PART ONE
The Study of Urban Geography

1
Urban Geography
from global to local

Preview: the study of urban geography; global triggers of urban change—economy, technology, demography, politics, society, culture, environment; globalisation; localisation of the global; the meaning of geographic scale; local and historical contingency; processes of urban change; urban outcomes; daily life in the global village; why study urban geography?

INTRODUCTION

Urban geography seeks to explain the distribution of towns and cities and the socio-spatial similarities and contrasts that exist between and within them. If all cities were unique, this would be an impossible task. However, while every town and **city** has an individual character, **urban places** also exhibit common features that vary only in degree of incidence or importance within the particular urban fabric. All cities contain areas of residential space, transportation lines, economic activities, service infrastructure, commercial areas and public buildings. In different world regions the historical process of urban evolution may have followed a similar trajectory. Increasingly, similar processes, such as those of suburbanisation, gentrification and socio-spatial segregation, are operating within cities in the developed world, in former communist states and in countries of the Third World to effect a degree of convergence in the nature of urban landscapes. Cities also exhibit common problems to varying degrees, including inadequate housing, economic decline, **poverty,** ill health, social **polarisation,** traffic **congestion** and environmental **pollution**. In brief, many characteristics and concerns are shared by urban places. These shared characteristics and concerns represent the foundations for the study of urban geography. Most fundamentally, the character of urban environments throughout the world is the outcome of interactions among a host of environmental, economic, technological, social, demographic, cultural and political forces operating at a variety of geographic scales ranging from the global to the local.

In this book we approach the study of urban geography from a *global perspective*. This acknowledges the importance of macro-scale structural factors in urban development, but also recognises the reciprocal relationship between global forces and locally contingent factors in creating and recreating the geography of towns and cities. A global perspective also demonstrates the interdependence of urban places in the

contemporary world, and facilitates comparative urban analysis by revealing common and contrasting features of cities in different cultural regions.

The framework we shall employ in our study of urban geography is depicted in Figure 1.1. In reading from left to right, we move from the global to the local scale. This schematic diagram highlights the major 'trigger factors' and processes underlying contemporary urban change, as well as the principal urban outcomes of these processes. In this chapter we examine the nature of these factors and processes, and the relationship between global and local forces in the construction of contemporary urban environments.

GLOBAL TRIGGER FACTORS

THE ECONOMY

Economic forces are regarded as the dominant influence on urban change. Since its emergence in
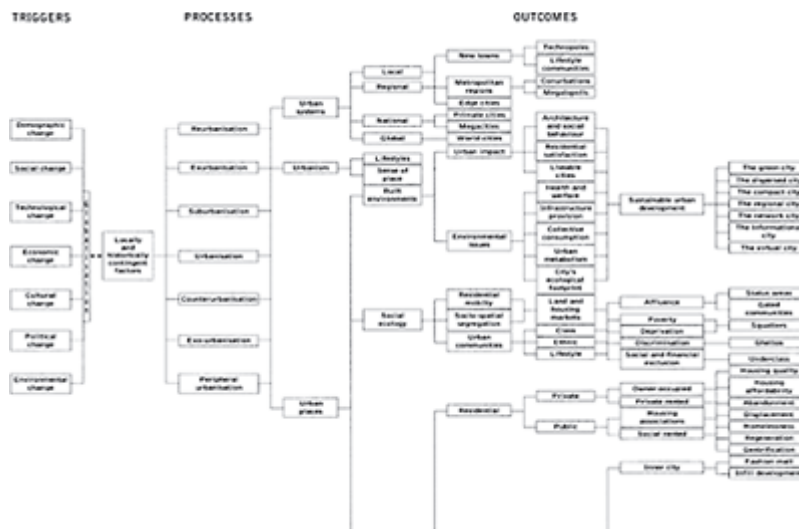

Figure 1.1 Triggers, processes and outcomes in urban geography

the sixteenth century, the capitalist economy has entered three main phases. The first phase, from the late sixteenth century until the late nineteenth century, was an era of *competitive **capitalism*** characterised by free-market competition between locally oriented businesses, and *laissez-faire* economic (and urban) development largely unconstrained by government regulation. In the course of the nineteenth century the scale of business increased, consumer markets expanded to become national and international, labour markets became more organised as wage-rate norms spread and government intervention in the economy grew in response to the need for regulation of public affairs. By the turn

of the century these accumulated trends had culminated in the advent of *organised capitalism*. The dynamism of the economic system—the basis of profitability—was enhanced in the early decades of the twentieth century by the introduction of **Fordism**. This economic philosophy was founded on the principles of mass production using assembly-line techniques and 'scientific' management (known as Taylorism), together with mass consumption fuelled by higher wages and high-pressure marketing techniques. Fordism also involved a generally mutually beneficial working relationship between **capital** (business) and labour (trade unions), mediated by government when necessary to maintain the health of the national economy.

