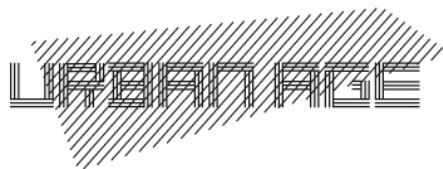


BULLETIN 1

SUMMER 2005



EDITORIAL

This is the first edition of the Urban Age Bulletin; one of a series of documents that charts the progress of the Urban Age conferences as we move from city to city, from New York to Shanghai, from London to Mexico City, from Johannesburg to Berlin. The Bulletin is designed as an informal vehicle of communication for the Urban Age project, a two-year sequence of investigations on cities across the globe organised by the London School of Economics and the Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society. Alongside the website (www.urban-age.net), individual conference newspapers and reflection papers by urban experts, the Bulletin is an instrumental element in the evolving international dialogue between urban policymakers, designers, academics and 'city builders'. At the heart of the Urban Age project lies the ambition to better understand how people live, work, move and engage in the contemporary city, at a moment of intense urban growth and transformation.

This first Bulletin restates the objectives and structure of the Urban Age project, reflects on the New York event held in February 2005 and looks forward to the Shanghai conference in July 2005. It contains a selection of contributions by speakers in New York – Richard Sennett, Saskia Sassen and Gerald Frug, - as well as a review of the two-day event by Deyan Sudjic, who together with Richard Sennett chairs the international advisory panel of the Urban Age. It also offers a sense of the breadth of the debate with a summary of key points raised by speakers, respondents and participants. Many of these issues – from the impact of changing labour markets on urban form to the effects of public transport on urban liveability – are being investigated more fully in the reflection pieces that have been commissioned from the travelling group of urban experts. These will be made available on our website and included in the Urban Age 'blueprint for cities' to be published at the end of 2006.

Less than a year after the launch of the Urban Age project, cities seem to have hogged the international limelight. Under the banner headline 'Meet the Mayors', Time magazine featured the faces of the mayors of Rome, London, Berlin, Stockholm and Paris on its front cover, heralding the resurgence of the European city as a significant political phenomenon. As we prepare for the next two conferences in 2005 – Shanghai from 7 to 9 July and London from 11 to 13 November – we continue to build on our interdisciplinary and international 'family' of urbanists, bringing in new members and institutions that complement the skills and expertise of the Urban Age team. Through this Bulletin, we look forward to increasing the level and intensity of debate on the core themes that characterise the Urban Age.

Urban Age is a worldwide series of conferences investigating the future of cities

Organised by the Cities Programme at the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Alfred Herrhausen Society, the International Forum of Deutsche Bank

WAS NEW YORK ALRIGHT? ALMOST.

DEYAN SUDJIC

The first instalment of the Urban Age's cumulative sequence of conferences somewhat tentatively took the form of a question. "Is New York almost right?" it asked. And, of course, there could be no definitive answer to such a question when it is posed in the circumstances of a forum of practitioners, academics, politicians and their advisors. Yes, New York has got to be more than almost all right, if you happen to be working within the city administration. Elected city governments are in no position to suggest anything else. Or perhaps the more realistic of them might go as far as to say that New York is as all right as it can possibly be in the circumstances. But no, New York is not at all all right if you are looking at the city's apparent inability to formulate policy, or to deal with the multiple problems that face it, or even to get the cars parked on its side streets out of the way to make room for pedestrians. No, it is not all right from the point of view of the city's disadvantaged, or its minority majority. Nor is it all right to invest in heavy transit infrastructure that it can't afford to run in the long term - the same systems, as the conference heard, that some manufacturers are trying hard to sell to Latin American and Asian cities far poorer than New York.

But the question was asked in a rhetorical sense, as much to trigger a discussion about the nature of all cities of a certain size and history, with the intention of creating the beginnings of a framework of fresh ideas with which to understand and address their nature. In this sense, New York can be understood as representing one very particular form of the big city. New York's history gives it an authoritative claim to be understood as the archetype of a certain type of contemporary metropolis. What Manchester in England's Northwest was to the industrial cities of the 19th century, and as contemporary Shanghai may be seen as the distillation of the explosive urbanisation of the early 21st century reflected across much of Asia, so New York is the essential city of the culture of congestion. It dominated ideas about the city in the mid 20th century. Whatever else it may be, New York is not currently in the business of creating these buildings' contemporary equivalents. And there are some who would see in that evidence of a certain decline in its ambition. The concerns of the city today might be regarded as more parochial in nature, of managing what the city is, rather than reinventing it. And these could be seen as issues of a more local concern, rather than of wider interest. Indeed, the New York that once so energetically pursued the invention of the instruments of planning and building the modern metropolis without a trace of self-consciousness, is now in the same position as its rivals and peers, looking for models that have worked elsewhere.

To see New York in those terms, and to lament it, might be regarded as a position tinged by nostalgia for a lost golden age, far removed from the real lives and concerns of the vast

majority of its 18 million citizens. But it was what prompted Rem Koolhaas's provocative suggestion that "in an urban age, the city no longer exists". By which he might be understood to be pointing to the divide between the old cities – London, New York, and Paris, and the new ones - Shanghai, Lagos, Jakarta, and just about any example of American exurbia. The latter have quite different characteristics, and are mutating faster than a species-jumping virus with an intensity, speed and scale that is eclipsing the old models. It was an intervention that prompted Saskia Saassen to make a carefully nuanced plea for the survival of the quality of "cityness", by which she meant the transplanting of the essential qualities and values of old urban societies into the changed physical realities of the new cities. Casting a long shadow over the conversation was the battle between two unique individuals in the history of New York and in the wider history of ideas about the nature of all cities: Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs. They are figures that still have the power to sharply divide an audience in New York, and they might be seen as precursors of the debate between Koolhaas and Saassen.

