Chapter 1

Approaching the City

1.1　Introduction

Approaching the city. What do we mean by this? Do we hope to kindle some excitement in you? Yes, we do! We assume that you have enrolled in a course about cities, or that you have picked up this book, because you are interested in cities and interested in learning more about their dynamics. If you are like us, you have probably always been drawn to cities and to urbanism – the distinctive ways of life that characterize cities – even before developing an academic interest. You might consider yourself to be an urbanite, someone that has always lived in an urban environment. Or you might be from the suburbs or a rural area, but have moved to the city to attend college or university. Or maybe you are studying in a small town but you expect to move to a city when you graduate. In any case, we guess that you have often approached cities in the most straightforward sense: you have travelled toward one. As your plane broke through the clouds on its final descent, as your bus or car rounded one last bend to reveal a spectacular skyline, or as your train gradually made its way through an ever-intensifying landscape of factories, office and retail parks, houses, and apartments, toward a central station, you probably found yourself stimulated by excitement, expectation, and curiosity; perhaps by nervousness and trepidation or, most likely, by a mixture of all these feelings.

Urbanist (urban scholar) Mike Davis imagines such an approach to Dubai:

> As your jet starts its descent, you are glued to your window. … [T]he plane slowly banks toward the desert mainland [and] you gasp at the even more improbable vision ahead. Out of a chrome forest of skyscrapers soars a new Tower of Babel. It is an impossible half-mile high: taller than the Empire State Building stacked on top of itself. You are still rubbing your eyes with wonderment as the plane lands. … With your adrenaline pumped up … you round off the afternoon with some snowboarding on the local indoor snow mountain (outdoors, the temperature is 105°[F]). (Davis, 2006a: 47–48)

Bright lights, big city

Cities – their bright lights, spectacular buildings, and extreme experiences – have figured centrally in people's imaginations for centuries. They are places of possibility and danger, of hope and disappointment, of power and powerlessness, of glamour and destitution, of production and consumption. They are often seen as different or special – separated off, sometimes behind walls – from the rural areas beyond. They are often seen as sites where new innovations emerge and as places that epitomize new forms of social organization.

For example, scholars like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels saw the English cities of the nineteenth century as epitomizing the new economic and social order of industrial capitalism. When studying these cities, they saw places of intense and innovative economic activity, novel social interaction, global interconnection, and massive inequality. Cities, like the world, were in flux as industrial capitalism grew exponentially. While we often imagine Marx and Engels in their later gray-bearded lives, it was a young Engels, only in his mid-20s, who approached London for the first time on a ship travelling up the River Thames in the mid-nineteenth century. As it does for many of us, this first approach to a storied city

set his mind racing, his adrenaline pumping, as he tried to comprehend the multitude of sights, sounds, and smells he encountered. London was remarkable for its

> gigantic docks in which are assembled the thousands of ships which always cover the River Thames. I know nothing more imposing than the view one obtains of the river when sailing from the sea up to London Bridge. … The further one goes up the river the thicker becomes the concentration of ships lying at anchor, so that eventually only a narrow shipping lane is left free in midstream. Here hundreds of steamships dart rapidly to and fro. All this is so magnificent and impressive that one is lost in admiration. The traveler has good reason to marvel at England's greatness even before he steps on English soil. (Engels, 1845/1987: 30)

We return to Engels in Chapter 4, but for now we can agree that, whether in the nineteenth century or in the twenty-first century, cities inspire awe as we approach them.

Yet, it would hardly be useful for us as social scientists to simply celebrate the awesome and positively awe-inspiring aspects of cities (Figure 1.1 is an example of such a celebration). Things are never that simple. Indeed, the very next line of Engels' description of London notes, "It is only later that the traveler appreciates the human suffering which has made all this possible," a point he goes on to emphasize in his book through an extended

Figure 1.1   Dubai's iconic architecture on display in an advertisement in a Tokyo train station. The romantic allure of the city is on sale here, invoked through the flowing feminine dress and happy smile. The image also emphasizes the global interconnections among the world's cities. Photo: Eugene McCann.

description of the immiseration of working people in Manchester. Similarly, the purpose of Davis' imaginary descent into spectacular Dubai is to set up his deeply critical analysis of the sources of "Dubai Inc.'s" recent spectacular growth.

Approaching a city, living in one, or studying them necessarily evokes mixed feelings. Cities like society, then and now, are awesome and simultaneously awful. This makes them fascinating and troubling to approach, but it also makes the study of urbanism, in all its various facets, an important task. By studying cities, we are able to shed light not only on *urban* life but also on a vast array of processes, institutions, forces, interests, inequalities, and identities that constitute *society* more generally. This tension is most eloquently expressed by one Marxist scholar, Marshall Berman, speaking of another, Walter Benjamin, who studied the rise of modernity in Paris during the nineteenth century:

> [Benjamin's] heart and his sensibility draw him irresistibly toward the city's bright lights, beautiful women, fashion, luxury, its play of dazzling surfaces and radiant scenes; meanwhile his Marxist conscience wrenches him insistently away from these temptations, instructs him that this whole glittering world is decadent, hollow, vicious, spiritually empty, oppressive to the proletariat, condemned by history … but he cannot resist one last look down the boulevard or under the arcade; he wants to be saved, but not yet. (Berman, 1982: 146)

Urbanists who think critically about cities find that they are sometimes repelled by certain aspects of them, just as they are drawn to others. Box 1.1 contains an exercise that you can perform to think about your relationship to your city or town. So, how do we manage this

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Box 1.1   Experiencing the City

Many of us inhabit an urban area. We live in its neighborhoods, use its services and infrastructure, participate in its social and cultural activities and experience its various environments. In engaging with your city or town in these various ways, you quickly develop understandings of the place based on your own experience in combination with your understanding of larger forces that shape cities.

Take some time away from this book and: (1) write some field notes on a recent urban experience you have had (i.e., notes written during or immediately after an event that describe and reflect upon it); (2) write a short discussion of the experience, describing it based on your field notes and tying it to larger forces that seem connected to it; (3) use this experience to write a little about your feelings about cities in general and your city or town in particular. Are you in love with the place? Can you hardly wait to leave? Are you ambivalent? No matter your answer, write about why you have these feelings.

For example, if the bus runs past you some morning this week as you are trying to get to campus, or if you have difficulty finding parking when you drive there, this (and its consequences) would be an experience you could discuss. You would also need to link the specific experience to larger issues by identifying possible reasons why the bus ran by you or parking was hard to find (both of which might be related to public investment in transportation infrastructures).

tension between "urbanophila" and "urbanophobia" and use it to aid our understanding of cities? This is where a different connotation of "approaching the city" comes in.