The third and current phase of capitalism developed in the period following the Second World War. It was marked by a shift away from industrial production towards services (particularly financial services) as the basis for profitability. Paradoxically, the explanation for this shift lay in part with the very success of Fordism. As mass markets became saturated and profits from mass production declined, many enterprises turned to serve specialised 'niche markets'. Instead of standardised production, specialisation required flexible production systems. This current phase of capitalism is referred to as *advanced capitalism* or *disorganised capitalism* (to distinguish it from the organised nature of the Fordist era). The transition to advanced capitalism was accompanied by an increasing **globalisation** of the economy in which **transnational corporations** (TNCs) operated often beyond the control of national governments or labour unions (see Chapter 14).

The evolution of the capitalist economy is of fundamental significance for urban geography, since each new phase of capitalism involved changes in what was produced, how it was produced and *where* it was produced. This meant that 'new industrial spaces' (based, for example, on semiconductor production rather than shipbuilding) and new forms of city (such as a **technopole** instead of a heavy industrial centre) were required.[1]

TECHNOLOGY

Technological changes, which are integral to economic change, also influence the pattern of urban growth and change. Innovations such as the advent of global telecommunications have had a marked impact on the structure and functioning of the global economy. This is illustrated by the **new international division of labour** in which production is separated geographically from research and development (R&D) and higher-level management operations, while almost instantaneous contact is maintained between all the units in the manufacturing process, no matter where in the world each is located.

The effects of macro-level technological change are encapsulated in the concept of economic long waves or cycles of expansion and contraction in the rate of economic development (see Chapter 14). The first of these cycles of innovation (referred to as **Kondratieff cycles**) was based on early mechanisation by means of water power and steam engines, while the most recent (and still incomplete) cycle is based on micro-electronics, digital telecommunications, robotics and biotechnology. The different technology eras represented by Kondratieff cycles shape not only the economy but also the pace and character of **urbanisation** and urban change. Modification of the urban environment occurs most vigorously during up-cycles of economic growth.

Technological changes that directly affect urban form also occur at the local level. Prominent examples include the manner in which advances in transportation technology promoted suburbanisation (see Chapter 7) or how the invention of the high-speed elevator facilitated the development of skyscrapers in cities such as New York.

DEMOGRAPHY

Demographic changes are among the most direct influences on urbanisation and urban change. Movements of people, into and out from cities, shape the size, configuration and social composition of cities. In Third World countries expectations of improved living standards draw millions of migrants into cities (see Chapter 23), while for many urban dwellers in the West the 'good life' is realised through suburbanisation or exurbanisation. The condition of the urban environment can also affect the demographic structure of cities by influencing the balance between rates of fertility and mortality. Intra-urban variations in health are pronounced in Third World cities where well above average mortality rates are recorded in overcrowded squatter areas (see Chapter 27), but socio-spatial differences in health status are also characteristic of many Western cities. Demographic changes are related to other 'trigger factors' such as economic growth or decline, and political change. For example, population growth in a Third World country may induce political attempts to restrict **migration,** whether within the country to control **'overurbanisation'** or between countries, as along the Mexico-USA border.

POLITICS

Cities reflect the political ideology of their society. The urban impact of political change is demonstrated by the case of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (see Chapter 5). During the middle fifty years of the twentieth century the development of **new towns** and reorganisation of existing cities reflected the imperatives of a **command economy** and centralised political apparatus. The planned **socialist city** was intended to promote national economic development and to foster social and spatial **equity** in **collective consumption**. Accordingly, high priority was afforded to urban industrial development and the construction of large estates of public housing. With the collapse of communism and relaxation of strict urban land-use controls, capitalist tendencies such as suburbanisation and social differentiation in housing are becoming increasingly evident. An example of how local-regional changes can have a global impact is the way in which the end of the Cold War influenced the cities of the US **sunbelt**/gunbelt, whose economies had been dependent on defence-related industries.[2]

Within Western societies, changes in political ideology and subsequent modifications of economic and urban policy have had major impacts on city development. The rise of the **New Right** governments of Ronald Reagan in the USA and Margaret Thatcher in the UK led to reductions in public expenditure and increased dependence upon the private sector in urban development. This is evident in the rise of agencies such as **urban development corporations** and **enterprise zones,** public-private partnership schemes, property-led urban regeneration, and strategies such as the private finance initiative in the UK (see Chapter 16). Politics and economics exist in a reciprocal relationship, the outcomes of which can have a major impact on urban change. On the one hand, the

formulation of urban policy may be influenced by political forces such as the opposition of middle-class suburban voters to increased taxation to pay for inner-city services. On the other hand, a political decision by central government not to provide a financial incentive package to attract inward investment by a foreign-owned TNC can affect the future economic prosperity of a city and its residents.

SOCIETY

Macro-scale social changes can have a significant impact on the character of towns and cities. For example, social attitudes towards abortion or use of artificial methods of birth control may influence the demographic composition of a society and its cities. Popular attitudes towards ethnic or lifestyle minorities can determine migration flows between countries and cities, as well as underlying patterns of residential **segregation** within cities. This is evident in recent trends towards increased suburbanisation of the African-American population in the USA, which has been facilitated not only by the economic advancement of individuals and households but by changing social attitudes to the education, employment and residential status of minorities (see Chapter 18). In a similar manner, the attitude of society towards other minority groups, such as single-parent households, the unemployed, disabled people and elderly people, and towards women, conditions their status and location in the city (see Chapter 19).