One of the interesting things about this event was the chance it offered to measure the impact and resonance of these two points of view in front of an audience drawn from beyond the sectarian turf of New York itself. Participants could ventilate attitudes to these troublesome, inspiring, embarrassing presences in front of a group not all of whose members had grown up with their legacies. What makes it especially interesting to ask if New York is almost all right at this particular moment is the way in which the city is in the midst of rediscovering the notion of planning a city based on an idea. For the first time in 40 years, New York is actively being shaped again, with a view not just towards realising pragmatic individual projects, no matter how large (and Battery Park City was very large), but towards creating a new waterfront, or a cultural district, or notions of creating new residential communities.

The tensions within New York's community between urban thinkers and doers were faithfully reproduced within the conference. And the voices of those experienced in the labyrinthine separation of powers in New York became a touch world-weary at the naïveté of the tone as they understood it of the observations of those who have not shared their experiences and their burdens. And some of those visitors expressed a certain impatience with the inability of New York to understand the implications of what they saw as its complacency and insularity. In fact, the point of asking the question was not so much to come to some sort of conclusion about New York itself, but to use it as a model to begin a calibration for an examination of comparative approaches to the range of issues facing contemporary cities.

Urban Age in New York moved from the general - exploring notions of the oversimplification of the grain of the city that may be one of the outcomes of the global financing of urban development, to the particular - examining specific architectural proposals for Manhattan with slightly dizzying effect. Scrupulous efforts were made to maintain a dialogue that embraced as wide a horizon as possible. This was not

intended to be a conversation only about New York - or about Bogotá or Washington or London, for that matter – but about 'the City'. Nevertheless, it was enlightening to take part in the Urban Age programme in New York just as the Olympic Committee's envoys were concluding their imperial progress through the city in their trawl through the candidate cities for the 2012 Games. The whole city was apparently gripped by just two urgent questions. Do they like us? And: Do they like us enough to choose us?

One of the more pressing things that emerged from two days of talk was the very different assumptions of those who struggle with the day-to-day grind of manipulating the levers of power on their own behalf, or for the community at large, from those who spend their lives thinking about, and trying to understand, the processes that are involved. And these are different again from the mindset of those who see themselves as responsible for building the city. There were moments in New York when these worlds failed to engage. When city leaders, with electorates to think about and a predisposition to see things from their point of view, are confronted with the view of the urban world through the eyes of an architect, there is at best a mutual incomprehension, or more likely impatience and worse. In itself, this friction is a significant conclusion to our research; if nothing else, we need to find the tools to make an interdisciplinary discussion about the city work, and, from that, to focus on the things that we can agree on and the steps that can be taken to shape the future of the city, insofar as it can actually be shaped. The wide fault lines between those who try to understand the city and those who try to lead it and manage it was made glaringly apparent in the reaction to those architects who tried to explore provocative models of the spontaneous urbanising tendencies of such very specific places as the underground subways of Seoul, or Tokyo, which have nothing in common with conventional western notions of civic life, but which may in fact have precisely the qualities that we look for in an urban age. We traced this scar tissue, but we didn't come any closer to healing the divide.

But this was the first in a series of conferences, and as the planning for the Shanghai event takes shape, it's already apparent how powerful a tool it is to take the leap from one such clear-cut model of what the city can be to the next, utterly different, yet eerily similar city. For, although Shanghai, with its population of around 20 million, is portrayed as an exploding city with little in common with London or New York, it is in fact a city of not such a different order of magnitude when you measure what the two Western cities really are, as opposed to their political boundaries.

Deyan Sudjic is the Architectural Critic for The Observer

THE URBAN AGE PROJECT

THE CONTEXT

The world is entering an urban age. For the first time in the history of humanity, more than half of the earth's population will soon live in urbanised areas, and extended metropolitan landscapes will become the predominant form of human settlement. The greatest movement towards this contemporary urban transition is in the developing world and in particular the Asia Pacific region. Urban populations are growing exponentially and cities are exploding with ever more concentrated investment and overbuilt environments. At the same time, they are facing the challenging mandate to lead their countries towards global integration and modern lifestyles. Yet this is also an urban age for the advanced capitalist nations where, after decades of neglect, cities are once again at the centre of economic growth and social, political and cultural innovation. If negative trends of urban shrinkage, haphazard dispersal and thinning out of the city's core have not fully receded, these trends now coexist with renewed growth at the centre, the positive reappraisal of high urban densities and a rediscovery of vibrant and diverse inner-city neighbourhoods.

The late 20th century was commonly interpreted as an age of economic globalisation in which speculative investment flows roamed the world in pursuit of maximum profit and minimum social constraint. At the same time, the city was dismissed as being doomed by a technological hyper-mobility that would nullify the need for co-location. In marked contrast, the contemporary urban age is filled with policy promise and a renewed confidence that urban problems can be solved from within. The city is now seen as an agglomeration of opportunities and a promising milieu rather than a concentration of problems and a site of despair: a resource rather than a liability. A number of disciplines assert new confidence in the possibility of steering the urbanisation process so that it produces more efficient, equitable and liveable outcomes. Although their disparate trainings can sometimes obscure the meanings of each other's utterances, architects, planners, economic development practitioners and other city-building professionals would likely agree with the proposition that the city is once again germane ground for meaningful intervention. A multitude of recent new localist, new regionalist and new urbanist manifestos attest to this claim.

Worldwide, urban policymakers still struggle to balance the escalation of public and private investment in cities with more sustainable forms of urban development. Questions regarding the size, shape, and spatial distributions of densities, land uses and morphologically differentiated areas of the city have become increasingly complex and politicised. The design of the built environment, the distribution of urban density, and their impacts on social inclusion and quality of life, are at the forefront of political discussions in cities across the globe. More often than not, traditional models of urban growth and theories of city form fail to explain the dynamics now evident both in the networked global city, which thrives as a new economic centrality in the world system, and in the mega-city,

which faces severe pressures generated by its own relentless growth. Moreover, these contemporary stylised paradigms seem to confound themselves in the cities of both the developed North and the developing South, of the individualist West and the group-oriented East. A set of common challenges face New York and London, but also Mexico City and Johannesburg or the rapidly growing Shanghai. The development patterns of these cities generate important conceptual and practical questions and should prompt us to rethink basic notions of urbanity and "city-ness".