Academic approaches

Travelling toward a place is not all, or even most of, what we mean when we say "approaching the city." An "approach" is also an intellectual stance that we take as we address a process, situation, or problem that we are trying to understand and, perhaps, change. Approaching a city in this intellectual and even political sense involves bringing a specific set of already-existing assumptions, perspectives, theories, categories, frameworks, and analytical methods to bear on the cacophony of sights, structures, and experiences that confront us in the city. Those who define themselves as critical urban geographers adopt numerous approaches to cities. To be critical does not necessarily mean that one must necessarily subscribe to a Marxist approach, for example. Critical urbanists might bring feminist, postcolonial, queer, anarchist, and many other approaches to bear on their studies of cities and, most likely, will combine a number of these intellectual traditions in their analyses.

By the end of the chapter, answers to the following questions will be clear to you:

- What is an intellectual approach to a subject, in this case to cities and urban processes?
- What distinguishes a geographical approach to cities from the various other types of approaches that we might find in other academic disciplines?
- What do the concepts, urbanization and development, urbanism, and planning mean and how do they help us study cities from an geographical perspective?
- What are the key foundations of urban geography and how are they related to each other?

We unpack what it means to be critical in Chapter 2. But first, consider what it means to be an urban geographer.

1.2   Being Geographical, Being Urbanist

"Oh, you're studying geography! So, what's the capital of Mali? Do you know all the capital cities? Do you like maps? Is that about rocks?" You have probably heard versions of these questions, maybe in your dormitory, maybe at a family gathering. The questioner is usually well intentioned and the questions are not surprising since geography is a wide ranging, but often relatively poorly defined, discipline. As a geographer, it is useful to have answers to these basic questions,[1] but it is also worth having a better sense of what defines geography as a discipline. If we focus here only on human or social geographers (those who are most likely to study cities), we must ask what contributions do geographers make to the study of cities and society more generally?

While most social science disciplines can be roughly defined by *what* they study – the economy, culture, society, and so on – geography is defined by *how* we study the world, by our *approach*. Geographers study the economy, society, politics, and culture too, but a

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[1] We suggest: "Bamako"; "No"; "Yes"; and "Well, some geographers do study rocks, but you might be thinking of Geology. Let me tell you what geographers actually do …"

Space is a term with many connotations. Most contemporary critical geographers agree that space is both something absolute – the physical, material spaces of the world – and is also socially produced. In this sense, space is a concept that refers to the relationships between society – human practices, representations, institutions, ways of life, and so on – and the spaces that society produces (see **socio-spatial process**). Space then, is very much defined in terms of relationships with other beings and things as well as in relation to power and to change over time.

geographical perspective is one that emphasizes **space** in its approach to any of these subjects.

What this means is that we approach the world's various phenomena in terms of *connections and similarities* across regions or landscapes ranging from the scale of the local to the global (how one can buy the same products in shopping streets in cities in different continents while also buying other goods and engaging in social interactions that are very different from one street to the next, for example). We also pay attention to the way that *divisions and differences* are shaped by, but also shape, various social and environmental processes (how the political jurisdictions of different municipalities in an urban region can make big differences in where industries locate or where housing gets built, for example).

Geographers are very much attuned to the notion that social and environmental processes do not play out in the abstract, but operate *somewhere* – in neighborhoods, across regions, within the unique body of an individual self, and so on. We also see these spaces as active in the production of those social processes – giving them shape, constraining, and enabling them. This is a geographical perspective: an approach that studies the **spatiality** of

Spatiality is a term geographers use to indicate that space and society are mutually constitutive (see **space** and **socio-spatial process**).

social and environmental processes by employing a series of related concepts like **space**, **place**, **scale** (global, local, urban, etc. – but see our definition of this word for more nuance), distance, region, territory, boundary, landscape, environment, clustering, and unevenness.

As we will show in the following chapters, this general approach allows geographers to contribute to society's understanding of cities as political and economic spaces, as well as places imbued with meaning and identity that are not only local in character but also defined by their global connections. We are also able to say a lot about the urban built environment, the landscapes of cities, and the physical, environmental processes that shape and are affected by processes of urbanization. This focus on process (geographers are interested in "how" and "why" questions as much as "where" questions) means, too, that we are able to analyze the relationship between places and change – from the ways that migration alters the character of urban populations, to how investment flows reshape city skylines, to how urban growth can both contribute to pollution and also might be able to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Focusing on how social and environmental processes affect places means that

Place refers to locations imbued with meaning. Place is always being reworked and redefined by the people who live in it and forces stretching beyond it. In this sense, place can be understood as "**scaled**": regions, nations, and even the globe can be understood in some ways to be places, as can localities.

geographers can offer important insights into how planning gets done in cities, regions, and nations (we assume many of you see urban planning, in one of its many facets, as a potential career option in your future). Furthermore, many geographers, including you, perhaps, are politically active in one way or another. In fact, you may have been drawn to geography because you want to dig deeper into the spatial aspects of cities because you find them unjust, problematic, or troublesome in some way or another. Or a geographical perspective may have drawn you into certain types of politics, from electoral campaigning to involvement with community activism or various types of social movements. Geography's diversity, then, is a result of its approach and its openness to influences from other disciplines and from a diverse array of intellectual and political traditions. Geography is a very interdisciplinary discipline in which you can get up to an awful lot of interesting stuff (Gregory, 2009).

> **Scale** is a conceptual arrangement of space. It is commonly thought of in terms of levels – the local, national, global, and so on. And there is some truth to this. Yet, human geographers understand scale as a social product, tied up with power and politics (see **space**). While scales appear natural, fixed, separate, and ahistorical, they are, in fact, produced and often interconnected for certain purposes by particular interests. Think of the European Union, NAFTA, or even the nation-state or the municipality. All have very specific and relatively recent histories (it is not so long ago that none of them existed in their present form). All involve drawing new lines on maps, creating territories, and, thus, assigning certain powers to particular scales and allowing certain activities to take place, while others are disallowed (see **state**). Scales are social and political, and they are performed and produced by social action. Therefore, they are powerful and can be changed ("rescaled"), for better or worse.

Defining "the urban" as an object of study

At the beginning of this chapter, when we described the ways in which one might physically approach a city, we assumed that you would have no problem conjuring up an image of the city you were approaching in your imagination. Yet, the image you have in your head of what a city is, or your definition of what it means to be "urban," are very likely different from ours, from your colleagues in the course you are taking, and from people who are reading this book in other parts of the world. These definitions will not be *entirely* different, of course. We will probably all agree that certain places are cities – New York, London, Shanghai, Mumbai, Tokyo, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires, Sydney, for example – and we will all likely concur that certain phenomena, infrastructures, or experiences – such as being crushed into an overcrowded subway car as it rattles from station to station – are urban in character (Figure 1.2).