CULTURE

One of the most significant of cultural changes in Western society in the post-Second World War era, particularly from the late 1970s onwards, has been the rise of materialism. This is displayed in conspicuous consumption by those who can afford it. At the urban scale this is manifested in the appearance of a 'cappuccino society' characterised by stores selling designer clothes, wine bars, pavement cafés, **gentrification,** yuppies (young upwardly mobile professionals), marbles (married and responsible but loaded executives), and bumper stickers proclaiming 'Dear Santa, I want it all.' It is also evident in an increasing gap between rich and poor in cities (see Chapter 15). While some observers claim to have identified signs of an emerging 'post-consumerism', materialism remains a dominant cultural influence in urban society.

The effect of cultural change on cities is encapsulated in the concept of postmodernity or **post-modernism** (see Chapter 2). This embraces social difference and celebrates variation in urban environments, whether expressed in architectural or social terms. Youth cultures have flourished in some urban settings (for example, in inner-city ethnic areas energised by hip-hop and rap music), as have alternative lifestyle communities such as the gay districts of West Hollywood in Los Angeles or Pad-dington in Sydney. Postmodern **urbanism** is also evident in the growth of **cultural industries** (related to media and the arts) and in the regeneration (and place marketing) of historic urban districts such as Gastown in Vancouver, Covent Garden in London or the Merchant City in Glasgow.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The impacts of environmental change on patterns of urbanisation and urban change are seen at a number of geographic scales. At the planetary scale, global warming due to the greenhouse effect (caused in part by the waste outputs of urban civilisation) may require the construction of coastal defences to protect cities such as Bangkok, Jakarta, Venice and London from the danger of inundation. Equally, any significant deflection of the North Atlantic Drift current (the Gulf Stream) which carries warm water from the Caribbean to the coasts of Britain and northern Europe would affect local weather patterns and require a costly response from cities in terms of urban infrastructure such as improved winter heating systems, public transport and road maintenance. At the local scale, 'natural' phenomena such as earthquakes and landslides can force the abandonment of settlements (for example, Third World **squatter settlements** constructed on marginal lands) or require major works of reconstruction, as in Mexico City after the 1985 earthquake.

For reasons of clarity we have examined each of these important 'trigger factors' independently. In practice, of course, they are interrelated and operate simultaneously along with other local-scale factors to influence urban change. These trigger factors are integral elements in the processes of *globalisation*.

GLOBALISATION

Globalisation is a term used to describe a complex of related processes that has served to increase the interconnectedness of social life in the (post) modern world[3] (Box 1.1). For Robertson (1992 p. 8), the concept refers 'both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole'.[4] Globalisation is evident in three forms:

1. *economic globalisation:* seen in arrangements for the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services (such as the rise of TNCs, the new international division of labour, increases in foreign direct investment, flexible forms of production and a global financial system).[5]
2. *political globalisation:* seen in arrangements for the concentration and application of **power** (such as the growth of multi-state political-economic groupings, and consideration of local issues within global context).[6]
3. *cultural globalisation:* seen in arrangements for the production, exchange and expression of symbols that represent facts, meanings, beliefs, preferences, tastes and values (such as the global distribution of images and information, and the emergent cosmopolitanism of urban life).[7]

Significantly, there is a reflexive relationship between the global and the local. While global forces lead to change in the city, cities modify and embed globalisation within a local context. Within the global-local nexus, global forces are generally held to be most powerful and their control more spatially extensive. Local forces are seen to be relatively

weaker and geographically limited in effect. However, it is important not to allow the discourse of globalisation to obscure the fact that urban

---

BOX 1.1

Principal characteristics of globalisation

1. Globalisation is not a new phenomenon. The processes of globalisation have been ongoing throughout human history, but the rate of progress and its effects have accelerated since the 'early modern' period of the late sixteenth century, and more especially over the past few decades in tandem with the transition towards postmodernity.
2. Globalisation involves both an intensification of worldwide social relations through time-space compression of the globe, and local transformations involving enhancement of local identity as well as of local consciousness of the world as a whole.
3. In the global-local nexus, global forces are generally held to be most powerful and their control more spatially extensive. Local forces are seen to be relatively weaker and geographically limited in effect, although certain local actions can have global consequences.
4. Globalisation takes place in cities, but the relationship between the city and global processes is **dialectic**. While global forces lead to changes in the city, cities modify and embed globalisation within local context.
5. Global forces are mediated by locally and historically contingent forces as they penetrate downwards, coming to ground in particular places.
6. A number of 'trigger forces' underlie globalisation but the dominant force is generally regarded as economic.
7. Globalisation reduces the influence of nation-states and political boundaries at the same time that states are organising the legal and financial infrastructures that enable capitalism to operate globally.
8. Globalisation operates unevenly, bypassing certain institutions, people and places. This is evident at the global scale in the disparities between booming and declining regions and at the urban scale by social polarisation within cities.
9. The differing interests of actors means that global forces are sometimes embraced, resisted or exploited at lower levels.
10. The mobility of capital diminishes the significance of particular places, although it may also strengthen local identity by engendering a defensive response by local actors.
11. The location of agents that command, control and finance the global economy defines a global city. These are the bases from which transnational corporations (TNCs) launch offensives around the world. The extent to which cities achieve global status is a major determinant of their prosperity.