THE CONFERENCES

The principle aim of the Urban Age is to shape the thinking and practice of urban leaders. The two-year conference series is the first step towards the creation of an ongoing forum which will debate and influence how the city is studied, planned and managed. The series will operate as a mobile laboratory, testing and sampling the urban condition using a combination of expert presentations, site visits and opportunities for informal information exchanges. These results will then be analysed, searching for regional patterns and global similarities that will shape the future development of cities and the processes that sustain them.

CONFERENCE FORMAT

Each Urban Age conference will last for two days. Invited participants will include individuals from various fields, including the academic, policy, design, development and business communities. The conferences will be limited to a group of 50-75 people, small enough to allow for discursive sessions amongst all participants, yet large enough to incorporate many opinions and backgrounds. Four core themes will provide focus in each conference, reflecting the basic human activities of living, working, playing and moving :

- Labour and work places
- Public life and urban space
- Mobility and transport
- Housing and neighbourhoods

In addition, four broader, overarching governance issues will be investigated. These are:

- Investment and economic development
- Planning and legal structures
- Sustainability and energy consumption
- Political economy and networking cities

In order to address local and global concerns, urban experts representing each core research theme and a group of urban practitioners including architects, politicians, engineers and planners will travel to all conferences, accumulating knowledge and comparative experiences through participation in each conference throughout the two-year period. The travelling "sounding board" will work in conjunction with local experts from the host region. At each conference, regional experts from each of the core knowledge areas will give visual presentations on how the core themes impact upon the urban conditions in their geographic region.

Presentations will utilise knowledge gained from lessons learned ‘on the ground’ and will discuss how policy is responding to the dominant urban trends in each city. These presentations and subsequent publications will employ different modes of translating information from the two-dimensional geographic scale to the three-dimensional urban design scale, thus facilitating dialogue between academics, policymakers and practitioners.

A key objective of the Urban Age conference series is to identify what trends and policies are failing to respond to local needs, resulting in the continued propagation of dysfunctional urban areas across the globe. In addition to the academic experts, a group of urban practitioners, comprised of politicians, architects and engineers, will be present at each conference, supporting and challenging the notions put forth by the academics and local participants.

CONFERENCE OUTPUTS

While the primary objective of the Urban Age conference series is to shape urban practices by engaging the various actors in a meaningful dialogue, lessons learned from discussions will challenge many existing policies and modes of operation. Following each conference, the travelling experts will compose reflection papers, based on responses to issues raised during presentations and discussions.

Experts will also contribute to the final “Urban Age blueprint for cities”, which will chart the accumulation of international knowledge and urban best-practice. This book will be widely distributed in the autumn of 2006, coinciding with the final conference in Berlin.

KEY QUESTIONS

The question for architects, urbanists and mayors is how to plan and manage infrastructure and development without constraining growth, while simultaneously promoting the social and economic benefits of proximity and complexity in compact urban systems. The aspirations are clear, but the actual impact on the social economy of urban communities has yet to be understood. The process of investigation and exchange of the Urban Age will provide clues to the next generation of urban policymakers to better understand these interrelationships and successfully connect the physical arrangement of the built environment to sustainable growth.

Core topics will be discussed at both the larger geographic scale as well as the smaller urban design scale, while simultaneously linking them to the political and decision-making structures by which they are influenced. The specific thematic issues which each core knowledge area will address include:

Labour market and work places

- Cities as accumulation of wealth – where are the jobs and who has access to the jobs?
- Silicon Valley vs. Silicon Alley – rediscovery of the city for face-to-face transactions.
- Centrifugal vs. centripetal dynamics of urbanisation (‘urban sprawl’ vs. ‘urban

centrality’).

- Knowledge based economies and innovation processes (‘innovative clusters’ and ‘innovative milieus’).
- What are the driving forces of the formation and restructuring of the economic bases of cities and the impact on the patterns of urbanisation?
- What are the impacts of globalisation and IT on the economic base and social structure of cities?
- Large scale urban development projects and the role of real estate development.
- How can new spatial structures create future synergies between living, working and leisure?

Public life and urban space

- How do cities promote legitimacy and fairness?
- How can local identity be reflected in globalised built forms?
- What are the effects of increased privatisation and control on the public life of urban communities?
- What resources do cities possess to deal with risks of social disorder and major threats?
- How dependent are cities on decision-making processes at the local, national and supra-national level?
- What are the mechanisms of co-production of safety and security in the urban environment?
- How does the public realm facilitate civic life, engagement, a sense of citizenship and civic pride?

Mobility and transport

- What are the effects of transport systems on urban society, economy and environment?
- What are the characteristic of transport systems in sustainable parts of the city?
- What financing strategies can be utilised as management tools for transport systems?
- How can we use transport and mobility studies to further understand the specific spatial implications of moving people and goods in cities on the level of the everyday experience?
- Are there strategies for incorporating planning for transport at the micro level – such as the design of street and public space, local accessibility to public transport and the experience of ‘being in motion’ – into an overall, city-wide accessibility strategy?

Housing and urban neighbourhoods

- The fragmented, zoned city vs. the integrated, compact city: a policy choice.
- Social exclusion and urban design: creating ghettos of rich and poor or cultivating integration?
- What are the main characteristics of the built form that support inclusive neighbourhoods, allowing for successful family living?
- How do we develop an idea of the ideal urban density, if it exists – or how much variation should be appreciated?
- How can we balance informal housing developments with the need for basic infrastructure?
- What is the logic of ‘shrinking cities’ in the developed world and ‘exploding cities’ in the developing world?

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CONFERENCE DATES AND LOCATIONS

Six cities, representing urban regions in each of the major continents, have been chosen as partner cities for the Urban Age conference series:

NEW YORK/25 AND 26 FEBRUARY 2005 NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

SHANGHAI/7 TO 9 JULY 2005 ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

LONDON/11 TO 13 NOVEMBER 2005 EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE, EUROPEAN MAYORS CONFERENCE

MEXICO CITY/FEBRUARY 2006 LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

JOHANNESBURG/JULY 2006 AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

BERLIN/NOVEMBER 2006 FINAL CONFERENCE



THE LONDON SCHOOL
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EMPOWERING THE CITY: LONDON/NEW YORK

GERALD E. FRUG

All city governments are dysfunctional. But each is dysfunctional in its own way.