Why are we so comfortable with these definitions? We might also want to think about why it matters to put the urban label on certain places and experiences. Furthermore, we should consider the scope of our definitions: where and why do we start to disagree about what a city is and what it means to be urban? Do we simply define a city by its municipal boundary? Or is there a certain population threshold below which places are no longer usefully defined as urban? Does that threshold differ from one country to another? Is the

Figure 1.2   A busy shopping street in the heart of Tokyo. Tokyo is the world's largest urban agglomeration, with a population of 37.2 million in 2011. Photo: Eugene McCann.

world itself now mostly an urbanized place, in terms of population? If so, why and how does that matter?

Certainly, the United Nations reports that more than half of the global population now lives in urban areas. More specifically:

> Between 2011 and 2050, the world population is expected to increase by 2.3 billion, passing from 7.0 billion to 9.3 billion. … At the same time, the population living in urban areas is projected to gain 2.6 billion, passing from 3.6 billion in 2011 to 6.3 billion 2050. Thus, the urban areas of the world are expected to absorb all the population growth expected over the next four decades while at the same time drawing in some of the rural population. … Asia, in particular, is projected to see its urban population increase by 1.4 billion, Africa by 0.9 billion, and Latin America and the Caribbean by 0.2 billion. (United Nations, 2012: 1)

While this is interesting in itself, it is important for social scientists to remember that the real question is: How and why is urbanization important? What does it tell us about the way global society is organized, how the global economy works, and how the environment supports and is exploited, not to mention threatened, by human activity? And, as discussed in Chapter 2, it is important to ask: Who in global society benefits from, and who is exploited, marginalized, and threatened by ongoing urbanization?

Therefore, we do not want to be too enthralled with urbanization statistics simply for their own sake. Nor do we want to become trapped by definitional games about what a city

or urban area is, or what it is not. When we attempt to define the city as a *thing* with clear boundaries and coherent, universal characteristics, we quickly find that this game is not as easy as it might have first appeared.

Instead, we quickly question why it matters to reify and categorize cities as concrete things anyway. Clearly, for the purposes of municipal government, it does matter where the boundaries of a city are because these limits define the extent of the rights of citizens to vote in local elections, perhaps, and the responsibilities of a particular government to provide infrastructure and services to its citizens. Yet even this seemingly clear-cut example gets muddied. Should people who own businesses in a city but who live elsewhere be allowed to vote in local elections, given that they have interests there and that they provide jobs locally? Should a municipal government's responsibilities always end at its official boundaries if environmental impacts of industrial activities within its jurisdiction flow downstream to neighboring places, or if its own citizens will benefit from a regional transit system rather than a separate local one? These complexities are, then, exactly why academic urbanists tend to be suspicious of attempts to reify cities, that is, to define them as "things."

Instead, urban geographers tend to approach cities as *processes*. From this perspective, cities are always changing, sometimes quickly, sometimes so slowly that they seem concrete, fixed, and permanent. They are also always connected to wider forces, whether natural or social, cultural, economic, political and so on. Through these connections they both reflect and shape the more general forces, flows, landscapes, and contexts in which they are situated. Cities, then, are social and spatial; they are **socio-spatial processes**. If cities are socio-spatial, then they are always tied up with interests: one need only look at the statues and monuments in cities across the globe to be able to get a sense of who is powerful in each place now and who was powerful in the past. Similarly, the character of contemporary urban built environments gives clues into which interests – economic, political, and cultural; individual, collective, and institutional – influence city building. Cities, like the societies of which they are part, serve people's interests in uneven or stratified ways.

As both Engels and Benjamin understood, the way economic activity, social interaction, and residential landscapes are arranged in cities allows certain groups within society – economic, political, or cultural **elites** – to do very well from them, while the poor, disenfranchised, and even the middle class do less well and tend to wield less influence over the places in which they live (Figure 1.3). As we have

Socio-spatial process A phrase indicating the mutually constitutive relationship between society – the organization of society into groups or classes, the development of cultural mores, and so on – and space – the organization of built environments, landscapes, and so on. How a society operates, understands itself, and is governed is reflected by the spaces (urban and otherwise) that it produces. Furthermore, the legacies of geographies that came before necessarily structure and define the character of contemporary society. The addition of the word "process" indicates that this relationship between society and space is historical and dynamic.

Elites are small groups of people that control large amounts of capital, political power, or social and cultural influence. Their power is often exercised through institutions, such as the **state**, that mediate, facilitate, and occasionally limit their ability to satisfy their interests.

Figure 1.3   This golf course in Jakarta, Indonesia caters to the elite of the city. In the 1970s and 1980s Indonesia and Jakarta specifically engaged in development programs that cleared squatter settlements and prioritized the business elite. Photo courtesy of Sarah Turner.

already suggested, cities are defined in important ways by processes of change, including struggles and negotiations over their present and future character. Thus, cities encapsulate and influence political processes as well as natural, social, and spatial ones.

1.3   Approaching Cities as Processes: Urbanization and Development, Urbanism, and Planning

If we are to define cities in terms of socio-spatial process, we should use concepts and terms that help us focus on the way cities are both fixed, identifiable elements of the landscape while also always being fluid, changing, and connected to the wider world. We should also approach cities by paying close attention to the social practices, interests, identities, and struggles that produce them. Three concepts are particularly helpful in this regard: (1) urbanization and development, (2) urbanism, and (3) planning.

Urbanization and development

In the simplest terms, **urbanization** is the process of becoming urban, or more urban. It has three specific connotations:

i. It highlights the demographic process in which cities gain more residents, a wider variety of residents, and an increasing density of population.
ii. It speaks to the increasing globalization of urban economic, political, and cultural influence.
iii. It helps us consider the ways in which space is organized and reorganized in tandem with changes in the organization of society and the economy.

> **Urbanization** is a term that refers to the clustering of population in increasingly large, dense, and diverse, cities over time. It also suggests the increasing globalization of cities' and urban processes' influence. Both of these processes indicate the relationship between the (re)organization of space and changes in the character of societies and economies.

Think, for example, of the rise of industrial capitalism in Britain. The development of a system of factory production necessitated large numbers of workers living close to mills and factories. Most of these workers had previously lived in rural areas but, by one method or another, were forced or encouraged to leave those places and to seek employment in a new type of place – the industrial city. This long transition from feudalism to capitalism was reflected in, and facilitated by, urbanization.

More generally, urbanization represents and reinforces a division of labor in society: urbanites generally cannot produce enough food to feed themselves; therefore, they rely on farmers in the countryside around the city and on producers all over the world. Similarly, these farmers need cities as a market for their products. Therefore, urbanization encourages and depends on systems of **commodification**, transportation, trade, marketing, and regulation that have global extent and influence. In turn, as cities grow and people spend more time working in waged employment, other divisions of labor and specializations develop. For example, groups of people are authorized to be bureaucrats and are paid to govern and manage urban social formations and landscapes. As Marx and Engels wrote, "the existence of the town implies … the necessity of administration, police, taxes, etc.; in short, of the municipality, and thus of politics in general" (Marx and Engels, 1845/1987: 69).

