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Immer häufiger wird auf Tagungen und in Diskussionen unter Kollegen und Kolleginnen eine alte Debatte neu geführt.

Zur Rolle der Planung entstehen zur Zeit neue Zweifel. Man kann es ruhig zugeben. Die einstmals als Lösung der Krise konzipierte Planung konnte ihre theoretisch abgeleitete Fähigkeit nur eingeschränkt entfalten. Die Planung mit all ihren Strategien, Taktiken und Instrumenten hat nur eine geringe eigenständige Wirkung. Offenbar überzeugen gute Argumente nur die wenigsten.

Ob nun Wohnungsbau, Umweltschutz oder Verkehrsplanung, keine Krise wurde außerhalb der Literatur antizipiert und durch Planung tatsächlich aufgehoben. Meistens war es wie zum jährlichen Weihnachtsfest — überraschend und plötzlich. Immer wieder wird auf den 'ausweglosen' Zustand gewartet, und dann geht es holterdipolter gegen alle Regeln der Kunst. Eher werden in solchen Situationen zukünftige Probleme geschaffen als die aktuellen wirklich gelöst.

Die Gründe für solches Handeln sind alt. Planung hält auf, Kranfahrten müssen optimiert werden, befriedigende Renditen sind Voraussetzungen, der Markt benötigt den richtigen Datenkranz usw.

Die Varianten hierzu sind vielfältig und enthalten selten Neues. Was immer wieder erstaunt, daß viele Planer von diesen Argumenten überrascht sind. Frustriert wollen sie sich als Marionetten sehen. Planer als Erfüllungshelfen, als Büttel verschiedener Fraktionen in Politik und Wirtschaft.

Eine solche Sicht sollte bekämpft werden. Einmal ist auch der Planer an einen demokratischen Auftrag gebunden. Nicht er bestimmt die Prioritäten sondern die aus einer Wahl hervorgegangenen Vertreter. Daß diese auch irren können, sich von der Basis entfernen, die eigentlichen Probleme verkennen, ist bekannt und durch Tageszeitungen hinlänglich belegt.

Was notwendig ist, ist, sich dieser Position bewußt zu sein und die gegebenen Freiräume zu erkämpfen, offensiv zu argumentieren und nicht nur unter Kollegen zu klagen. Dies bringt zwar Ärger mit allem möglichen, aber dieses Untertauchen bzw. diese stille Kündigungen, diese Ämter, in denen nichts mehr läuft, weil alle Kollegen (mit Recht) auf Irrationalitäten und vergebliche Bemühungen der Vergangenheit verweisen, sind ebenfalls schlimm.

Wer sich an sein erstes Seminar zur politische Ökonomie erinnert, wird wissen, daß die Rolle des Staates, der Wirtschaft und die politischen Strukturen erklärbar sind und damit der Veränderung zugänglich.

Planung bedeutet daher nicht nur eine perfekte Sachanalyse und ein gelungenes planerisches Konzept, sondern auch gesellschaftspolitisches Engagement und die Selbstimmunisierung gegen Resignation.

Hanns Werner Bonny, Dortmund

The City as Commodity

The Decline of Urban Vision

Traditionally, social theorists understood cities as expressions of the common good. *Civis*, the Latin root for city and citizen, expressed the transformation of societies from a social mass ruled by force and the scarcities of nature to one based upon community and a shared political vision. This community exercised social choice in an endeavor to create and sustain the common good. In essence, the city was understood as a source of, and even a requirement for, the attainment of civilization.

Recent U.S. research and policy, however, is predicated upon a different understanding of and role for community. In this framework, the city is viewed as a commodity the value of which is defined by consumers seeking to satisfy their individual preferences. Citizenship is conceived as a form of consumerism, and cities are assigned the status of spatial reservoirs for want of satisfaction. Urban social and fiscal problems that once demanded policy attention are now viewed as the side-effects of a changing lifestyle in an advancing national, and even international, technical and economic postindustrial order. This position is presented in the *Urban America in the Eighties* (UAE) report (1980), prepared by the President's Commission on a National Agenda for the Eighties, the *Rethinking Urban Policy* (RUP) report (1983), prepared for the National Research Council, and *The New Urban Reality* (1985), a study headed by Paul E. Peterson for the Brookings Institution. According to the presidential commission report, "(c)ontrary to conventional wisdom, cities are not permanent. . . . To attempt to restrict or reverse the processes of change — for whatever noble intentions — is to deny the benefits that the future may hold for us as a nation" (NAE, 1980: 65,66).