Some people treat the city governments of London and New York as being a lot alike. After all, each has an elected Mayor and a separately elected city council or assembly; each is a city with roughly 7-8 million people in a metropolitan area of roughly 18-20 million. If you compare the cities with this kind of similarity in mind, New York seems way ahead of London in terms of the authority it exercises. To give just a few examples, New York has the largest municipal hospital system in the country – with 11 hospitals and more than 100 community health clinics. It educates over 1 million children in primary and secondary schools, provides housing to 420,000 city residents, runs 29 job centers, has 60,000 children in child care programs, provides over 200 shelters for the homeless, operates 1,700 parks, manages the city's water supply, admits 110,000 individuals to its prison facilities every year, and has more than 2000 trucks picking up 12,000 tons of waste every day.

London's city government – the Greater London Authority – does none of these things. None. All of these kinds of services are provided either by the national government or by the 33 local governments within London – London's 32 boroughs and its financial district, the City of London. New York City's government is overwhelmingly a service government – it provides services of an incredible variety and scope to its residents. That's not what London's citywide government is. New York City's government in many ways is more comparable to London's boroughs than it is to the Greater London Authority. In terms of service delivery, London's city-wide government is very weak. From a service point of view, some people think that London should become more like New York.

I think that this is the wrong way to think about the comparison between the two cities in this conference. For our purposes, London's citywide government has a lot to teach New York. The four interconnected themes of Urban Age require us to put together work and home life, public space and private space, the neighbourhoods and the region, cars and mass transit, immigrant businesses and high finance, policy making and urban design, the metropolitan region and the city block. To deal with these issues, New York and London have to think about how and where they should grow. London has the capacity to do this, and New York City doesn't.

In 2004, the Greater London Authority published a document called the London Plan. It lays out a vision of the city in terms of transportation, economic development, housing, public space – along with the environment, social exclusion, tourism, culture, design and many other ingredients. The London Plan envisions London as connected to those around it – to its own Southeast Region in the UK, to northern Europe and the European Union more generally, and, finally, to the world. The London Plan examines both London as a whole and specific sites on specific blocks within the city. It seeks to understand how the different kinds of

questions we raise here fit together – and what to do about them. It is important to emphasise that the Greater London Authority did not just decide to write this plan. It was legally required to do so by an Act of Parliament. To an American reader, it presents the very kind of regional thinking urbanists long for – regional thinking that covers, and organises, the work of 33 constituent municipal governments. True, the document focuses only on Greater London, which itself is only part of the UK's Southeast Region. And London is also only one actor among many focusing on these problems. It has to deal with boroughs, the private sector, other local governments – and above all, the national government. Still, because it comes with force of a statutory mandate, the London Plan is designed to be taken seriously.

For this kind of undertaking, New York City is completely dysfunctional. There is no document such as the London Plan for the City of New York – and no organisation now exists with the authority to write one. There is also no government agency that is thinking about the future of the City of New York in terms of its connection even with the narrowest definition of its region – one that would include the parts of New Jersey right across the Hudson River. It is not that no one is thinking systematically about New York City and its region. The Regional Plan Association has done absolutely terrific work over many decades thinking about these kinds of issues. They have a problem, however. It is not merely that they are a non-profit organisation, rather than a government agency. It is that there is no one they can talk to – the government authority in this region is so fractured that it is hard to get any of the pieces to begin to fit together. Their problem is our problem. We should keep in mind a fundamental question: who could possibly implement any of our ideas?

Like London, New York City can only exercise the power delegated to it by a central government. The Greater London Authority can only do things authorised by Parliament. New York City's power does not come from the national government; the federal government in the United States plays a relatively minor and mostly destructive role in determining local power. Here, New York State exercises the kind of authority over New York City that Parliament exercises over London. Don't be fooled by the phrase home rule. Home rule gives New York City somewhat more leeway when confronted with its centralised government than London has. For example, it gives New York City the power to pass local regulatory ordinances, which the Greater London Authority cannot do. Still, notwithstanding home rule, New York State ultimately remains in control over most of the issues that concern Urban Age – housing, transportation, economic development and the city's finances.

In setting up New York City, New York State has denied it control over many of the most important ingredients of urban life. New York State has fractured government authority in the region by giving power not to the city but to state-controlled public authorities – or quangos, as they are called in Britain. Much of the important development in the city is controlled not by the city but by the Empire State Development Corporation – an agency, appointed by the Governor not the

Mayor, that directly or through subsidiaries, dominates major projects ranging from Ground Zero to Battery Park City to Times Square. The two most important actors on transportation issues are the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is appointed by New York State's Governor, with only 4 of its 17 members recommended by the city; the Port Authority is appointed by two Governors, without any city input. Public space is divided up into more than 50 business improvement districts governed by property owners and not city residents. The Union Square Partnership – the oldest business improvement district in New York – manages the streets on a day-to-day basis. Given all this fragmentation, New York City lacks a vital ability: it does not have the power to plan for, let alone determine, its own future.

One example of this problem comes from the issue of mobility and transport. The Greater London Authority has responsibility for transportation in London – largely through an organisation called Transport for London, whose board is completely appointed by the Mayor. And transportation is very widely defined: it includes the buses and the underground, highways and car traffic, cabs and mini-cabs, walking and cycling. The Mayor and Transport for London have the statutory obligation to make sense of how cars and mass-transit, along with cabs and bicycles, create a city-wide transportation system. Sure, the Mayor of London does not control everything – the railroads, the airports, and major highways are in the hands of the national government (or the private sector) and local streets in the hands of the boroughs. But if the Mayor is energetic and proactive, he can be the key guy on the issue.