> **Commodification** is the process by which an object, product, capacity, or even labor, a belief, representation, or piece of land is converted into an element of market exchange by being assigned a price. Once mediated by money, commodities are frequently more able to circulate through markets, being bought and sold.

Development also suggests socio-spatial change, expressed in the urban built environment. While urbanization refers to the relationship between space and broad structures in society – capitalism, modernity, and so on – urban development can be understood as a more

> **Development** has many meanings, ranging from the global scale (international development), to the scale of the individual (personal development or self-improvement). For our purposes, it refers to the creation, destruction, and recreation of urban built environments over time – land, buildings, and infrastructure – for the purposes of producing and utilizing value of different sorts. It is driven by the interests of specific **elite** groups, often referred to as **growth coalitions** or growth machines.

Figure 1.4   Use value and exchange value in the urban landscape. Photo: Eugene McCann.

specific process; a purposeful one, driven by clearly defined interests. It refers to the crea-
tion, destruction, and recreation of urban built environments – land, buildings, and infra-
structure – for the purposes of producing and utilizing value of different sorts.

   We should think of value in terms of both *use* and *exchange*. If we take a privately
owned family house as an example, we can agree that, on an everyday basis, we value it
because it shelters us and it is a home, with all the meanings, associations, and memories
that that word connotes. Yet at certain times, for better or worse, its exchange value as a
commodity – a product that can be sold on a market – becomes paramount. In this sense,
the house is an asset for its occupant who may own it outright or who might be paying off
a mortgage (i.e., "renting to own" from a bank that holds the mortgage and profits from it
by charging interest). When the house was originally built, it was most likely also seen as
an asset by a developer hoping to sell it for a profit (for a value higher than the price of raw
materials, labor, and other costs necessary to build it). In the future, if it were to become
run-down or seen as obsolete, the land upon which it sits may be regarded by a new owner
as its primary source of value, rather than its use value, leading to its demolition and the
creation of a new house that is more valuable both in terms of use and exchange
(Figure 1.4).

Between these points of creation and destruction, use value and exchange value operate in parallel through the house's history. It becomes more than a building – a home – by being lived in. It becomes the place where relationships blossom, families grow, gatherings are held, food is prepared and shared. It is also a place where illness strikes, divisions occur, violence might unfold, separations are agreed upon, and deaths happen. The house's use value as a shelter is deepened through all these events. It is a place saturated with meanings and memory and a place in reference to which individual and collective identities are forged.

As all this is going on, the homeowner is also hoping that the house's exchange value increases. Furthermore, the house might be drawn upon in other ways for financial necessities. Perhaps a room or a whole floor will be rented out to a tenant to provide the owner with a little extra income or maybe the equity in the house (the portion of its value beyond the amount still owed to the mortgage holder) will be used as collateral to secure a loan to help fund repairs or medical bills. In all these ways, then, development – the building of a house on a piece of land in a neighborhood in a specific city, in a nation with a distinctive set of cultural norms around housing and particular rules around land ownership, and so on – ties use and exchange value together on an ongoing process of change.

We can take the lessons from this one house to think about all the houses in a city and all the other buildings and infrastructures that are valuable both because of how we use them and attach meaning to them (think of sports stadia). We can think similarly about how most buildings in a city can be bought, sold, destroyed, and rebuilt (think of sports stadia!). Using the notion of development to help us approach the city in this way emphasizes that the process of developing a place (of changing it through successive rounds of building, demolition, and rebuilding) as part of a wider process of urbanization, is very much a social one. It is a socio-spatial process both because of how social actors of various types engage in producing the built environment and because it is a process with consequences for how social life is lived.

This approach also raises important questions about who benefits and loses through development. Given that society is unevenly or hierarchically structured, with certain people having more resources and influence to shape decisions about what will be built and where, we can assume that not everyone benefits equally from development and change on the urban landscape. Thus, urban geographers are perfectly equipped to analyze processes of socio-spatial **uneven development** in cities and also to understand the political struggles that so often stem from and revolve around urban development proposals and neighborhood change. We return to this issue in Chapter 2 and throughout the rest of the book.

> **Uneven development** A process and condition that is both the product of and, crucially, the inevitable result of capitalist development. Uneven development can be expressed at all scales, from different levels of development in various parts of the world, to differences in development from neighborhood to neighborhood in a city. This concept (and most evidence) contradicts classical economists' argument that the economy tends toward equilibrium.

Urbanism

A second concept, **urbanism**, is used in two ways. On one hand, it often refers to architecture and design, as when public

Urbanism is often used to refer to urban design (architecture, etc.). In this book, its other meaning is more prominent: ways of life that define cities in specific historical periods. These ways of life, of course, shape and are shaped by the design of urban built environments.

transit infrastructure or green architecture are referred to as examples of sustainable urbanism (Chapter 10 gives definitions of these examples). On the other hand, urbanism is a concept that refers to ways of life and interaction with others that are specific to cities at particular times in history. We will explore this connotation here, but it is worth acknowledging that the two uses of "urbanism" are not entirely separate: as we have already argued, urban built environments are both physical and social, and urban society both produces and is also shaped by urban landscapes.

Thinking of cities in terms of urbanism (ways of living and interacting that define identities and meanings in an urbanized context) helps us think about cities as *social* and *emergent* – lived places, produced and reproduced by people and, therefore, always changing and always reflecting the character of society at a particular time in history and in a particular place on the planet. Sociologists like Georg Simmel (1903/2002) and Louis Wirth (1938) developed the notion of urbanism as a distinct way of life in the early twentieth century. Looking at the rapidly urbanizing cities of Paris and Chicago, these scholars argued that city dwellers seemed to behave and interact differently than their rural or small town counterparts. Urbanites, living in the new type of industrial city that had so awed and disgusted the young Engels in the 1840s, were argued to be more alone than their counterparts elsewhere, even while (paradoxically) being crushed together in larger numbers and in tighter quarters than they might have been in rural villages. This form of urbanism was associated with the rise of industrialism, as we suggested above, and also with modernity. Urbanism as a way of life, according to these sociologists, involved people developing a protective shell around themselves, so as to manage their increasing interactions with larger and larger numbers of strangers.

