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THE CHANGING FACE OF THE GLOBAL CITIES

Peter Hall

To appreciate the changes that have taken place in the global cities since 1950, it is necessary to understand the relationship between form and function that existed at that time.

The Global City in 1950

The functions of global cities were the same in 1950 as in 1990, but they had a different relative weight. The two basic functions, in both a chronological and an economic sense, were the movement and exchange of goods, and the control of the national state. Most of these cities were great national capitals, and some were capitals of even greater empires. That meant a concentration of government offices, and of the national legislature, in close juxtaposition to the original royal palace: specifically, around Whitehall in London, the Louvre in Paris, the Spreeinsel in Berlin and Kasumagaseki in Tokyo. Not far distant, but forming a distinct quarter, was a commercial-financial core that had developed in stages out of the original goods-trading function, on or next to the original trading locus: the City of London next to the original bridgepoint which determined the head of navigation, the Parisian Bourse next to the Grande Croisée of the international trade routes, the Berlin Börse on the opposite bank of the Spree, Otemachi on the opposite side of the Imperial Palace.

Balancing these were two other specialized functions: a retail sector dominated by big department stores, which had developed around 1900 on the basis of new transit routes (Oxford and Regent Streets; the Grands Boulevards; Alexanderplatz and Potsdamer Platz), and a high-class residential and shopping district, usually close to the relocated royal palace or the royal park (Kensington; the Champs Elysees; Charlottenburg). In sharp contrast, dense working-class districts tended to develop in a kind of horseshoe around the commercial core, combined with small-workshop artisan or sweatshop industries which were organized in tight industrial quarters, based on what has come to be called flexible specialization of production: in London, Clerkenwell and Shoreditch and Whitechapel; in Paris, the 11th, 19th, and 20th arrondissements; in Berlin, areas like Wedding, Prenzlauer Berg, and Kreuzberg. And finally, education and culture tended to generate at least one distinctive quarter of student and artistic life: Bloomsbury, the Rive Gauche, Berlin's Mitte.

Because it lacked the national capital functions, New York was always a special case. But there, too, a distinctive financial center developed next to the port; department stores colonized a separate quarter, which migrated in a series of leaps up the island; high-class residential areas developed around Central Park; workshop industry in the ethnic ghettos of the Lower East Side; an artistic and bohemian quarter in Greenwich Village.

Beyond the central and inner districts, the great world cities had developed huge suburban extensions along the transit routes. Their precise form varied from city to city. Berlin and Paris were both densely built, tenement-fashion, though in both cities extensive villa suburbs had developed by World War II: areas like Dahlem in Berlin, Suresnes and Port-St-Cloud in Paris. In both, too, the garden city movement had produced what would more accurately be called garden suburbs, built by nonprofit organizations: places like Plessis-Robinson in Paris, and Onkel-Toms-Hütte or Britz in Berlin. These residential areas were intersected by huge belts of newer, more capital-intensive industry, representing the newer technologies that had developed between 1880 and 1910: in Paris the Renault factory was in Billancourt at one end of the western factory belt, Citroën in Levallois at the other; in Berlin the giant Siemens electrical concern created its own model settlement of Siemensstadt on one side of the city, its rival AEG was centered in Oberschöneide at the other; in outer London, the new electrical and consumer industries concentrated in the northwest sector in order more readily to reach the British home market, while the giant Ford plant colonized a riverside site at Dagenham on the other side of the metropolis. Characteristic of these newer industrial areas was their homogeneity, a function of early land-use zoning; around them developed what were in effect separate blue-collar industrial towns, sharply differentiated from the white-collar commuter suburbs a few miles away (Hall 1989, *passim*).

This pattern of land-use differentiation had developed in stages from the middle ages to the twentieth century. In all the world cities, it was essentially in place by 1940, and it showed relatively little change from then to the 1960s and even the 1970s. Then, profound changes began to occur to the metropolitan economy, and through it to metropolitan form.