---

change is not effected by global forces alone. As we shall see in the course of the book, national, regional and local agents are also of significance. For example, national taxation policies, regional trade-union power and local planning regulations all have an impact on urban development and change. Local actions may also have global consequences, as

when urban-based protests against socially regressive economic activities (such as the exploitation of child labour) result in changes in patterns of trade and consumption at the world scale.

Globalisation should not be regarded as leading automatically to the disintegration of local life. Individuals can either disembed themselves from a locality by operating within a global milieu or embed themselves by attachment to a particular place. Neither condition is exclusive. The reflexive nature of the global-local relationship is evident in the world of international finance, where the disembedded electronic space of the international financial system actually compels embedded social relations in specific locations (such as the City of London), to facilitate discussion of new financial products and engaging in inter-personal exchanges of information. More generally, in the place-bound daily lives of most people, particularly those out-with the mainstream of advanced capitalism, globalisation may promote a search for local identity in a mobilised world.[8]

Globalisation is a highly uneven set of processes whose impact varies over space, through time, and between social groups. Global forces bypass many people and places. Many towns in the Third World, as well as in rural areas of Western society, produce mainly for local consumption using local techniques. Even within global cities, certain **neighbourhoods** where poverty and disadvantage prevail are

Plate 1.1 An example of economic and cultural globalisation: the British high-street retailer Marks and Spencer's store in Hong Kong

peripheral to the working of the global economy. It should be recognised, of course, that the current situation of social and economic disadvantage in such areas may have been triggered by macro-scale forces such as the investment decision of an executive in a TNC based in a city on the other side of the globe. The unevenness of globalisation is apparent at all levels of society. At the world scale it is seen in the disparities between booming and declining regions, and at the urban scale in the social polarisation between affluent and marginalised citizens.

The uneven penetration of globalisation is a question not simply of which institutions, industries, people and places are affected but also of how they are affected.[9] Local people and places may be overwhelmed and exploited by the forces of globalisation or they may seek to resist, adapt or turn globally induced change into an opportunity. Resistance is a common response in which global forces are mediated at lower spatial scales. During the 1980s, mass protests were held in a number of Third World cities in an effort to resist the imposition of economic austerity measures by the International Monetary Fund (as a response to the burgeoning Third World debt crisis). More recently, the chamber of commerce in the predominantly Mexican Pilsen neighbourhood of Chicago opposed the siting of a Starbucks coffee shop in an effort to preserve local ethnic diversity from the homogenising cultural influence of a global corporation. Frequently, however, people and organisations must acquiesce and adapt to global forces. The proliferation of clothing sweatshops in Los Angeles and New York City during the 1980s was an attempt by local manufacturers to maintain their competitiveness in world markets. Global connections may also be pursued actively by local agents, particularly if they create new opportunities for local economic growth. In world cities such as London and New York foreign investment in property development, especially during the boom years of the 1980s, boosted commercial property markets by raising rental income, increasing property values and generally expanding business opportunities.[10] Provincial cities less attractive to finance capital are usually less able to attain similar benefits.

GLOCALISATION: THE LOCALISATION OF THE GLOBAL

As we have seen, there is a dialectical or reflexive relationship between global and local processes in constructing contemporary urban environments. The term **glocalisation** has been used to describe the simultaneous operation of processes of:

1. de-localisation or de-territorialisation evident, for example, in the instantaneity of e-mail communication across the globe;
2. re-localisation or re-territorialisation, whereby global influences interact with and are transformed within local context as, for example, in the creation of historic heritage districts in cities.

The effects of 'glocalisation' are generally apparent. Persky and Weiwel (1994) have demonstrated how in many US cities a significant share of economic activity continues to serve local markets.[11] In labour market terms globalisation is of relevance only for a small minority of workers with the skills necessary to compete in international labour markets. Equally, firms must strike a balance between being sufficiently mobile to take advantage of opportunities that may arise elsewhere, and being sufficiently embedded in

a local context in order to develop links with local suppliers and labour forces. In social terms, globalisation has positive and negative consequences for different peoples and places. On one hand, it may promote the growth of vibrant multicultural urban communities; on the other it can lead to socio-spatial concentrations of disadvantage. Politically, glocalisation focuses attention on cities as both strategic sites for global interests seeking to maximise profit and spaces where local grass-roots and civil society assert their right to liveable places. By combining the deterritorialisation tendency of globalisation and the re-territorialisation of localisation the concept of glocalisation underscores the dialectic nature of the relationship between global and local forces in the construction and reconstruction of contemporary urban environments.