One classic symptom of urbanism, they argued, was a blasé, individualistic, disinterested, or unconcerned attitude, with little eye contact made with strangers and little concern for the welfare of others, for example. Indeed, their ideas about modern cities resonated with those of Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist who argued that rapid change society, such as those wrought by industrial urbanization, produced "anomie" in people, meaning that they felt disconnected from their community and thus operated in an individualistic or asocial manner, rejecting accepted social norms of behavior (Durkheim, 1893/1997). In turn, this led to a breakdown in society, Durkheim argued, as individuals increasingly felt alienated from it. The individual was in a crowd, but made him/herself alone. Urbanism in rapidly growing industrial cities, Wirth and his colleagues in the Chicago School of urban sociologists (see below) surmised, was a new, often cold and alienating way of life.

Later studies questioned some of these assumptions, however. For example, Herbert Gans (1962) suggested that while urbanites might prefer to stay separate from, or anonymous in, the crowd while travelling to work, shopping in downtowns, and so on, they were also involved in building and maintaining strong community bonds at home in their neighborhoods. These were what Gans called "urban villages," like the Italian–American community of Boston's West End, which he studied in the late 1950s.

More recently, other urbanists have argued that how one lives and experiences urban life is influenced by a whole series of identities and differences, for example, gender, race, sexuality, age, class, and disability. Others have pointed out that Simmel and Wirth's notion of what characterizes urbanism in the modern city might only apply to *their* modern cities (specifically, those of the global North in the industrial age), while examinations of how people cope with urban life in, say, contemporary African cities is very different and perhaps less alienating (Robinson, 2006). We return to this issue in Chapter 2.

Urbanism is a complex and contested concept. It helps us focus on urban places as fundamentally peopled – how they live, how they negotiate processes of change, and how they manage their relationships with each other, with social processes and institutions like the economy and government, and with nature, the landscape, and the wider world.

Planning

The constant change that characterizes cities and their many spaces is not simply the result of individual decisions about how to build and extract value from property, for example. The **state** – the group of institutions that govern society – is also a crucial actor in the process of developing cities. **Planning** is the institution of the state that is primarily responsible for designing and managing how flows of investment circulate in and out of the built environment. Indeed, urban planning is a socio-spatial *process* in itself, since planning is a future-oriented activity in which actors of various types engage so that they can govern how development will take place.

Planning refers to managing and facilitating flows of investment and people as they circulate around urban landscapes. One of the key tools of contemporary planning is **zoning**, in which decisions are made – ideally in a rational, strategic manner that is for the common good – in which different land uses are separated from each other in a manner that is written down in policy documents (plans) and is, therefore, predictable. This system protects vulnerable people or land uses from being polluted or otherwise endangered by other activities. Zoning

State, the A set of institutions, including government and the law, that govern and exercise control over a particular territory. The term usually refers also to the people who work in state institutions – its agents, such as urban planners or police officers. Societies invest rights in the institutions of the state, such as the right to tax and to enforce laws. States are also charged with responsibilities, including providing infrastructure, social services, and so on. States' functions, rights, and responsibilities are divided among different scales. Urban geography deals with both the "local state" – planning, for example – and the ways in which provincial and national state bureaucracies, policies, and actions impact on cities.

Planning has many connotations. This book's focus is on urban and regional planning, which is a set of practices that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century to manage flows of investment into and around urban regions and to address crises (health, sustainability, etc.) that emerge with **development**. **Zoning** is an example of such a planning practice. Historically, planning was the purview of a few visionaries, funded by private donors, and often intent on designing model alternatives to the polluted, crowded industrial city. By the mid-twentieth century,

planning had become a professionalized, bureaucratized **state** institution. Increasingly, since the 1980s, the **neoliberalization** of the state has meant that more elements of planning have been made private (e.g., the rise of private consultants contracting with the state). While many worry about the anti-democratic potential of this shift, others see hope in its ability to bring a wider range of voices to the table.

Zoning Cities are often separated into different zones, which then have restrictions attached to them in terms of what kinds of buildings and uses can be placed within them. Common examples include restrictions on the height of buildings, for instance in residential districts seeking to restrict high-rise development. A common use-based example is the restriction on types of businesses that can operate in certain areas, for instance a ban on industry, warehousing, or adult entertainment in residential areas. Zoning is a core feature of urban land-use planning.

regulations are likely to prevent a solid waste incinerator from operating next door to a school, for example. Zoning might also be invoked to prioritize the elite's version of the city, such as when strip clubs are prohibited from operating in certain residential areas identified as middle class but are allowed to operate in lower income areas (Hubbard, 2011). While both of these land uses have use values of one type or another, the problems that would be caused by their proximity make it socially desirable to separate them, at least according to some group's perspective.

Zoning also facilitates economic activity and the extraction of exchange value from the land. For example, the predictability that comes with written, enforceable zoning policies allows the owner of the house discussed earlier to assume that not only will its use value be protected to some extent (no polluting incinerator next door), but also that growth in its exchange value will be facilitated by policies that encourage similar properties to be developed around it and that discourage land uses that would diminish the house's value (that incinerator would also have a negative economic impact, as might a strip club). The company that owns the incinerator might also prefer for it to be located away from houses and schools. Zoning facilitates the agglomeration of similar activities in particular areas of cities and, by doing so, it helps these sorts of land uses to be located near crucial infrastructures and near similar businesses with which they might compete but with which they might also share certain common benefits of location.

As will be discussed in Chapter 2 and later in the book, planning and development are highly political and are often the objects of a great deal of political contestation. In these disputes – over whether new developments should replace farmland on a city's edges, whether social housing should be allowed in wealthy neighborhoods, or whether the gentrification of old working class neighborhoods by shiny new condominiums should proceed unchecked, for example – the state is a group of institutions charged with adjudicating the various private interests who are affected positively or negatively by development. As Chapter 2 will suggest, a critical analysis of planning as a state institution indicates that planning policies, like all other state policies, are not neutral but are the product of, and have an influence on, a society that is economically, socially, and spatially uneven.

Summary

While we often think of cities as epitomizing solidity, permanence, and concreteness (both literal and figurative), thinking of them in terms of urbanization and development, urbanism, and planning reminds us that their solidity and stability is only one part of the story. The city we approach on the plane or train is only fixed, solid, and stable when we think of it as a snapshot in time. If we think of what we see instead as one frame in a long movie, we gain a sense of cities as moments within longer trajectories of change or development. Like any epic movie, the city has numerous actors with various roles of various degrees of prominence. Like many epics, the landscape or setting is more than an inert backdrop but is, in fact, quite active in the narrative – imbued with meaning, identity, and value. Yet, unlike an epic film, cities do not have a single, all-powerful director who calls the shots. A critical perspective insists that they are the product of a wide range of structures, institutions, actors, and relations that operate hyper-locally within individual houses, streets, and neighborhoods, while also stretching far beyond municipal boundaries.

