graceland, a space which became an almost-religious site of pilgrimage for fans of the entertainer, and propelled Elvis’ posthumous career and myth-like status.
- Graceland acts as an embodiment of Elvis in a number of ways: spiritually, because he is buried there; physically because it was where he lived, and family still live today; and commercially because parts of the house are used as a museum where visitors can take a tour of the mansion.
Commemoration: Historical events, memories, and their places.

- Pilgrimage:

Increasingly, the role of monuments in cities has changed. In particular, static commemorations as found in statues are challenged or reconfigured by media events which attract and enthral very large audiences, a nation, or several nations.

Connections are often reified by people flocking to sites of the event in the days after they occurred. After 9/11, vast amounts of people from all over the world made a ‘pilgrimage’ to the remains of the site, dubbed ‘Ground Zero’. The site’s popularity as a tourist destination took on a life of its own in the months following the tragedy.

This type of tourist attraction rests uneasily between ‘patriotic tourism’ and ‘dark tourism’ where visitors travel to sites in some way connected to death.

The viewing tower at Ground Zero had 1.8 million visitors in the year following the attacks, and in 2003 – despite the platform’s absence – this figure was doubled, drawing 3.6 million visitors. What this meant was that the site had, in effect, become one of Manhattan’s top attractions.

Key Points

- Memorials come in many different forms, and are public spaces for people to mourn, debate, and protest. They act as markers of major events and their protagonists.
- Media events challenge the traditional role of monuments in their function as commemorative objects. Media events can also be commemorative acts, linking people to places.
- Tourism to monuments and cities housing monuments is not only commemorative, but also commercial. Souvenirs, photographs, and t-shirts are just a few of the physical objects tourist can take away with them.