New York is miles behind London in thinking about transportation. The state has divided authority over transport in a way that no one could conceivably defend. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority runs New York City's subways and buses, along with the Long Island Railroad; the Port Authority runs the airports, PATH trains to New Jersey, and the Air Train at JFK; New Jersey Transit, appointed by New Jersey's governor, runs its own trains and buses into New York. The Transportation Authority operates nine bridges and tunnels; the Port Authority controls other bridges and tunnels, including the Lincoln Tunnel and the George Washington Bridge; the New York City's Department of Transportation controls still other bridges and tunnels, such as the 59th Street Bridge. The highways are run by the New York and New Jersey State Departments of Transportation. The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission licenses the city's taxis. Transportation, you should know, is the area for which the federal government is most insistent on metropolitan planning. The problem for New York is that there are many metropolitan transportation planning bodies in the area, not just one. One deals with New York City and a few nearby New York suburbs; another one deals with New Jersey; yet another deals with Connecticut. No one, starting from scratch, would devise a transport and mobility structure like this one. To declare this set up a scandal would be a waste of time. Everyone knows it is a scandal; it has been a scandal for decades.

The basic difference between New York and London can be summarised very simply. New York State has given New York City a heart, but no brain. Parliament has given London a brain, but no muscle. And a brain is what a city needs at this moment on the kinds of issues we are addressing. By saying this I mean no disrespect whatsoever to the officials of either city – New York has many very smart people working on the city's future and London has many who are physically strong. It is the city government, not its employees, that I am referring to here: it is the New York City government that has been denied the ability to think about, let alone take control of, its own future.

London shows that this is not necessary. The State of New York could authorise the Mayor to work with others – public and private, regional and neighbourhood – to prepare something like the London Plan. It can give him the power to bring the multiple public authorities into compliance with his plan. If a more regional organisation is thought better, the states of New York and New Jersey can together create a democratically accountable organisation – democratically organised like the Greater London Authority – empowered to write such a plan. This could be done today if the political leadership took seriously the importance of nurturing New York as a global city. That is the vision of London that animates the London Plan. Many people will call this idea utopian, but it is only utopian because the state has set up the city – and the region – in a way that makes it hard to do. Changing this requires the kind of political muscle that in 1986 abolished the London-wide government and that, now, has created a new one to help guide its future. We could use the exercise of that kind of muscle here.

Gerald E. Frug is the Louis D. Brandeis Professor of Law at Harvard Law School

EMPOWERING THE CITY: LONDON/NEW YORK

RICHARD SENNETT

All the cities selected for Urban Age are big. Some of these cities, like Shanghai and Mexico City, are experiencing rapid growth on a scale which has little precedent in history; others, like London and New York, are mature but still growing; yet again, cities like Berlin face the real prospect of decline. The question is what these very different places can learn from one another.

I would like to explore one answer which may seem odd. It concerns civility. By 'civility' I do not mean good manners; the word implies more deeply the capacity of people who differ to live together. It further implies that people who are of different races, classes, or religions can live together without daily control by the state – that the complexity of social life does not require policemen. This should be the promise of urban life: the city's diversity of urban life becoming a source of mutual strength rather than a source of mutual estrangement and civic bitterness.

To make sense of this ideal in the cities of our time means a certain change in the way we think about "difference." In Europe and North America, we have emphasised differences in identity – what makes Germans and Turks, or Americans and Mexicans culturally different. In the cities of China, India, or Mexico itself, cultural differences matter much less than differences in wealth and social class: the vast shanty-towns of Latin America, South Asia and tropical Africa attest to this expanding gap between rich and poor. To understand the scale of this class difference, we might recall that of Mexico City's current population of 18 million, the United Nations estimates that 42% of its citizens are at or just above the poverty line; in Shanghai, the East's fabled tiger of growth, the estimates are that currently 35% of its population is in the same state.

Can 'civility' have any practical significance under these conditions? I want to argue that it does – that indeed we can learn something from the experience of differences in cultural identity about how to civilise economic differences. In this regard, I want to consider the history of Jews in cities, a scorned and feared 'Other' in European civilisation. Their urban existence took three forms – forms which foreshadow the problems of living in difference today faced by quite different peoples in other cities on the globe.

The first of the ways Jews, as outsiders, lived in cities is encapsulated in the Jewish Ghetto of Renaissance Venice. Jews were necessary to the city not only as merchant traders but also as doctors and scribes; doctoring then was dangerous and low-paid work which Christians avoided. Most merchant traders spoke languages the Venetians themselves did not know, but this skill was also low-paid. These necessary strangers lived in an enclosed place which consisted of three islands linked together by a set of draw-bridges. During the day Jews worked in the city, at dusk they returned to the Ghetto islands, the bridges were drawn up, the outsiders shut in for the night with police boats policing the outside.

The reason for this arrangement is that the Venice lacked civility of the fundamental sort. During Lent Jews were attacked as the supposed killers of Christ; at times of plague

they were attacked as the supposed poisoners of wells. Prejudices against them were so strong that they could survive only in isolation with protection from the state – the patrol boats were meant as much to keep others out as Jews penned up within. So here was a model of urban difference without civility, requiring the state to perform the office of peace-keeping which civil society could not.

To understand the second model, skip to Berlin at the end of the 18th Century. Jews at that time and place were tolerated in civil society, so long as in public they effaced any expression of what made them different. Jews lived throughout Berlin; though barred from the army and the universities, they enjoyed a measure of other legal rights which a Venetian Jew could not have imagined. These rights attached to the city's many poor as well as its relatively few rich Jews. But all paid a price. People turned on them whenever they asserted their own particularity in public; in practice this meant, for instance, that Jews were at liberty to worship within synagogues but attacked when they built booths or shrines outside during religious festivals. Berlin Judaism, in the words of Moses Mendelssohn, was the religion of closed doors and shuttered windows, not a religion of the streets.

This model of civility exchanged inclusion for identity. The exchange, rather like current debates about the headscarf for Muslim young women in French schools, supposed that civil society and more largely citizenship required its own unitary identity; you could not be different and still be connected to others. On the streets of Enlightenment Berlin, as in French schools now, the dominant culture became a universal standard for all.

The third way Jews lived in cities is embodied by the experience of London's East-End Jews in the early years of the 20th century. These were almost entirely poor Jews. So accustomed are we to the stereotype of the upwardly-mobile Jew that we fail to appreciate how many urban Jews were rooted, long-term, in poverty – which was the case for these Jews, clustered around Brick Lane and its environs, the home now to many equally poor Bangladeshis. This was not a protected ghetto, as was Renaissance Venice, nor was it a space of secret identity, as was Jewish life in 18th century Berlin. Rather it was a space abandoned to its own devices by the dominant culture.