THE QUESTION OF SPACE AND SCALE

The complexity of the global-local nexus forces us to think about the meaning of spatial scale itself. As we shall see in Chapter 2, space is a social construct. The nature of urban (and other) spaces is the product of social relations among actors with different interests. When we refer to the global and the local as being related dialectically, we do not mean to imply that scale or geographic space *per se* should be given theoretical or political priority in determining the social processes underlying urban change. When we speak of global and local scales we are, in fact, focusing on the *processes* operating at these (and other intermediate) scales, not on space or scale *per se*.[12] Further, in the real world the significance of different geographic spaces and scales is in a constant state of flux, with certain spaces/scales declining in social importance and others increasing. Changes in the relative importance of geographic spaces/scales are reflected in changes in the distribution of power among social groups. This may result in a strengthened position for some (for example, a spatially mobile TNC) and a weakened position for others (for example, a place-bound minority **community**). We shall develop the concept of social power later in the book (see Chapters 20 and 29). Here it is sufficient to recognise that the notion of discrete spatial scales, global and local, is a simplification of a reality in which different actors have interests, and operate simultaneously, at multiple spatial scales. A TNC makes decisions on the local-regional scale in relation to its branch plant operations, negotiates tax advantages with national governments, secures capital in the international financial markets and adapts its planning strategy to satisfy institutional shareholders based in a variety of countries. Equally, local actors opposed to the closure of a factory providing local employment may use direct action through a 'work-in' at the plant, liaise with regional trade union organisers, lobby national government to exert pressure on the parent company or employ international legal experts to pursue the option of an employee buyout of the plant.[13]

LOCAL AND HISTORICAL CONTINGENCY

As was suggested above, in addition to the operation of macro-scale trigger factors, the processes of urban change are also influenced by a host of locally and historically contingent factors that interact with and mediate more general forces of change. There are

as many examples of such forces as there are cities in the world. They range from the physical impact of a constricted site on urban development, as in the high-rise architecture of Hong Kong island, to socio-demographic influences such as the concentration of retirees in seaside towns of southern England, or the particular cultural economy of Las Vegas.

More generally, global forces come to ground in cities. As Sassen (1996 p. 630) observes, cities are the locations where much of 'the work of globalisation gets done'.[14] Local context, such as the urban economic base, social structure, political organisation, tax regulations, institutions and competing interest groups, exerts a powerful influence on urban change. The central importance of cities within the global economy and society is affirmed also in the 'hollowing out of the state' thesis. This contends that globalisation has led to the supranational and local scales becoming more important loci of economic and political power than the nation-state, which, in contrast to its central role during the Fordist era, has assumed the role of enabler rather than that of regulator of economic activity.[15] The importance of local action within a globalising world is also a direct consequence of the post-Fordist drive for economic flexibility and product differentiation. The economic advantages that may accrue to cities that can provide attractive production environments (for example, an educated and skilled labour force, good climate and high-quality life space) stimulate innovation and encourage local communities to emphasise the particular advantages of their city as a place to live and work.[16] The concept of a dialectic relationship between processes operating at global, local and other intermediate scales provides an essential backcloth to our study of urban geography.

PROCESSES OF URBAN CHANGE

The interaction of global 'trigger forces' and locally contingent factors results in a number of different processes of urban change. These are summarised in Figure 1.1 and will be discussed in detail later (see Chapters 4 and 21).

Urbanisation occurs when cities grow at the cost of their surrounding countryside, *suburbanisation* and *exurbanisation* when the inner ring or commuter belt grows at the expense of the urban core, **counterurbanisation** when the population loss of the urban core exceeds the population gain of the ring, resulting in the agglomeration losing population overall, and *reurbanisation* when either the rate of population loss of the core tapers off or the core starts to regain population while the ring still loses population. These processes of urban change are visible to varying degrees in **metropolitan areas** of both the developed world and the Third World. The phenomena of **peripheral urbanisation** and **exo-urbanisation** are characteristic of cities in the Third World. The concept of peripheral urbanisation reflects the expansion of capitalism into Third World regions and employs a **political economy** perspective (see Chapter 2) to describe the impact of global capitalism on national **urban systems** in the Third World. Exo-urbanisation is promoted by foreign direct investment in Third World countries leading to a pattern of urban growth based on labour-intensive and assembly manufacturing types of export-oriented industrialisation, as in the Pearl River delta region of China.

The varying processes of urban change underline the value of examining global forces within local context in order to understand the complexity of contemporary urban forms. In practice, the reciprocal interaction between global and local forces leads to a plethora of urban outcomes.

URBAN OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the processes of globalisation and urban change are depicted in Figure 1.1. Three principal outcomes refer to:

1. changes in *urban systems* at local, regional, national and global scales;
2. the spread of *urbanism;*
3. changes in the socio-spatial construction of *urban places*.

Each of these principal outcomes subsumes a host of related processes and outcomes. As we progress through Figure 1.1, from left to right, we obtain more detailed insight into the major themes and issues of relevance to the study of urban geography. In essence, Figure 1.1 provides a set of 'signposts' to the subject matter of urban geography. All these topics will be discussed later in the course of the book.

At this point, however, it is useful to think about the kinds of question we need to ask to develop an understanding of urban geography. Appropriate questions include where, when and why did the first cities arise? What are the major urban land uses? Further questions focused on the urban economic base, on the social composition of residential environments, urban political structure, urban policy and planning, and the concept of sustainable urban development, also shed light on the dynamics of urban change. The list of questions that could offer insight into the form and functions of cities is almost limitless. (You can think of some of your own.) Some key questions that reflect the nature of urban geography, and the content of this book, are shown in Table 1.1. Examination of Figure 1.1 and Table 1.1 provides prospective students with a useful overview of the scope and content of urban geography.