1.4   Urban Geography: Foundational Approaches

While most geographers would probably see some reflection of themselves in our descriptions of urban geographical approach, discussed above, it is important to acknowledge that there are numerous, more specific approaches in the discipline, each with their own particular concepts, characteristics, and objects of study. Geography is not defined by one paradigm or canon of work to which all geographers genuflect. Within the wide range of geographical scholarship, *urban* geographers represent a significant and vibrant subgroup. Like the discipline as a whole, urban geographers are a diverse group who study many things from numerous angles, even if they can be grouped together by their adherence to the sort of spatial perspective described above and by a common interest in cities and urban processes. As geographer Loretta Lees (2009) puts it, urban geography is "[t]he geographical study of urban spaces and urban ways of being." Here we will expand on this definition of urban geography by focusing on key ways in which urban geographers approach the city.

   Urban geography, as a subdiscipline, is defined by a series of approaches (each based on a particular combination of concepts and methods and each dominant for a particular period of time), by the insights these approaches bring to our understanding of urbanism, and by the debates and critiques that emerge among the community of scholars over the merits and limits of each approach and of alternative approaches. This is not to suggest that, at some clearly demarcated point, one approach gets debunked, never to be mentioned again, while another gets anointed as the one that will offer newer, truer insights. Rather, the development of an academic subdiscipline is like a long, ongoing conversation in which current topics are always framed in reference to what came before. Defining the key approaches and concerns of contemporary *critical* urban geography, as is done in Chapter 2, needs at least some reference to the approaches of the past because, to a more or less explicit extent, these past approaches are still very much part of the present discussion, even if sometimes only as approaches contemporary urban geographers would like to critique or from which we would like to distance ourselves.

In this regard, it is impossible to ignore the influence of one group of sociologists on the development of urban geography and urban studies in the first half of the twentieth century. This "Chicago School" is discussed in some detail here, including how its work has influenced geographers. We will then briefly discuss how urban geography developed until the early 1970s. Chapter 2 will pick up the story of urban geography's development from that point on, because the early 1970s are usually understood to be the time when critical approaches emerged in the discipline.

Before there was Urban Geography: The Chicago School

Geographers came relatively late to the city as an object, landscape, or process to study. The modern city in the global North had been the object of sustained academic attention since approximately the turn of the twentieth century when sociologists became especially interested in the types of urban-social phenomena, such as inequality, loneliness in crowds, mixing and segregation, and immigration, that Engels and others had identified 50 years previously. From the 1910s onwards, a group of sociologists associated with the University of Chicago developed an approach to the city that remains, even today, foundational to urban studies literature. Inspired by the work of sociologists Georg Simmel and Emile Durkheim, and, especially, by attempts to apply Darwinian theories about natural ecosystems to understandings of new forms of social organization in the industrial age, these sociologists sought to analyze and understand that rapidly changing city developing around them.

We should remember that Chicago, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was a really new place. A significant part of it had burned to the ground in 1871, but by 1893 it hosted the World's Columbian Exhibition. The Exhibition was a massive world's fair that was intended to present the best of contemporary urbanism (in both the way of life and the design senses of the term) to the world and to advertise Chicago as a new force – a vibrant center of enterprise and innovation. The city certainly was a growing economic powerhouse in the late nineteenth century and in the early decades of the twentieth century. As a result, it attracted huge numbers of European immigrants, domestic rural migrants, and African–American migrants hoping to escape discrimination and poverty in the south of the USA.

Chicago, like London 50 years before, was a roiling landscape of rapid change and startling novelty. It was a place of art and innovation, and a place of segregation and violence. It generated great wealth while many of its residents lived in horrible poverty. It was, then, a modern city of light and shadow. And in all its extremes, contrasts, and innovations, it was a puzzling place – something new on the face of the earth. Perhaps not surprisingly, engaged sociologists were drawn to studying the city.

The Chicago School of sociology approached the city as a biological or ecological system. The Chicago School's approach was defined by its use of metaphors to equate natural processes (like the way species of plants find their best fit within an ecological system) with social ones (like the ethnic geography of a city in which people of the same ethnicity live close to each other). Other key concepts were competition, cooperation, territory, invasion and succession, symbiosis, natural areas, and community. In sum, they regarded the city as

an **urban ecology** – the "natural" environment of "man."

Like Engels, the Chicago School placed great emphasis in understanding the city at street level through detailed ethnographic fieldwork, involving observation of and conversations with residents. It also went further by pioneering survey techniques that allowed it to supplement its fine-grained observation with knowledge of large numbers

> **Urban ecology**, an iteration of the Chicago School's human ecology approach, borrows ecological concepts like invasion and succession, in an attempt to explain the organization of society in cities. This approach has been roundly critiqued (Chapter 2) and is no longer a prominent approach in urban geography, although it continues to provide an historical reference point.

of people living in neighborhoods across the city. In turn, it built generalizations, or models, out of all of its data (but see Box 1.2).

Box 1.2   The Hidden History of the Chicago School: Gender and Social Work

If we are to think about cities critically, one thing we must be willing to do is question taken-for-granted understandings of what social science is about, how social scientific knowledge has come about, and how common sense understandings of "valid" or "relevant" forms of research and knowledge have been used. The history of social science, in general, and urban studies more specifically, is full of cases in which certain stories have been hidden or forgotten.

The case of the Chicago School highlights how certain forms of knowledge and particular producers of knowledge can be marginalized and unfairly downgraded because those in power, either in society as a whole or in an academic institution, see what they say or who produced them as a challenge to dominant intellectual, social, and political paradigms. Geographer David Sibley, in his book *Geographies of Exclusion* (1995), recounts how knowledge of Chicago's changing society in the early years of the twentieth century was based in part on the work of women social workers, as well as male sociologists (social work and sociology had their own separate departments at the University of Chicago).