Leslie Stephen, a reasonably humane late Victorian, said of this Jewish community, "they live as they like, without being any trouble to us." The reason for this was that the dominant culture did not much trouble about them. Here lies the secret of the third model: civility based on indifference. The Jews of the East End were free as their forbearers were not; indifference had made that gift. But the result of such toleration was mutual ignorance; the denizens of this "unfathomable London," as E.M. Foster called it, did not participate in a larger collective life. The Berlin model had repressed identity for sake of a common citizenship; the London model repressed urban citizenship for the sake of this peculiar form of civility.

What do these three cultural models suggest about cities today in which economic inequalities matter most?

Of the three, the model of the Venetian ghetto, by one of

history's ironies, is the way the rich increasingly protect themselves against the poor. Every time a gated community is built, a new ghetto comes into existence; every time a prosperous community is ringed by parks, or separated by the impenetrable barriers of a highway, a soft ghetto is created to protect inside. We need to discuss how effective these modern ghettos are in coping with crime; what I wish to emphasise is that, old or new, this form of settlement has given up on civility as a project. It supposes that differences need to be policed.

The Berlin model is in a way the most idealistic. It supposes that the traces of near-poverty, like Jewishness, can somehow be hidden or discounted. Lest you think that this is absurd, I would remind you that this was Hannah Arendt's image of a good city, one in which people spoke and dealt with others without reckoning how rich or poor were those they addressed. It is, more ambiguously, the ideal of Islam's power to unify which animates those in many Muslim cities today: a universal culture which discounts material differences. The experience of the Berlin Jews shows the problem here: universal cultures can be repressive. To put this in another context, I'd cite to you the remark of one of Ceaucescu's city planners, leading a visiting delegation from one standardised building complex to the next: "you see how relentlessly modern we are!" Universalism can become a smoke-screen for hiding inequalities, as though they do not matter, which in the case of the mass of poor and near-poor in developing cities they clearly do.

Which leaves us with the third, London model, which is indeed, I am afraid to say, the future as matters now stand. Dissociation as a version of civility. Fragmentation as a form of freedom. A social compromise which works against shared citizenship. A helicopter flight over Cairo, Mexico City, or for that matter Los Angeles shows these proposition made into physical reality. Many planning strategies unwittingly lead to this dead-end, as when we try to decrease density by pushing new development outward, rather than gather it inward within the city. Or again, the London model springs to life whenever we locate public services in the geographic centre of a particular community rather than at the edge where that community touches on another of different character.

It's a cliché to say that cities are complex social organisms, but complexity is inert if differences do not interact.

How streets are laid out, public spaces organised, transportation designed, housing woven into the fabric of the city – all these concrete physical practices make a difference to the sociological experience of urban space. If I could translate the social problem of civility into visual terms, I would say it consists in finding ways to knit the city together without homogenising it. Many of the existing formulas planners use for knitting, such as mixed-use development, fail in actual practice to knit. This project is thus a foray into developing new practices, as much as it aims to share amongst urbanists what we already know.

There is one way in which cultural difference cannot be compared to economic inequality. When civility in the city works well, people acquire multiple identities. This was the story of many of New York's Jews, and also more recently of

many of the city's Afro-Caribbeans, Koreans and Indians, whose work identities outside the home community have been grafted onto race, religion or ethnicity. When civility fails in the city, identities remain singular rather than compound; someone who can be easily stereotyped is more vulnerable to discrimination than someone with a more complex social identity.

Economic 'civility' is not a matter of such multiple identification, the bourgeois sentimentally identifying with the poor. Rather, a more worldly recognition that civic indifference – my third model – has up to this point marked giant cities like Sao Paulo or Bombay, and that indifference is an unsustainable condition; these cities will explode, as did European cities in the 19th century under similar economic conditions. What we learn from culture about economics is perhaps ironic: toleration is not the goal, rather, active inclusion.

Richard Sennett is Professor of Sociology at the LSE and MIT

QUOTES: URBAN AGE NEW YORK CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 2005

It is worth reminding ourselves that we are at a point in time where more than half of the world's population lives in cities, and that number is increasing exponentially, particularly in the developing world.

Ricky Burdett, Centennial Professor in Architecture and Urbanism, London School of Economics and Political Science

Civility means that the diversity of urban life becomes a source of mutual strength rather than a source of estrangement and civic bitterness. In the past this issue has been framed in terms of ethnicity or culture and in the current period of inequality I think it needs to be increasingly framed in terms of economics.

Richard Sennett, Professor of Sociology, London School of Economics and Political Science and MIT

Architecture has a role in the manufacturing of identity in urban contexts and the unique ability to make something visible long before it has actually happened. Architecture creates a sense of what a city is like. It is what we use to identify a city. It is an apparently extremely primitive totem pole, and yet this ancient throwback has never been more in demand than it is now.

Deyan Sudjic, Architectural Critic,
The Observer

Governance is clearly more important than ever. The management of complexity in places where rights, knowledge and education now rightly have been allowed to give a voice to neighbourhoods and individuals means that the task of governing cities is more complex than ever before. City-wide interests conflict with the most local of interests and it clearly takes the legitimacy of city leaders to bring about change. Examples such as Bogotá's cycle ways, Washington's renaissance, New York's control of its education system, or London's congestion charge would not have come to fruition without the legitimacy of ballot boxes.

Tony Travers, Director, Greater London Group, London School of Economics and Political Science

The impact of broad demographic, market and cultural forces is also remaking the suburbs. With suburbs taking on a greater share of America's population, they are beginning to look more and more like traditional cities, in population and in form. Low density sprawl still dominates by far the physical landscape, but it is clear that the market increasingly emphasises the urban in suburban.