The Great Economic Transformation

The economic transformation consisted essentially of five separate and parallel processes: the attrition of the old workshop sector; the transformation of the capital-intensive manufacturing sector; the virtual disappearance of much of the large-scale goods-handling service sector; the growth of the producer service, or information-handling, sector; and the continued growth of what could be called conspicuous-consumption consumer services (Hall 1989, *passim*).

The attrition of the workshop sector was the oldest of these processes. It can be traced in London as far back as 1900, when more successful small manufacturers developed integrated factory production and moved their operations out from the old industrial quarters to new locations on what was then the London fringe; in Berlin, similarly, the successful electrical enterprises migrated outwards. Even earlier, some of these complexes—such as the watchmaking quarter of Clerkenwell—had succumbed to foreign competition. But the process received a massive boost in some European cities from wartime destruction, and then from slum clearance and redevelopment in the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, there was a general tendency among planners at this time to view the whole phenomenon as a relic of an earlier industrial age, which should be swept away as speedily as possible in the interests of hygiene and efficiency.

The second trend, too, had its historical antecedents—indeed, following on from the first. Dynamic economic sectors, like electrical manufacturing, tended to relocate outwards in search of space for assembly-line production, and better highway communications. This process, evident in the 1920s and 1930s, continued apace in the 1950s and 1960s. But in general, vacated premises could be reoccupied by other firms which were simultaneously trading up into more space. Only during the world recession of the 1970s and early 1980s did a totally new set of tendencies begin to operate: saturation of demand in some sectors, coupled with competition from newly industrializing countries, led to a process of drastic rationalization, associated in turn with the rise of transnational corporations which were free to relocate their operations to lowest-cost sites worldwide, and with drastic financial restructuring which involved the takeover of financially weak firms. This had a number of consequences: production drastically contracted in the older-industrial countries and cities, while that which remained was relocated to more efficient greenfield sites outside the cities, and capital was substituted for labor in a drive to maintain profit. All these combined to decimate manufacturing employment in the world cities, above all in older, more congested—hence, less efficient—inner-city sites. The result, quite suddenly, was the appearance of industrial dereliction on a large scale.

Almost simultaneously, a similar set of processes affected the goods-handling services: ports, warehousing, freight transfer. Technological change, in the form of containerization, led to a concentration of these activities on large, preferably greenfield sites; inner-city docks closed down, to be replaced by container ports near estuary mouths; large areas of inner-city railroad freight yards became redundant. Pressure on profits forced the pace, encouraging port and railroad authorities to try to realize on their inner-city land assets. Logically, the port industries that had depended on the bulk freight transfers—oil seed crushing, sugar refining—also tended to close or to relocate. This change had perhaps the most drastic effect of any, because it involved areas that were both large

and completely homogeneous. In the extreme case, London, the entire dock system— occupying an area eight miles long and on average about one mile wide— disappeared within a fifteen-year period. Only slightly less drastic changes occurred in New York, San Francisco, and Rotterdam.

The result of these three secular trends was a spectacular reduction in goods-handling activities of all sorts within the metropolitan economy, reflected especially in employment levels. Perhaps it should not have been surprising, for the logic was inexorable: in New York Clarence Stein, that perceptive commentator, had predicted it as long ago as 1925. Perhaps, too, it was too long postponed, so that when it happened it did so with great suddenness. In any event, it caused enormous problems of economic adjustment with a very short period— in New York in the mid-1970s, in London in the 1980s. So great was the scale of this adjustment that in London overall employment has never returned to the level of the late 1960s: despite recent gains in the wake of financial deregulation, gains in information-processing and other services have failed to compensate for the losses in the traditional goods-handling sectors.

The most important positive trend has been the increase in what can be called the informational services. The phenomenon is a very complex one, which seems to involve what Castells (1989) calls a new informational mode of development, replacing the industrial one. One cause, which many commentators have stressed, is the disarticulation of many ancillary functions from the manufacturing sector. Market analysis, management, sales, and legal and accounting functions may be detached from the manufacturing activity and given to specialist firms. The rise of the giant transnational corporation may assist this process, though it is not immediately clear why. More probably, it represents a general tendency to vertical disintegration in the entire production system. However, this is not the only cause. There is also the secular growth of what can be called informational consumer services: education, publishing, and the electronic media, the market for which depends on rising disposable income and the increasing size and segmentation of the market for information. Whether the end product goes to consumers or to other production units, what unites these activities is their use and manipulation of information. Information is increasingly the major or sole input, the raw material, of many urban activities.