Below we explore the values and implications of the new urban analysis. Our concern with postindustrialism is not with the possibility of conceiving cities in this manner, but rather whether it is desirable to do so. For a better understanding of the new analysis, we will briefly present the nature of the changing community-city relationship as represented by the early political philosophers and the urban historian/philosopher Lewis Mumford. This understanding of urban community

can be seen as the basis for the postindustrialist vision of society and will be the subject of the following part. A critical assessment of the postindustrial framework concludes the paper.

City as Community

Western social theorists from Aristotle to Hobbes generally understood cities as necessary for the fullest attainment of human potential. This tradition, as we trace it to the Greeks, conceived humanity as born not in an isolated state of nature, but in the political association of citizens.

For Aristotle, the city-state was the highest level of culture upon which social life was to be conducted (in Barker, 1962: 4-5). the final and perfect association, formed from a number of villages, is the polis — an association which is said to have reached the height of full self-sufficiency; or rather, while it grows for the sake of mere life (and so far, and at that stage, still short of full self-sufficiency), it exists (when fully grown) for the sake of a good life, and is therefore fully self-sufficient. . . . From these considerations it is evident that the polis belongs to the class of things that exist by nature, and that man is by nature an animal intended to live in a polis.

Medieval theorists believed that cities were essential to social being and life. In medieval civilization, cities found meaning and purpose as an expression of social virtue (Thomas Aquinas, as quoted in Gibson, 1961: 319-320):

"It appears that the aim of a social group is to live good lives, since men form groups in order to live well, something that man living alone could not do. Excellent living, then, is the goal of human association. The evidence of this is that only they who have the common job of living well are parties to the social unit. Indeed, if the sole objective of society were to subsist, then animals and slaves would be citizens of the State; if it were to pile up shekels, all those who do business together would belong to the same commonwealth."

Similarly, on the eve of industrialization, Thomas Hobbes distinguished life in an

isolated state of nature from the artful construction of the city. The former Hobbes described as without meaning or moral basis, whereas the latter constituted the civilization of life that made moral development possible (Hobbes, 1962: 19)"

"For by art is created that great Leviathan called a Commonwealth, or State, in Latin Civitas, which is but an artificial man. . . . the pacts and covenants, by which the parts of this body politic were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that fiat or the let us make man, pronounced by God in the creation."

This opinion prevailed from Hobbes' seventeenth century until the rise of the machine economy and the industrialization of human settlement in the nineteenth century.

Industrialization and Urban Retrogression

In his *Technics and Civilization* (1934), Lewis Mumford records the transformation of Western societies from communities of self-reliance to machine collectives based on surplus production. This machine-inspired transformation directly challenged long-standing ideas of community as the traditional guild city was overwhelmed by, and literally reconstructed according to, the values of the new technic (Mumford, 1934: 184 & 185):

"The machine was displacing every other source of value partly because the machine was by its nature the most progressive element in the new economy. . . . What paleotect dared to ask himself whether labor-saving, money grubbing, power-acquiring, space annihilating, thing-producing devices were in fact producing an equivalent expansion and enrichment of life?"

An ideology of quantity pervaded the new social order rationalizing the dehumanization of urban life (Mumford, 1961: 570). Quantitative production has become, for our massminded contemporaries, the only imperative goal: they value quantification without qualification. In physical energy, in industrial productivity, in invention, in knowledge, in population the same vacuous expansions and explosions

prevail. As these activities increase in volume and speed, they move further and further away from any humanly desirable objectives.

The rule of economic activity and values replaced the "tendency toward settlement" with a universalizing "tendency toward movement" (Mumford, 1945: 10). Cities lost their distinctive spatiality and, with it, their social basis. They were borderless, a "formless urban exudation" (1961: 505). The urban process had become suffused with self-contradictory and self-destructive tendencies such that the advance of urbanism actually was antithetical to civilization: "(This) is not in fact a new sort of city, but an anti-city. As in the concept of anti-matter the anti-city annihilates the city whenever it collides with it" (Mumford, 1961: 505).

Left unchecked, the great cities would devolve to cultural pseudomorphs. It was the task of social theory to halt this social retrogression by conceiving an urban society which affirmed rather than attacked life values (Mumford, 1961, 1961: 263 & 268):

"(A)n orgy of uncontrolled production and equally uncontrolled reproduction: machine-fodder and cannonfodder: surplus values and surplus populations. . . The dirt-crowded houses, the dark airless courts and alleys, the bleak pavements, the sulphurous atmosphere, the over-routinized and dehumanized factory, the drill schools, the second-hand experiences, the starvation of the senses, the remoteness from nature and animal activity — here are the enemies. The living organism demands a life-sustaining environment".