Working in and with Hull House, an institution in Chicago founded in 1889 by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr to provide services and education to the city's largely immigrant working class, the social workers gained and published a great deal of valuable information on the way the city's society was changing. Yet, leaders of the Chicago School of sociology defined their discipline as scientific, while they labeled social work as feminine and less rigorous. Beyond suffering from this sexism, the women of Hull House were seen to have socialist leanings. Thus, they "suffered double exclusion" (Sibley, 1995: 167) and found "their contribution … lost from sight" Sibley, 1995: 170). As is discussed in Chapter 2, Sibley's hidden history is a clear example of how, as critical geographers, we must be willing to think critically about the world and also about the foundation of our academic concepts, debates, and histories.
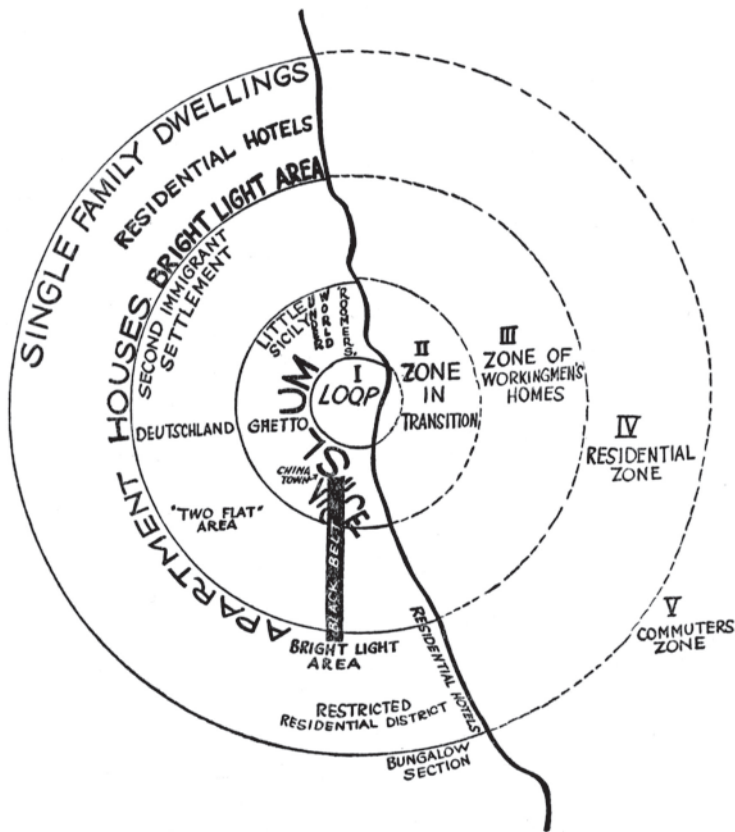
URBAN AREAS

Figure 1.5   Burgess' Concentric Zone Model superimposed on the geography of early twentieth-century Chicago. Source: Park and Burgess (1925/1967: 55). Used with permission, University of Chicago Press.

Most famous of the Chicago School's models was Ernest Burgess' Concentric Zone Model, which every self-respecting urban geographer, even today, has an image of in their head and an opinion of on the tip of their tongue (Figures 1.6 and 1.7). The model reveals how the Chicago School's human ecology approach and its key concepts influenced its arguments about how cities, in general, work. It also epitomizes the limits of its approach that have come to form the basis for more recent critiques, which are briefly outline below and discussed more fully in Chapter 2. Figure 1.5 shows that Burgess's model was very much a product of its time and place. It establishes the term **Central Business District (CBD)** to describe the downtown as the center of the urban region.

Around it are a series of rings, defined roughly by the age of their built environments (oldest to youngest), their quality (least to best), their density (densest to less dense), and their value (least expensive to most). Overlaid on these gradients are references to the
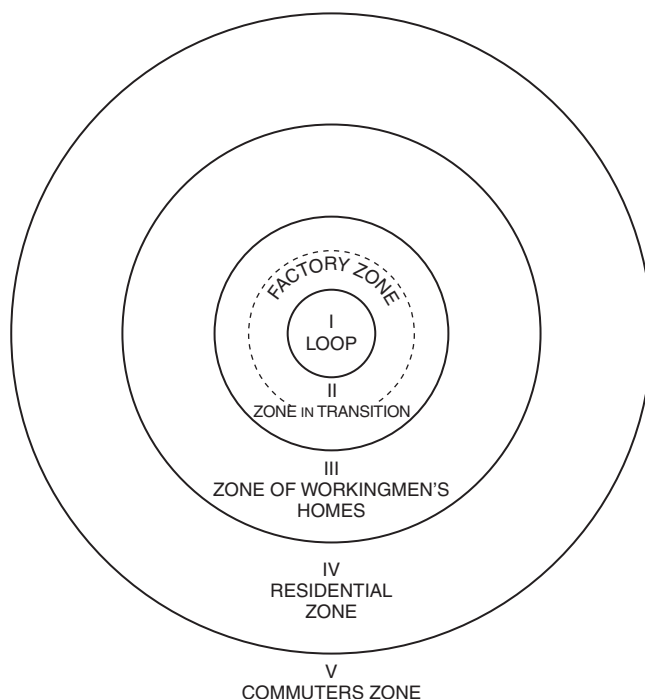
The following diagram shows five concentric circles with labels:

- I LOOP (center)
- FACTORY ZONE (dashed circle around the center)
- II ZONE IN TRANSITION
- III ZONE OF WORKINGMEN'S HOMES
- IV RESIDENTIAL ZONE
- V COMMUTERS ZONE

Figure 1.6   The abstract version of Burgess' Concentric Zone Model. Source: Park and Burgess (1925/1967: 51). Used with permission, University of Chicago Press.

class and ethnic character of the city's population, to neighborhood differentiation even within the zones, and allusions to the wider national and global processes that partially produce cities.

Figure 1.5 is the more concrete version, in which the Chicago context is clear. It describes a city of immigration – from Europe ("Deutschland," "Little Sicily"), Asia ("Chinatown"), and elsewhere in the United States (the "Black Belt"). These immigrants were largely poor, as can be seen in the references to apartment dwellings, rooming houses, and residential

> **Central Business District (CBD)** The core of the city, where transport networks converge and land uses are dominated by retail and office functions. Commonly, especially in older global North cities like Chicago, this area has the densest land uses and the highest land prices. Since the mid-twentieth century in the global North, traditional CBDs face competition from suburban office and retail locations, often located at the junctions of major highways.

hotels (single room occupancy establishments for low income people). The city was, then, defined to a great extent by circumstances elsewhere and flows between various other places and Chicago. The model also describes an economically and socially segregated city. This is evident in the ethnic designations mentioned above, but also in its references to ghettos, slums, better residences, and bungalows.

The process of modeling is about abstracting from the concrete context to make generalizations and draw lessons. Figure 1.6 shows how the specifics of Chicago are reflected in a general model. Some of the terms, such as the CBD, and the zones of

workers' homes, better residences, and the commuter zone, where people live in bungalows and travel to work in the CBD, are clearly related to the more concrete diagramming of Chicago.

Zone in transition A key term in the Chicago School's ecological diagramming of cities. The zone in transition is the area around the Central Business District of global North industrial cities where a mix of land uses is found and where a general transition from residential uses to retail, office, and light industrial uses was identified by the Chicago sociologists.

Another key term is the **zone in transition**. In Figure 1.5, it can be seen that this zone, like the others, contains a lot of diversity that, in Figure 1.6, gets subsumed under a single label. Yet, while the other labels are relatively understandable, this "zone in transition" needs further explanation. It is the area of the city, surrounding the CBD, in which the Chicago School researchers encountered a mix of building types, qualities, and uses as well as a range of often low income immigrant, ethnic minority communities. They saw it as "in transition" because residential buildings were deteriorating and residential uses in the zone were being replaced by light industry and by the expansion of the CBD.