The question then is what factors determine the location of the informational industries. Some producer services may need to locate close to their major clients, but this becomes a circular process, since they tend to serve each other. In any case, what is clear is a continuing tension between forces of centralization and forces of decentralization. Agglomeration economies are quite acute for many of these industries, especially if they form part of a vertically disintegrated production chain. Much information still comes through personal, face-to-face contact. Other information, such as that found in libraries, is extraordinarily concentrated in large cities and a few university

towns. Increasingly sophisticated electronic information systems, available at reducing and near-uniform cost nationwide, should act in the opposite direction. But research indicates that paradoxically, the take-up of such services is far greater in the major metropolitan cities, creating a kind of circular effect: demand brings forth increasing supply.

The overall result, so far, seems fairly clear: large, discrete, routine operations dependent on electronic transfer will be transferred to back offices, generally located in the outer suburbs of the metropolitan areas of the world cities: northern New Jersey, southeastern Connecticut, Interstate 680 in the San Francisco Bay Area, Reading outside London, the Paris new towns. Banks, insurance companies, and some governmental activities (payment of social security and welfare) are especially prone to this kind of transfer, which is occurring on an increasing scale. So far, it has been somewhat limited in its geographical scope, because of the need to maintain contact with head office and the need to secure the right kinds of labor. There are one or two well-publicized cases of longer-distance transfers — credit card operations to the Dakotas, airline ticket processing to the Caribbean — but so far they appear to be few in number; economies of metropolitan agglomeration continue to operate, albeit on a wider spatial scale than hitherto.

Indeed, at a more local scale, a process of re-agglomeration appears to be taking place, with the growth of "urban villages" or "supersuburbs" like Arlington between Dallas and Fort Worth in Texas, or Mesa outside Phoenix in Arizona (Dillon, Weiss, and Hait 1989). Like Tyson's Corner outside Washington, D.C., these are huge new commercial centers having some attributes of a traditional downtown. They have come into existence with amazing speed: Tyson's Corner, a supermarket and grocery store only twenty years ago, is now the largest downtown in Virginia. The problem is that they tend to be pure agglomerations of office blocks, whose sole advantage is that they are cheap to rent.

The Age of the Mega-Development

Meanwhile, their place is taken by other activities that have the need for a central location. Because of this fact, downtown office space has shown a long-term historic tendency to expand either upwards, or outwards. Here an interesting shift is observable. In the first great postwar office-construction boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the general tendency was to colonize the prestige inner-city residential areas: the West Ends of London and Frankfurt, the Champs-Élysées and the Grands Boulevards in Paris, Midtown Manhattan (and, somewhat later, the Paulista in Sao Paulo). The reasons are complex, but they include the attraction of a prestige address for the activities then tending to grow (advertising, marketing, public relations), the availability of similarly prestigious old buildings, and the possibility of profitable redevelopment. Latterly, however,

the emphasis has swung back to redevelopment at the fringes of the financial quarter (Broadgate and Spitalfields in London, the Gare de Lyon in Paris, Battery Park in New York), for the simple reason that the main demand in the 1980s—especially in London and New York, following deregulation—has come from the financial services sectors.