A second method of gaining an understanding of the nature of urban geography is to engage in field observation in the tradition of nineteenth-century social commentators such as Charles Booth in London, Friedrich Engels in Manchester and Jacob Riis in New York. The central area of most cities

TABLE 1.1 THEMES AND QUESTIONS IN URBAN GEOGRAPHY

Theme	Question
Urban geography: from global to local	Why study urban geography? What is the nature of the relationship between global and local forces in the production of urban environments? How has globalisation influenced the form and function of cities?
Concepts and theory in urban geography	What do we mean by urban? What contribution have the different major theoretical

	perspectives made to understanding in urban geography?
The origins and growth of cities	When, where and why did the earliest cities arise? What are the social and spatial characteristics of pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial cities?
The global context of urbanisation and urban change	Are socio-cultural differences between cities declining as a result of globalisation? How important is your own city in local, regional, national or global terms?
Regional perspectives on urbanisation and urban change	Why are cities in the Third World growing faster than cities in the developed world? How did the urban settlement pattern of North America develop? Why are many of the greatest centres of urban life in Europe?
National urban systems	What functions do cities perform? Does any single city or set of cities dominate the national urban system? How extensive is the hinterland of your city?
Land use in the city	What are the major urban land uses? What factors and agents underlie land-use change in the city? How do different populations use urban space?
Urban planning and policy	Why does the impact of urban planning and policy vary between countries? How does public planning affect urban development in the capitalist city? What effect has the collapse of communism had on the form and function of the socialist city?
New towns	What is the difference between an 'old town' and a 'new town'? Should the growing demand for housing be met by building on greenfield land or on brownfield sites in existing cities?
Residential mobility and neighbourhood change	Why do households move? How do urban housing markets work? What factors lead to housing abandonment, gentrification and neighbourhood regeneration?

Theme	*Questions*
Housing problems and housing policy	What is the relative importance of different housing tenures in the city? Is there an adequate supply of decent and affordable housing? Why are people homeless? What can governments do to improve the quality and availability of housing?
Urban retailing	What forms of retail facility are available in the city? What impact has suburbanisation had on the structure of retail provision?

	What difficulties confront disadvantaged consumers?
Urban transportation	What are the dominant modes of travel in the metropolitan area? What is the relationship between transport policy and urban structure? Is the car-oriented city sustainable?
The economy of cities	What is the economic base of the city? How is the urban economy related to the global economy? To what extent has your city been affected by industrialisation, deindustrialisation or tertiarisation in recent decades? What role does the informal sector play within the urban economy?
Poverty and deprivation in the Western city	What aspects of multiple deprivation are evident in the city? Is there an inner-city problem? Do particular neighbourhoods suffer from the effects of long-term decline? What can be done to alleviate the problems of poverty and deprivation?
National and local responses to urban economic change	What strategies have been employed to address the problems of urban economic decline? Is there a role for local economic strategies or for the community economy in urban economic regeneration? What has been the impact of property-led regeneration on the socio-spatial structure of the city? Are cultural industries important?
Collective consumption and social justice in the city	Is there any evidence of social or spatial inequity in access to public services? To what extent have reductions in public expenditure impacted on the provision of welfare services in the city?
Theme	*Questions*
Residential differentiation and communities in the city	Does the city, or particular neighbourhoods within the city, generate a sense of place for residents? Why does residential segregation occur? What is the extent and incidence of social polarisation in your city? How has it changed over recent years?
Urban liveability	How would you define a liveable city? What are the main hazards of urban living? Is there a relationship between urban design and social behaviour? How do different populations, such as women, elderly people, children, members of minorities and disabled people, cope with the pressures of urban life?
Power, politics and urban governance	What form of government controls the city? Does the political geography of the metropolitan area facilitate or constrain good government? Do citizens participate in urban government?

	What is the relationship between urban government and central government?
Third World urbanisation within a global urban system	How are the processes of urbanisation and urban change in the Third World related to those of the developed world?
	What evidence is there of the influence of colonialism on urban development?
	What is the likely role of Third World cities within the global urban system of the twenty-first century?
The internal structure of Third World cities	What are the main structural differences between cities of the Third World and those of the developed world?
	How has the abolition of apartheid affected the form of cities in South Africa?
	Is the concept of the Islamic city valid?
Rural-urban migration in the Third World	What are the relative contributions of migration and natural population change to urban population dynamics?
	Why do people migrate to cities and what are the consequences for the urban geography of the Third World?
	What is the response of governments to rural-urban migration?
Urban economy and employment in the Third World	What are the major components of the urban economy?
	What is the role of women and children in the urban economy?
	How important is the household economy in the coping strategies of the urban poor?