Bruce Katz, Vice President and Director, Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institute

For researchers and policy makers, I think one of the critical strategies is to disaggregate the global economy into the multiple highly specialised circuits that compose it, from the many highly specialised financial systems to the small and semi-formal international real estate markets that immigrants set up. When you conduct this operation, two things happen. First, you can actually study this very slippery concept of the 'global'. More importantly, for those of us concerned with cities, you can locate your city on many global circuits and detect the links and strategic geographies that connect it to a whole bunch of other cities.

Saskia Sassen, Professor of Political Economy, London School of Economics and Political Science

I get the sense that, in the economic realm, we are essentially accepting the neo-liberal global economic agenda when we think of cities as reactive mechanisms. E.g. it goes without saying that there are no more manufacturing jobs in New York, but the implication of that goes unexplored, even when it has a series of important meanings for the environment. We talk often about the opportunity to walk to your job, but, on the other hand, wider environmental issues are ignored. A small example, but not a trivial one: to send one kiwi fruit from New Zealand to London requires the emission of five times the weight of the fruit in greenhouse gases. We will need to be more inclusive in our discussions of urban economic self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Michael Sorkin, Principal, Michael Sorkin Studio, New York

New York City does work, but it could work a lot better. For the money we invest in our health system, we don't need the infant mortality rates that we see in Harlem and other parts of the city; for the amounts that we invest in transport, we don't need to see our subway system lingering on the edge of collapse; for the money that we invest in housing, we don't have to have housing that has twenty-year lives and thirty-year mortgages. We could do a lot for the people living in low-income housing. We don't have to segregate our communities.

Ronald Schiffman, Professor, Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment, Pratt Institute

GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING

I look at citizens just as nuclear power. Properly channelled and harnessed, nuclear power can power the city, otherwise it can destroy it. It is my goal to try to channel and inspire that citizen power to drive a new agenda for our city. In my humble estimation, when you are a mayor you go for the 80-

20 or 70-30 rule. Most of the time you act in the “butler” function – you are basically just taking orders and delivering the services as well as you can. But twenty or thirty percent of the time you are in business because you believe there is a “trustee” function. It is your job to keep citizens satisfied so you can work on those functions of initiating agendas for change, the important planning functions of city government.

Anthony Williams, Mayor of Washington D.C.

I think that in every city, but particularly cities in the developing world, urban design can be an extremely powerful tool to construct equality and integration. Even if we do not have income equality, we can aspire to construct equality in the distribution of quality of life when we act so that the public good prevails over private interests. Just to mention a local example: if the hundreds of miles of waterfront that New York has were used for public space rather than private land, a lot of equality would be created.

Enrique Peñalosa, Mayor of Bogota
1997–1999

Rather than the beginning of an urban age, I think we are witnessing the end of one, and the dawn of a metropolitan, or even megalopolitan age. The vast urbanised areas or networked cities of today are the new unit of production and urban activity. They need to be discussed and mentioned. In terms of governance, neither New York nor London – the thirty one county tri-state region NY-NJ-CT metropolitan area and what Peter Hall calls “Roseland” England – the rest of the South East stretching from Portsmouth to Ipswich – has any kind of regional governance system nor an official regional plan.

Robert Yaro, President, Regional Plan Association

Throughout the world there is a tension between cities and higher political entities. While the powerlessness of cities is often discussed, I want to point out the actual powers that cities do have to control their own destinies. Land-use and planning is probably the area where cities exercise their power the most significantly. Throughout my career, I have never ever seen a time when the City of New York was not creating, setting and trying to implement the land-use and planning agenda. Every significant project that has taken place in New York City, and every strategy, has been driven by the Mayor, not by the Governor, not by any regional authorities, but by the Mayor.

Carl Weisbrod, President, New York Downtown Alliance

LABOUR MARKETS AND WORKPLACE

Despite the dictum that the telecommunications revolution would eliminate the need for face-to-face contact and make cities obsolete, metropolitan areas today represent privileged locations of firms in the field of new media, internet services, financial-business, design and other forms of knowledge and cultural production. We must not forget urban manufacturing either. This “silent partner” in the urban economy supports other key sectors, such as the creative, cultural and health care industries, at the same time that it serves as a gateway to social integration by providing important employment opportunities with low entry barriers for people with different cultural backgrounds and qualifications.

Dieter Läßle, Professor of Urban and Regional Economics,
TU Hamburg-Harburg

New York has lost diversity in terms of the sectoral composition of its economy. The project-by-project orientation of its core industries also has particular implications for the spaces of the city, both public spaces and quasi-public, or what I call liminal spaces of informal negotiation and deal-making. It creates a particular kind of urban energy but also a fragmented and contested city, composed of villages and districts.

Susan Christopherson, Professor, City and Regional Planning
Department, Cornell University

In architecture, we may be witnessing a shift of gear from the pursuit of physical flexibility that represents change to a search for formal qualities that inspire change without imposing it – the kind of resilience found in armatures such as grids, intensities of surfaces and suggested voids. Our “risk-society”, as sociologist Ulrich Beck reminds us, needs to realise that technological cures are inadequate for many of its problems, caused by technology itself. Instead, social logics and complexities will need to be made more accessible to all members of society. I would like to think of the new outputs in architecture research as a step in that direction.

Hashim Sarkis, Professor of Urban Planning and Design,
Harvard Graduate School of Design

Global businesses now operate very differently from what they did a decade ago. I am deeply impressed by the impact that information technologies have had on every aspect of work. Assumptions of co-location and synchrony no longer correspond with the realities of these businesses, we need a radical change from the assumptions on which the architecture of cities in the 19th and 20th century was

based. We have to be inventive in the way we design, deliver and manage buildings. The workplace needs to be prepared for mobility, volatility, permeability and complementarity of the big and the small, what is internal to the firm and what is not.

Frank Duffy, Founder, DEGW

New York and other world cities generate on the one hand wealth, knowledge and creativity, but on the other, inequality, segregation and poverty. As much as we need policies to sustain the positives, we need to wrestle with the negative and think of how to get healthcare benefits to workers in a flexible labour force; how to insure minimum livable wages; how to protect the manufacturing jobs that provide entry-level opportunities and are now threatened by the rise in real estate values; how to create mixed-use spaces that also benefit low-income communities.