These developments are increasingly large and discrete, involving the simultaneous redevelopment of an entire quarter of the city. Because this would otherwise pose an impossible task of land assembly, they tend to occur on land in single ownership, particularly dockland or railroad land released from goods-handling functions. They involve a new kind of mega-developer working in association with consortia of banks, and often also with a public or quasi-public agency—the Federal government in Toronto, the Urban Redevelopment Authority in San Francisco, the London Docklands Development Corporation. Because such mega-developments also impose colossal demands on transportation facilities, they may involve an extraordinary degree of developer support for the necessary investments—as with Olympia and York, the Toronto-based developers of Canary Wharf in London docklands, who have paid one-third of the cost of extending the Docklands Light Railway and nearly one-half the cost of extending the Jubilee underground line to the site. These features make the mega-development a new feature of the 1980s, though there were important earlier precedents in schemes like the Barbican in London, Hötorget in Stockholm, and La Défense in Paris, which originated in the 1940s and 1950s. La Défense, in particular, anticipated many of the features of what was to become an urban art form; appropriately, its completion with the new triumphal arch came only in 1989.

La Défense provided a precedent in another way: unlike Barbican or Hötorget, it is a free-standing development quite separate from the existing central area, and linked with it by a totally new transit facility (the first line of the Parisian RER). It is a model that was closely followed at about the same time by Shinjuku in Tokyo, save that here the necessary transportation infrastructure was already in place, and much later by London's Canary Wharf. It can be argued, of course, that such developments are no more radical in concept than were the earlier office incursions into residential areas like Mayfair or Midtown Manhattan. There is however a twofold difference: first, the scale of the necessary transportation infrastructure; second, the scale of the development itself. The mega-project, colonizing and creating in effect a third city—the term is being used to promote Canary Wharf—is a new feature of the 1980s.

Here, though, a distinction has to be drawn. La Défense was originally a private initiative, but was soon incorporated into the short-lived 1960 Paris regional plan, where it became one of a series of new nodes intended to restructure the older suburbs—others were at Créteil, St-Denis, and Rungis—and then into the definitive 1965 Schéma Directeur. The 1990 revision of the plan con-

tinues that tradition, with mega-developments at Charles de Gaulle airport, at the EuroDisney site in the new town of Marne-la-Vallée, and at the "science city" of Massy-Palaiseau— all three sites carefully chosen at the intersection of RER lines with the new planned circumferential loop of the Train à Grande Vitesse (Anon 1989a, 1989b; Pommelet 1989). Canary Wharf, in sharp contrast, came into existence because of the Enterprise Zone incentives in the heart of London Docklands, without benefit of any plan at all, and the rail infrastructure followed belatedly and piecemeal. No better contrast could be found between the French and British styles of urban development in the 1980s.

The Significance of the Festival Marketplace

The Paris example illustrates another point. Mega-projects do not inevitably and invariably mean offices. The Charles de Gaulle plans involve a mixture of offices and exhibition and conference facilities, based on the notion of a European Gateway trade center; EuroDisney is a pure leisure development; Massy-Palaiseau involves a combination of scientific and technological facilities. Elsewhere, there is similar variation. In the United States, two of the classic mega-developments— Boston's Waterfront and Baltimore's Inner Harbor— were both essentially leisure developments, which introduced the idea of leisure shopping and the festival marketplace to the world; they have had scores of imitators, including New York's South Street Seaport. This is important, because it underlines the fact that urban regeneration can be based on conspicuous consumption as well as on producer services. What James Rouse grasped in Boston and Baltimore was that, for a generation reared in the suburbs, a trip to the city could actually be an exotic experience, so long as it was properly packaged —which meant not only the creation of a new urban environment, but also its positive management. There is much in common, in fact, between the festival marketplace and the theme park concepts: both involve attracting large numbers of visitors into an entire experience in a synthesized urban environment, in one case completely imaginary, in the other partially so, both completely sanitized for family viewing. The heart of the city, in this concept, becomes a kind of exotic suburban enclave, stripped of all its negative connotations of decay, dirt, crime, and social malaise.

It is no accident that such schemes — both here and in the countless imitations (Liverpool, Rotterdam, San Francisco) — tend to be based on water. The collapse of inner dock functions left vast sites adjacent to central business districts, which had few assets save for water and interesting buildings. The problems of total physical redevelopment, including landfill and the demolition of old dock structures, were often formidable. Water recreation, in the form of instant city-center marinas, could be profitably combined with mass tourism on the model of countless Mediterranean fishing ports. Hotel and restaurant developments could also be combined with the fast-growing sector of busi-

ness tourism, especially if a convention center could also be developed. Large-scale government funding became available for such projects, allowing a process of private leveraging to take place.