Theme	*Questions*
Housing the Third World urban poor	What are the main sources of shelter for the Third World urban poor?
	When, where and why do squatter settlements arise?
	What response have Third World governments made to the problem of low-income housing provision?
Environmental problems in Third World cities	What are the major environmental hazards faced by poor urban residents in the Third World?
	How do Third World cities manage the wastes produced by their burgeoning populations?
	What is the ecological impact of the city on the surrounding area?
Health in the Third World city	What are the chief causes of morbidity and mortality in the Third World city?
	Are the health problems in Third World cities different from those experienced in cities in the developed world?
	What can be done to address the health problems of Third World cities?
Traffic and transport in the Third World city	What are the main forms of urban transport?
	What role is played by paratransit?
	What are the major traffic and transport problems?
Poverty, power and politics in the Third World city	How do the poor respond to their disadvantaged position within the urban power structure?

	How important is clientalism? What is the significance of urban social movements in the Third World city?
The future of the city—cities of the future	What is sustainable urban development? What is the nature of the relationship between energy consumption and urban form? What will be the form of the city of the future?

may be explored easily on foot at a pace that enables the 'participant observer' to absorb the structure of the city and engage with the ebb and flow of urban life. In Glasgow a stroll of less than a mile from the central railway station through the old city to the cathedral represents a journey back in time, over a millennium of urban history. In cities with extensive public transportation systems the urban explorer can cover large areas. In London, for example, the Underground rail system affords access to a variety of urban milieux: the financial heart of the City of London (Bank station), the political hub (Westminster), an ethnic Bangladeshi community (Shoreditch), Georgian residential squares and terraces (Leicester Square), an environment of the super-rich (Kensington), disadvantaged council estates (Hackney) and areas of waterfront regeneration (Tower station). In many cities, especially the low-density metropolitan areas of North America, private transportation is a prerequisite for exploration beyond the urban core.

All towns and cities can be 'read' by an observer trained in the basic principles and concepts of urban geography. Here, we conclude our introduction to the subject by undertaking a 'virtual field trip' to experience the daily rhythms of life in an advanced capitalist city. You can undertake a similar exercise for your own city.

DAILY LIFE IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

You awake to the sound of an alarm clock bought in the local hardware store but manufactured in Taiwan. You breakfast on fresh orange juice from Florida, tea or coffee from Sri Lanka or Brazil, bread made from wheat grown on the prairies of North America, jam from Bulgaria, butter from New Zealand, bacon from Denmark and free-range eggs from a local organic farm. Depending on your job, and income, your choice of clothing for the day may have been designed and made in a Milanese fashion house or manufactured under sweatshop conditions by child or female labour in the Far East. As you leave for work in the city you nod a greeting to your neighbour who is **teleworking** from home, and to her partner who works flexitime to accommodate domestic commitments. You travel into the city in a car constructed in South Korea. In your office the ballpoint pen on your desk was manufactured in Germany. Your notepad is made from timber harvested from a renewable forest plantation in Sweden. You perform your job using a personal computer constructed and sold locally but designed in Silicon Valley, California, and loaded with software produced in Seattle. You may spend much of your working day in cyberspace, using e-mail and teleconferencing facilities to establish real-time communications with business contacts around the globe. All your discussions are in English, the emerging global language.

In your lunch break you visit a McDonald's, an icon of cultural globalisation in which the same menu and decor are available in almost every large city of the world. With time to spare, you stroll past the security officer at the entrance to a new **shopping mall** and enter a travel agency where you make a reservation for a summer trip to Bali. In the adjacent music store you pick up a copy of a CD that is currently a chart hit in over twenty countries. You might spend some time sitting on a public bench in the town square reading a newspaper that, in addition to local and national news and weather, contains reports of a bank robbery in Bogota, floods in Dhaka, share prices on the Tokyo stock market, pollution in Lagos and baseball results from the USA. Across the square a small crowd has gathered around a group of street musicians from Peru who are playing traditional folk tunes of the Andes. By the fountain an unemployed man distributes leaflets protesting against the loss of local jobs as a result of downsizing by a foreign-owned TNC. Overhead a Russian jet airliner comes in to land at the city's international airport. At the street intersection enterprising youths rush to clean car windscreens before the traffic lights turn to green. As you rise to return to the office, a party of Japanese tourists ask for directions to the cathedral. You direct them past the redeveloped harbour-side where postmodern pavement cafés and gentrified loft apartments located around a yacht marina are replacing the abandoned warehouses and wharves of an industrial past. On the opposite bank of the river the site of a recent garden festival awaits redevelopment under a public-private partnership scheme to build a concert hall, science museum, I-max theatre and a millennium tower.

After work you meet some friends in an Irish theme pub, before going on to eat dinner in an Indonesian restaurant. As the city centre empties of its daytime workforce the space is reoccupied by a night-time population of service workers and entertainment seekers. The homeless search for a sleeping space for the night in the doorways of now silent commercial premises, while in the shadows prostitutes and drug dealers ply their trade.

The journey out to your exurban home takes you past inner-suburban areas of social housing where groups of unemployed people congregate on street corners and regard passing strangers with a mix of curiosity and suspicion. Many of the young have never had a job and lack the educational qualifications to enter the labour force, while older men formerly employed in heavy engineering are without the flexible skills needed to compete for a place in the post-Fordist economy. Some inner-city neighbourhoods are occupied by ethnic minorities, while others accommodate lifestyle communities, each contributing to the cultural diversity of the metropolis. Farther out, towards the edge of the city, the proliferation of middle-class gated communities underlines the levels of segregation and social polarisation within the city. Once you are on the urban motorway the lights of the city are soon left behind. Out of sight, out of mind—until tomorrow.