By the 1930s, even conservative strands of urban theory realized the dilemmas posed by industrial urbanization and sought their remediation through national policy. Louis Wirth synthesized more mainstream views of urbanism first for the 1937 Urbanism Committee and then in his classic paper *Urbanism as a Way of Life* (1938: 3-24). He too suggested that industrial urbanism was built upon a contradiction — it had created conditions of social dependence to a degree never before realized in society, while at the same time

undermining the power of the most basic normative bonds in communities, those of kinship. Unless resolved, this contradiction threatened the stability of Western society.

Wirth was far from confident the contradiction could be resolved without enormous social pain. The city as a basis of social solidarity was forecasted to disappear — urban communities would be reduced to a series of "tenuous segmental relationships superimposed upon a territorial base with a definite center but without a definite periphery and upon a division of labor which far transcends the immediate locality and is worldwide in scope" (Wirth, 1938: 23). With their economic and social functions beyond territorial control, cities would no longer be self-governable: "Self-government either in the economic, the political or the cultural realm is. . . reduced to a mere figure of speech or, at best, is subject to the unstable equilibrium of pressure groups" (Wirth, 1938: 23).

Yet in spite of the foreseen decline of the city, Wirth remained convinced that urbanism was and would continue to be the dominant way of life. Modern technology, as he observed at the close of his essay, required urbanism. We were and are part of an extraordinary social transformation which Wirth urged us to better understand so that we might learn at least how to ameliorate the social pain.

The New Urban Realism

Urban society has failed on the whole to meet the challenges of Mumford and Wirth. Saunders has suggested in his *Social Theory and the Urban Question* (1981), that the urban question has been for the most part dismissed. Where Mumford characterizes contemporary urbanization as reducing "every part of the city . . . into a negotiable commodity" (1961: 446), postindustrial theorists envision a "resorting" of communities "to coincide with a changing system of stratification" (Suttles, 1975: 58). The resorting process, while perhaps costly for individual communities, is understood to be guided by "natural and beneficent" economic forces (Arrow, 1975: 14). In time, these forces will yield a "mosaic culture" (Berry, 1981),

underpinned and bound together by "universal cultural forms which are required by the mechanics of life itself" (Suttles, 1975: 40-41).

A postindustrial vision of society was presented initially in Daniel Bell's *Notes on the Postindustrial Society* (1967) and was applied to urban thinking with Edward Banfield's *Unheavenly Cities* (1970). This vision has received support recently in a 1980 presidential commission report, *Urban America in the Eighties*, a 1981 National Research Council study, *Rethinking Urban Policy*, and a 1985 Brookings volume, *The New Urban Reality*. Together this body of work suggests that "the urban problem" needs to be reconceived. Whereas much of twentieth century social theory and analysis has sought to relate cities and their problems to the dynamics of an industrially-based urbanization, the postindustrialists regard the industrial era as coming to a close, if not over. In this view, a new dynamic has been guiding cities and societies for some time now. This dynamic has its roots in technological, economic and demographic developments which stress the need for a spatially deconcentrated, service-based production-consumption system. Innovations in transportation, communications and energy technologies have relieved societies of their dependence on spatial agglomerative economies and businesses and residents are responding by moving out of central cities, and even beyond the urban periphery.

Beneath the spatial dispersion of population and economic activity, a web of technological and economic structures has been detected which serves to give centrifugal direction to an otherwise centripetal process. The new technological and economic order obeys an underlying logic of efficiency which yields coordinated, centralized "command-and-control centers" that are neither spatially nor locationally constrained (National Research Council, 1983: 38-58). In fact, the new order is global in organization and scope, as local labor and resources in the U.S. and in South Korea, Mexico, and South Africa compete with each other for necessary capital. Such competition in a postindustrial world does not require large central

cities. David Lewis had forecasted in 1969 that (1969: 302, 303):

"The United States as a whole has become a complex network of communications and services, and every major city, and thus every citizen, is a component of this intricate network — connected by telephones, and television, power grids and consumer production, airways and highways. . ."

The closed urban form, the finite and mononuclear city of tradition, gives way to a new species of urban form in which the basic factor is mobility; an open-form, multinuclear, multidirectional city — a city which is indefinitely additive and indefinitely variable in its capacity for growth and change.