Business tourism was not always so painlessly catered for. Especially in the most problematic American cities, it might lead to an unusual form of walled development, brilliantly exploited by the Atlanta architect John Portman in his widely-imitated designs for Hyatt Regency hotels: a huge internal atrium, with the rooms oriented inward in a style that whimsically recalled Islamic architecture, and with a whole gamut of specialized shopping and services provided within the hotel envelope. In the extreme cases, as William H. Whyte has pointed out, these developments presented virtually blank walls to the outside world, rather like urban fortresses; once inside, the visitor felt a positive psychological discouragement to venturing into the unknown, very probably hostile, outside urban world.

That world, to be sure, could be menacing and gloomy enough: in many American cities, the downtown came uncannily to resemble the center of East Berlin or Dresden, where the glistening facades constitute a Potemkin village behind which all is grimy decay. In fact, many such cities came to assume a new morphology: as urban renewal and freeway construction took away the belt of dense housing and small-scale industry that had surrounded their downtown areas, these downtowns became isolated islands of mega-development, separated from the rest of the city and suburbs by a wide belt of decay and dereliction, a kind of no-man's land traversed as rapidly as possible by elevated freeway or underground transit, sight unseen. The contrast between the one and the other is brilliantly pointed in Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, that definitive parable of American urban life in the 1980s. At least in world cities like New York, the "Yuppies" continued to live adjacent to their downtown jobs; elsewhere, the daytime occupants of the downtowns might almost entirely consist of commuters or of business tourists, who at nightfall would scuttle back either to their suburban homesteads, or to their fortress hotels.

The Neo-Marxist Critique of Post-Modernism

What, then, has all this to do with Post-Modernism? The style, for some, is symptomatic: it is the style of illusion, of surface appearances, of high style. But for others, Post-Modernism is a deeper and more complex metaphor, symbolizing the collapse of the postwar era of capital accumulation and its replacement by a new age of urban crisis (Harvey 1989; Cooke 1990). Gone, for these critics, is the attempt to build a postwar consensus through accommodative Keynesian and welfare state policies; in its place is capitalism red in tooth and claw, stripping away the vestiges of past economies based on real production of real things, substituting the immaterial economy of paper

transactions, of unbridled financial speculation and fraud, of surface glitter and unbridled conspicuous consumption (Cooke 1990, 84). "Postmodernism," Harvey writes, "has come of age in the midst of this climate of voodoo economics, of political image construction and deployment, and of new social class formation" (Harvey 1989, 336). Politically, postmodernism has been marked by a rejection of Keynesian statist models and a return to local initiatives — though their capacity to act depends greatly on chance (Cooke 1990, 120).

There is a strange implication for urban design: "Fiction, fragmentation, collage, and eclecticism, all suffused with a sense of ephemerality and chaos, are, perhaps, the themes that dominate in today's practices of architecture and design" (Harvey 1989, 98). And, specifically, "In the field of architecture and urban design, I take postmodernism broadly to signify a break with the modernist idea that planning and development should focus on large-scale, metropolitan-wide, technologically rational and efficient urban plans, backed by absolutely no-frills architecture ..." (Harvey 1989, 66). Both Harvey and Cooke join the Marxist critic Frederick Jameson in criticizing postmodernism for its preference for pastiche and its schizophrenic disposition, which— they suggest— simply serves a capitalism determined to pursue nostalgia and recycling, while destroying all sense of history: the effect is to produce historical amnesia, thus allowing postmodernism to generate passive acceptance of modern consumerist society (Cooke 1990, 109111).

Finally, Harvey and Cooke both point to a paradox: "Postmodernist flexibility ... is dominated by fiction, fantasy, the immaterial [particularly of money], fictitious capital, images, ephemerality, chance, and flexibility in production techniques, labour markets and consumption niches; yet it also embodies strong commitments to Being and place, a penchant for charismatic politics, concerns for ontology, and the stable institutions favoured by neo-conservatism" (Harvey 1989, 339).