WHY STUDY URBAN GEOGRAPHY?

You should now be in a good position to answer this question. Urban geography provides an understanding of the living environments of a majority of the world's population. Knowledge of urban geography is of importance for both students and citizens of the contemporary world. Urban places are complex phenomena. Urban geography untangles

this complexity by explaining the distribution of towns and cities, and the socio-spatial similarities and differences that exist between and within urban places.

This book adopts a global perspective for the study of urban geography. The perspective acknowledges:

1. the interconnectedness of global urban society as a result of globalisation;
2. the dialectic relationship between global and local processes in the construction and reconstruction of urban environments;
3. the importance of local and regional variations in the nature of urbanism within the overarching concept of a global economy and society.

The concepts, themes and issues introduced in this opening chapter illustrate the complexity of urban phenomena and the explanatory power of urban geography. Concepts and theory provide the essential framework for explanation in any academic subject. Accordingly, proper understanding of urban geography must be based on a combination of theoretical insight and empirical analysis. For the author of a textbook, deciding on how and when to present students with the (sometimes difficult) theoretical content is always a tricky question. This book favours a dual approach. Throughout the text, relevant theory and concepts are integrated with empirical evidence to illuminate particular themes and issues under investigation. In addition, however, since students should be familiar with the key philosophical perspectives and debates at an early stage, these are introduced in the following chapter. Together, the two chapters that comprise Part One of the book provide a foundation for our subsequent discussion of the wide range of themes and issues that constitute the subject matter of urban geography.

FURTHER READING

BOOKS

J.Benyon and D.Dunkerley (2000) *Globalization: The Reader* London: Athlone Press

L.Budd and S.Whimster (1992) *Global Finance and Urban Living* London: Routledge

S.Clark and G.Gaile (1998) *The Work of Cities* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press

K.Cox (1997) *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local* New York: Guilford Press

P.Dicken (1998) *Global Shift: Transforming the World Economy* New York: Guilford Press

J.Eade (1997) *Living the Global City: Globalisation as Local Process* London: Routledge

P.Knox and P.Taylor (1995) *World Cities in a World System* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

R.Robertson (1992) *Globalisation* London: Sage

S.Sassen (1994) *Cities in a Global Economy* Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press

J.Short and Y-H.Kim (1999) *Globalization and the City* London: Longman

JOURNAL ARTICLES

E.Berner and R.Korff (1995) Globalization and local resistance: the creation of localities in Manila and Bangkok *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19(2), 208–21

N.Brenner (1999) Globalisation as reterritorialisation: the re-scaling of urban governance in the European Union *Urban Studies* 36(3), 431–51

K.Cox (1995) Globalization, competition and the politics of local economy development *Urban Studies* 32(2), 213–24

M.Frost and N.Spence (1993) Global city characteristics and central London's employment *Urban Studies* 30(3), 547–58

D.Graham and N.Spence (1995) Contemporary deindustrialisation and tertiarisation in the London economy *Urban Studies* 32(6), 213–24

C.Hamnett (1994) Social polarisation in global cities: theory and evidence *Urban Studies* 31(3), 401–24

J.May (1996) Globalization and the politics of place: place and identity in an inner London neighbourhood *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21, 194–215

G.Mohan (2000) Dislocating globalisation: power, politics and global change *Geography* 85(2), 121–33

S.Sassen (1996) Cities and communities in the global economy: rethinking our concepts *American Behavioral Scientist* 39, 629–39

D.Walker (1996) Another round of globalization in San Francisco *Urban Geography* 17(1), 60–94

KEY CONCEPTS

■ urbanisation
■ urban growth
■ urbanism
■ global perspective
■ trigger factors
■ globalisation
■ glocalisation
■ global-local nexus
■ spatial scale
■ local contingency
■ hollowing out of the state
■ global village

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why study urban geography?
2. Examine the influence of global-scale 'trigger factors' in urban change.
3. With reference to particular examples, illustrate how locally or historically contingent factors can mediate the urban impact of globalisation.
4. In his play *Coriolanus* the English dramatist William Shakespeare asked, 'What is the city but the people?' What did he mean? Write an account of a city as seen through the eyes of a member of a particular social group, such as a yuppie, homeless person, public official, property speculator or member of an ethnic or lifestyle minority.

PROJECT
Most towns and cities can be 'read' by an observer with a knowledge of urban geography. Using the example of the 'virtual field trip' presented in this chapter as a guide, prepare an analytical description of the pattern of daily activity in any city with

which you are familiar. In your account you should:

1. attempt both to describe and to interpret the observed patterns of daily life in your city;
2. consider how the different population groups and areas fit into the life of the city;
3. relate your observations of urban life to the key themes and issues in urban geography identified in this chapter. Which of the general themes and issues are of particular relevance to your city? Does your city exhibit specific local characteristics that influence its form and function?
4. illustrate your account, if you wish, with relevant supporting material such as field sketches, photographs, newspaper cuttings, published statistics or government reports.