Sixteen years later, Paul E. Peterson, editor of *The New Urban Reality*, confirms Lewis' judgement: "The industrial city has become an institutional anachronism. If the great manufacturing centers of Europe and the American Snowbelt developed as by-products of the industrial revolution, their decline is no less ancillary to contemporary technological change" (1985: 1).

In the new postindustrial order it is necessary to cut our national, political and social ties with the traditional city which has become obsolete. In fact, the abandonment of cities in national policy has the status of a social imperative (Byrne, et al., 1985). As the 1980 presidential report *Urban America in the Eighties* (UAE) counsels, "there are no national urban problems," and placing "the swirl of local and regional concerns ahead of an overall concern for the nation is both inappropriate and ill-advised" (1980: 99,100). An entirely different policy orientation is needed which recognizes that "a new urban system is emerging" based on mobility and adaptation to change (Hanson, 1984: 52). The future importance of cities as places is in doubt. A period of "policy-guided disinvestment" and urban "slenderizing" is necessary to prepare American society for the global, competitive order of postindustrialism (UAE, 1980: 105). For this reason, place-oriented policies must give way to people-oriented ones. Of greatest importance are policies which focus on the people-to-jobs nexus

and are studiously neutral as to either the place of those jobs or the place of the prospective worker. Sectoral employment and development strategies which invest in the "strongest" industries should replace traditional urban and regional planning for balanced growth (National Research Council, 1983: 180-181). The plight of "less resilient areas" (National Research Council, 1983: 182) cannot be overlooked, but under no circumstances should national policy be structured around priorities to address the needs or conditions of these areas (Peterson, 1985: 25, 26).

Instead of developing remedies on behalf of urban areas, the federal government should concentrate its attention on policies that have no specifically urban component to them at all. . . The best urban policy, and the one most in keeping with American traditions, would thus not focus on the special needs of cities at all. Instead, it would be directed toward dispersing racial concentrations by increasing the choices available to racial minorities.

The consequence of such a policy orientation is intended to be the reduction of the social and political status of cities in society. As Peterson puts it, "cities must simply accept a less exalted place in American political and social life than they once enjoyed" (1985: 1). The diminished importance of cities is only rational given that they are "no longer the most desirable settings for living, working or producing" (UAE, 1980: 4). Contemporary postindustrial analysis is tough-minded in this regard: "Industries rose and fell — and so did empires, and so did cities" (Fallows, 1985: 47). Efforts to resist change are not only futile, but dangerous: "A rebuilt South Bronx can only lure the jobless into remaining longer . . . reconstructed homes will be transformed into slums soon enough, and . . . the torch will be back at the task of destroying them soon enough" (Baumol, 1981: 13) Rather than undertaking "a counter-productive effort to keep losers afloat" (Long, 1983: 21), the appropriate national response is to allow "the fates and fortunes of specific places. . . to fluctuate" (NAE, 1980: 65). This is perceived as fully consistent with the American immigrant tradition, as Donald

Hicks, the principal author of *Urban America in the Eighties* explains (quoted in Fallows, 1985: 68):

"I was being told. . . by people whose last names would have been very much at home in Florence or Milan. . . how I dared to tear people away from the roots they had established. I wasn't cheeky enough to say anything then. . . (but) so many of their families had decided to migrate and they found a better life. They were angry at the advice that America help others do the same"

In the postindustrial vision, the concepts and analytic frameworks of traditional urban geography, demography and economics, regional science, and even urban politics and sociology have little, if any contemporary relevance (Byrne and Martinez, 1987). Agglomerative and localization economies, compaction dynamics and land-use specialization can still be recognized, but the study of these urban features can only reinforce a sense of the declining significance of urban places. Multinucleation, polycentrism, population size, density and distribution may be interesting topics for urban geographers and demographers to investigate, but the study of these things is not terribly important from a policy perspective. And the notions of democratic citizenship and community as locally rooted are projected as quaint but outmoded ideas of a bygone era.

A new language of urban analysis accompanies the postindustrial vision. Cities have been replaced on the social plain by "headquarter centers," "specialized satellites," "subordinate service nodes," and "high-tech nests." The fixed boundaries of physical space have been superceded by forces of "variable geometry" as a "space of flows" substitutes for a "space of places" (Castells, 1985: 14-15). Expectably, social strategies appropriate to the new space have new names and purposes. The fashion is to improve locationally vague things like entrepreneurial spirit and inventiveness. For which we need development "incubators" and "enterprise zones" to "spin-off" new enterprises; technology centers to "hatch" new ideas; and "economic intelligence systems" and "information sentries" to monitor progress at transition and to identify "mid-life re-

tooling" needs. If all goes as forecasted, the new postindustrial order will be, as far as possible, featureless. In that way, a vibrant life of perpetual motion can be enjoyed by one and all. What urban crisis?