The powerful implication, of course, is that this is the system's last fling: with the Fordist-modernist model in ruins, capitalism desperately grasps for a new way out. After the spectacular collapse of state socialism across Eastern Europe in the fall of 1989, one cannot be so sure. At least, if next year is also capitalism's turn to collapse, no one seems to have a serious idea as to what is coming afterwards. Perhaps we are witnessing yet another cyclical phase in the history of an inherently cyclical socio-economic system: a phase that Joseph Schumpeter characterized, as long ago as 1939, as the secondary or speculative wave that marked the very end of a long wave of capitalist development (Schumpeter 1939, 145-50). The early 1990s will teach us whether the 1980s were a re-run of the similarly abandoned, feverish, superficial 1920s, or whether they mark a new phase altogether.

Table 1

Schematic Differences Between Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism

romanticism/Symbolism
 form (conjunctive, closed)
 purpose
 design
 hierarchy
 mastery/logos
 art object/finished work
 distance
 creation/totalization/synthesis
 presence
 centering
 genre/boundary
 semantics
 paradigm
 hypotaxis
 metaphor
 selection
 root/depth
 interpretation/reading
 signified
 lisible (readerly)
 narrative/*grande bistoire*
 master code
 symptom
 type
 genital/phallic
 paranoia
 origin/cause
 God the Father
 metaphysics
 determinacy
 transcendence

Postmodernism

paraphysics/Dadaism
 antiform (disjunctive, open)
 play
 chance
 anarchy
 exhaustion/silence
 process/performance/happening
 participation
 decreation/deconstruction/antithesis
 absence
 dispersal
 text/intertext
 rhetoric
 syntagm
 parataxis
 metonymy
 combination
 rhizome/surface
 against interpretation/misreading
 signifier
 scriptible (writerly)
 anti-narrative/*petite bistoire*
 idiolect
 desire
 mutant
 polymorphous/androgynous
 schizophrenia
 difference-difference/trace
 The Holy Ghost
 irony
 indeterminacy
 immanence

Source: Harvey (1989), p. 43.

Table 2

**Fordist Modernity Versus Flexible Postmodernity, or
the Interpenetration of Opposed Tendencies in Capitalist Society as a Whole**

Fordist modernity

economies of scale/master code/hierarchy
homogeneity/detail division of labour

paranoia/alienation/symptom
public housing/monopoly capital

purpose/design/mastery/determinacy
production capital/universalism

state power/trade unions
state welfarism/metropolis

ethics/money commodity
God the Father/materiality

production/originality/authority
blue collar/avant-gardism
interest group politics/semantics

centralization/totalization
synthesis/collective bargaining

operational management/master code
phallic/single task/origin

metatheory/narrative/depth
mass production/class politics
technical-scientific rationality

utopia/redemptive art/concentration
specialized work/collective consumption

function/representation/signified
industry/protestant work ethic
mechanical reproduction

becoming/epistemology/regulation
urban renewal/relative space

state interventionism/industrialization
internationalism/permanence/time

Flexible postmodernity

economies of scope/Idiolect/anarchy
diversity/social division of labor

schizophrenia/decentering/desire
homelessness/entrepreneurialism

play/chance/exhaustion/Indeterminacy
fictitious capital/localism

financial power/individualism
neo-conservatism/counterurbanization

aesthetics/moneys of account
The Holy Ghost/immateriality

reproduction/pastiche/eclecticism
white collar/commercialism
charismatic politics/rhetoric

decentralization/deconstruction
antithesis/local contracts

strategic management/Idiolect
androgynous/multiple tasks/trace

language games/image/surface
small-batch production/social
movements/pluralistic otherness

heterotopias/spectacle/dispersal
flexible worker/symbolic capital

fiction/self-reference/signifier
services/temporary contract
electronic reproduction

being/ontology/deregulation
urban revitalization/place

laissez-faire/deindustrialization
geopolitics/ephemerality/space

Source: Harvey (1989), p. 340-1.

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