Brad Lander, Director, Center for Community and Environmental Development, Pratt Institute

TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY

When you compare the prices of parking lots and street parking in central Manhattan, you can see that the latter is subsidised by \$17 per hour. This is a highly inefficient and inequitable land-use decision for public space in the core of such an important world economic centre. I think that New York has good chances in terms of a sustainable future.

Small qualitative changes can have big quantitative effects.

Hermann Knoflacher, Professor of Transport Planning and Traffic Engineering, TU Vienna

In transport, we do not really need new ideas or innovative planning solutions, they are all on the table. What we need is 21st century organisational structures, we need new models for our agencies, agencies that deal with innovative funding, with the fact that there are stake-holder groups involved, that the systems that were once seen as independent are now highly interactive.

Robert E. Paaswell, Director, Institute for Urban Systems, CUNY

New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority needs an inflation-sensitive source of revenues that will fund the continuation of the capital investment in this system, and that's just for maintaining the existing system in a state of good repair, let alone the expansions needed to build a stronger city and bring more people into the central business district. It is both an intellectual curiosity and a political shame that people will not connect the dots

between the fiscal resources and infrastructure needs.

Richard Ravitch, Principal, Ravitch, Rice & Company, New York

Architecture can help us re-think the potentials and possibilities of integrating urban transportation systems and urban structures. Buildings have been traditionally designed to contain static populations and activities. Yet, as capitalism evolves towards what has been described as a regime of flexible accumulation, the amount of people that are engaged in dynamic activities is increasingly large. One possible contribution to respond to the increasing demands on mass transport is to change the way we conceive stations. To think of the transportation terminal as an object, an aesthetic monument not connected to the social and commercial tissues of the city, is a missed opportunity to explore more contemporary forms of transportation space.

Alejandro Zaera-Polo, Joint Director, Foreign Office Architects, London

PUBLIC LIFE AND URBAN SPACE

Public space embodies a sense of belonging to the wider political community through an architecture of sympathy, it conveys a sense of safety in the crowd. Security is a "thick" public good, the most basic instrument to the preservation of liberté, égalité et fraternité. In this age of terrorist threats and sometimes unjustified fears, institutions know how to protect their cities better. But the political meaning of cities remains extraordinarily powerful: the repertoires of people trying modestly to get along in their neighbourhoods have never been more important. They join and co-produce solutions together with their differences, as the Brooklynites of Paul Auster's books and films often do.

Sophie Body-Gendrot, Professor of Political Science and American Studies and Director, Center for Urban Studies, Sorbonne

The crime problems and insecurity issues that New Yorkers still face are spatially concentrated in specific neighbourhoods and call for solutions that reflect the unique problems in those neighbourhoods. Also, one cannot have a conversation on crime in New York City, or any other American city, for that matter, or in London as I understand developments there, without talking about race. The efforts of legal institutions in the city to control crime created a racial breach which is quite severe. There is a deep distrust of the police and a lack of willingness to cooperate in

investigations among minority populations.

Jeff Fagan, Professor of Law and Public Health, Columbia University Law School

There is simply no proven connection between former Mayor Guiliani's theatrics of security and the decline in crime in New York. That would suggest that the choice of repression versus security is indeed a false dilemma. When we look at the role of design in this context of great indeterminacy, two positions can be taken. We can demand that the designers design for security and create designs that respond physically to threats. But we can also go also back to the most old fashioned of ideas for design and that is to design for delight. That is the default position for design, and appropriately so.

Harvey Molotch, Professor of Sociology, New York University

We see a new kind of rhetoric: the word "gentrification" for example, was clearly negative ten years ago and in places like this conference it is very noticeable that it is now used with clearly positive connotations. "City centre" is reduced to film screening, music, shopping, and fashion... We see a systematic laundering of the urban condition in the name of these four categories. Increasingly, the design of urban space has become a hyper-nostalgic celebration of its absence, another form of its denial.

Rem Koolhaas, Principal, Office for Metropolitan Architecture, Rotterdam

HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

New York City is indeed built out to its edges and yet it is now undergoing unprecedented immigration and population growth. This is a tremendous challenge to those of us in charge of planning this city. We must find places to channel this growth, while preserving neighbourhood character. We have a challenge to provide, in those neighbourhoods where we can grow, enough density to ensure affordability. Enough density to leverage open public space. Enough density to provide vitality and vibrancy of neighbourhoods, while respecting the built fabric of adjacent communities.

Amanda Burden, Director, Planning Department, NYC

We see incentives in zoning policy and the links between additional density and the creation of affordable housing as a bedrock way of fighting the potential increased segregation that the city may face as the result of rising real estate values. There has been great attention paid in US social policy to how to break concentrations of poverty. Compared to this "pull" of integration policy, not enough

attention has been given to the mechanisms to insure that any new community that we are creating, e.g. through re-zoning, is inclusive from its very beginning in terms of both income and race.

Shaun Donovan, Commissioner, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

The urban age that we talk about is, of course, a by-product and a pre-condition for the global economy as it is also part of the new economy. The new economy, however, relies on disparities. In the US, for example, eleven of the twenty fastest growing job categories are in the service sector, each of which pays less than two times minimum wage. I would suggest that if urban areas prosper, the agglomeration economies that support that growth will create even more disparities. The challenge in the housing sector is that as long as we consider housing a merit good, we will see an increasing disconnection between those labour markets and the housing market.

Nick Retsinas, Director, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University

I get quite impatient with how architects discuss what the city is. They are often insular and small in their view of what urban and social issues are. One of the things that we need is to change the bourgeois point of view and then begin to see the city from the point of view of poor people, in fact the majority of the people that live in cities today. When you take that standpoint you begin to understand concepts such as 'community' in a different light. Upper-middle class professionals may feel that urban societies have left the need for community behind. But for poor people community is essential, they need to aggregate in order not to be powerless and to create change. The same goes for inclusionary zoning, increasing FARs from 4 to 4.7 in re-zoning schemes to create affordability so poor people can live there does not really address the need to replace the lost jobs so that the same people can secure their livelihoods.

Max Bond, Max Bond Architects