Conclusion

The postindustrial vision renders the idea of the city as a community of general relations all but meaningless. Society is counseled to invest its social and moral resources in learning and pursuing the dictates of technology, economics, and demography. Relevant social choices concern exclusively the manner in which these forces are accommodated and the transition to the postindustrial order smoothed. The choices a society makes in this regard will determine how pleasant or painful the transition will be.

In the new order, not all members of society can, or should have, paying roles. A permanent underclass will occupy the central cities where they will be provided for through a compassionate social service system; the underclass will "lead a life of dignity while their welfare is provided through other means" (UAE, 1980). Other segments of the population may find themselves temporarily unemployed until spatial and technological changes, necessary for the passage to a service economy, are completed. But, as the presidential commission noted, "these changes... are... beneficial to the nation as a whole, even though they may have undesirable short term effects on specific communities" (UAE, 1980). In brief, the pain suffered by the underclass and the unemployed, while regrettable, is necessary.

Abandoned by this new theoretical orientation is the prospect for livable cities. Beyond tending to the poor, the only significant role left to cities is to surrender whatever remaining economic assets they might have to those economic agents which can make the highest and best use of them. Communities in this framework must be powerless to oppose this exchange. Their role is to adapt to change, not to influence it.

By traditional analysis, such a state of affairs represents a demise of political life.

Citizens lack the institutional support essential to the meaningful exercise of their political capacities. Cities cannot be the institutions for sustaining meaningful participation. They cannot provide participative opportunities because urban change has been reconceptualized as a natural rather than a social phenomenon. Citizens have no role to play. Correspondingly, political structures lack the political life essential to their functions. Such a breakdown culminates in a reality that is unjust — one that is shared by all but involves no meaningful participation by most. Rather than authors of reality, individuals have become slaves to it. The state of nature has overwhelmed political life and threatens civilization. We are at a crossroads where the common good is being dissipated by consumptive appetites of interest groups, malformed political beings that distort the "we" as constituent "I"s.

Cities and communities have become expendable and citizens are reduced to their preferences rather than their responsibilities. Before we dismiss the urban crisis and accept the postindustrial world of vibrant motion, we might heed Jane Jacobs' recent warning: "Societies and civilizations in which the cities stagnate don't develop and flourish further. They deteriorate" (1984: 232).

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mographischen Entwicklungen wurzelt. Dem zufolge sind Städte keine notwendigen Einrichtungen für die Konzentration von Industrie und Haushalten. Die Bedeutung von Städten als Verwaltungs-

bzw. Organisationseinheit wird darauf reduziert, die notwendige Anpassung an die neuen Realitäten zu leisten mit den damit verbundenen weitreichenden Folgen für ihre Gemeinwesen.

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Dieser Beitrag nimmt die neuere amerikanische Literatur einschließlich offizieller Regierungserklärungen zum Anlaß, die ihnen unterliegenden Wertvorstellungen zur Stadt als politisch-sozialem Gebilde mit ihren möglichen Auswirkungen für die Bewohner darzustellen und zu diskutieren. Im Anschluß an einen kurzen historischen Überblick wird die These vertreten, daß sich mit dem Übergang zur postindustriellen Gesellschaft das Verständnis von der Rolle und dem Charakter von Stadt als Gemeinwesen grundlegend geändert hat.

Von Aristoteles bis Lewis Mumford läßt sich eine Tradition verfolgen, die im städtischen Gemeinwesen eine Organisationsform sah, die die Entwicklung der Menschheit erst möglich machte. Mit dem Übergang zum Postindustrialismus hat sich diese theoretische Grundeinstellung derart verändert, daß Örtlichkeit nicht mehr als Gelegenheit und Chance, sondern vielmehr als Eingrenzung und Behinderung angesehen wird. Diese Trendwende wird ausführlich an einer Auswahl stadtsoziologischer amerikanischer Literatur illustriert.

Als Ergebnis dieser Entwicklung wird vielfach, u.a. von Seiten der amerikanischen Bundesregierung, ein neuer 'urban realism' propagiert. Dieser Realismus bezieht sich auf eine neue Dynamik, die in technologischen, ökonomischen und de-