It would not be too much of a stretch to say that the notion of this transition in this zone did not refer only to the built environment, however. It also has a social connotation because, as discussed more in Chapter 2, the Chicago School's grounding in evolutionary metaphors like invasion and succession, and its tendency to subscribe to a vision of the American Dream in which new immigrants would work hard, succeed, and (naturally) move to new, bigger, houses as their incomes increased, led it to assume that new immigrants lives were in transition. This territory would, over time and as a result of a "natural" process of invasion and succession, see a series of new groups arriving while established ones either lose out in a competition for space or prosper and give up their existing territories as they move onwards, upwards, and outwards.

What this approach to understanding the city and its people means for how we understand cities and what limits it puts on our understanding is discussed critically in the next chapter. For now, what is important is to explore two ways in which the urban ecological approach to the city has progressed since the 1920s: how the model has been modified over time and from place to place and also how urban studies research has developed, based on and extending beyond the Chicago School approach. The first of these is dealt with here and the issue of the legacy of the Chicago School is left to the next section.

The original model prompted a small industry focused on modifying it to account for changes in the character of United States urbanism in the following 90 years. Those who found its abstractness too simplistic (those perfect concentric circles!) proposed taking account of how features such as rivers and railway lines modify the geography of business and residential land uses on a landscape. Homer Hoyt (1939), who we will meet again in Chapter 2, produced a sector model looking more like a sliced-up cake than a series of onion rings. Later, others working on sprawling auto-dependent cities took this logic further, noting that these regions were no longer focused on single CBDs and were, instead, characterized by multiple nuclei, scattered like a galaxy of stars. Beyond the United States context, the Chicago School models have travelled. They are common touchstones in discussions of cities in many places and some scholars have tried to modify them to different

contexts. A prominent example of this is the Latin American City Model (Griffin and Ford, 1980), in which the standard rings are cross-cut by sectors defined, among other things, by the elite's tendency to reside closer to the CBD and along a major artery radiating out from it, rather than mainly in a suburban commuter zone.

Urban geography, from the Chicago School to the quantitative revolution

As urban geography emerged as a subdiscipline in the post-Second World War years, the legacy of the Chicago School was strong, as we have suggested above. There is a great deal of value in its approach, after all. It emphasizes the relationship between the character of the urban built environment and the character of contemporary society. Its adherence to a social form of Darwinism, for all its problematic consequences, did emphasize the important of process and change. The Chicago School's city was very much a city that was a *socio-spatial process*. Yet, as attempts to model and remodel cities proceeded through the twentieth century there was a tendency to favor *descriptions* of static, formal models, with their fixed, canonic zones, sectors, and nuclei. Form came to trump process; where questions seemed to take on more salience than how and why questions.

New generations of geographers in the 1950s and 1960s became uncomfortable with the consequences of this idiographic (descriptive) tradition. Indeed, they saw it as a dangerous legacy of the past that threatened to be the death of geography as a discipline because it made geography seem old-fashioned and of little relevance to the world's problems or to the cutting edge trajectories of contemporary social science. This new generation harbored a desire to make geography a scientific discipline; one characterized, not by description, but by a *nomothetic* (law generating) approach that can *explain* the processes going on in cities.

Their worked sparked the discipline's quantitative revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, in which geographers turned to forms of quantitative, locational analysis and **spatial science** in order to both identify economic laws that were common to how cities grew and changed and that, given their law-like character, could be applied to a wide range of different cities. In turn, the laws and the methods used to study cities became the basis for attempts to predict how urban processes might develop in the future. The quantitative revolution promised to make geography relevant to the state and business: planning agencies would call on geographers to consult on land use decisions and businesses would employ geographers to work for them in deciding the optimal location of their new offices, factories, or stores.

Spatial science emerged in geography in the 1960s as many geographers rejected ideographic (descriptive) approaches in favor of nomothetic (law generating) approaches. Major foci are the interactions of objects in space and the diffusion of phenomena across space, which geographers seek to quantify, measure, and model and, thus, explain and predict. While critical urban geography has tended to orientate toward qualitative, rather than quantitative analyses, there is no necessary reason why spatial science approaches cannot contribute to critical analyses of cities.

Yet, as we have already argued, the development of a discipline is not marked by clear breaks between different approaches. Instead, they overlap. In fact, in urban geography, more traditional forms of idiographic

analysis continued through the twentieth century, operating in parallel with, or counter to, nomothetic, quantitative approaches. More interestingly, we can identify traces of the Chicago School's models even within the quantitative approach. For example, a prominent focus of quantitative urban economic geography in the 1960s and 1970s was on the factors that caused land uses to be positioned in certain parts of the city and the factors involved in those locations changing over time. While the Chicago School tended toward a mix of social and economic explanations for changes in neighborhood composition, always inflected with its Darwinian metaphors of course, quantitative geographers focused on economic trade-offs that individuals and business make between accessibility of a piece of land and its cost (land rent). This understanding that economic behavior is driven only by cost and use became formalized into **bid rent theory**, which predicted that higher-value land uses (e.g., commercial and retail) tend to gravitate towards the center of the city, outbidding lower rent-generating activities (e.g., housing), which are generally found in outlying suburban areas.

Bid rent theory assumes that the most expensive land is that located closest to the city center. Under bid rent theory, land's value decreases outward. Much like the concentric circles in a bullseye, the best target is at the center. The phrase "bid rent" comes from the idea that businesses or people would offer a price (bid) for prime location (rent), but that they might be outbid by others. This theory is thought to allow us to predict where certain land uses will predominate in a city.

Therefore, there is a location in the city (what planners today still call the "Peak Value Intersection") that is most valuable because it is very accessible. And because of its value and accessibility, it tends to be occupied by businesses that are willing and able to pay the highest rents in the city.

A simplified representation of this understanding of the city involves bid rent curves superimposed on the Chicago School's concentric zone model. In this model, the highest value locations are in the center of the city (the CBD) and, as Figure 1.7 shows, prices for land fall with distance from that location. If we turn the concentric zone model on its side and treat it as the *x* axis on a graph in which the *y* axis represents a particular type of economic activity's ability to pay rents in a particular place, then we can see rents curving away from the CBD towards the suburbs. This is, as we said, an admittedly simple version of the model and, clearly, the quantitative geographers who use it are intelligent enough to understand that it is an abstraction that does not take account of variations in the geography of the city or of other factors influencing social and economic decisions around land use. Nonetheless, what the bid rent model did was overlay a quantitative model onto the earlier work of the Chicago School.

1.5   Conclusion: Building on our Foundations

This introductory chapter has introduced a general approach to the city: one that emphasizes the relationship between urban built environments and social life. It, thus, sees the city as a socio-spatial process in which change is manifest on the landscape and continually negotiated and struggled over by individuals, communities, and institutions. The chapter also describes some of the key elements of the history of
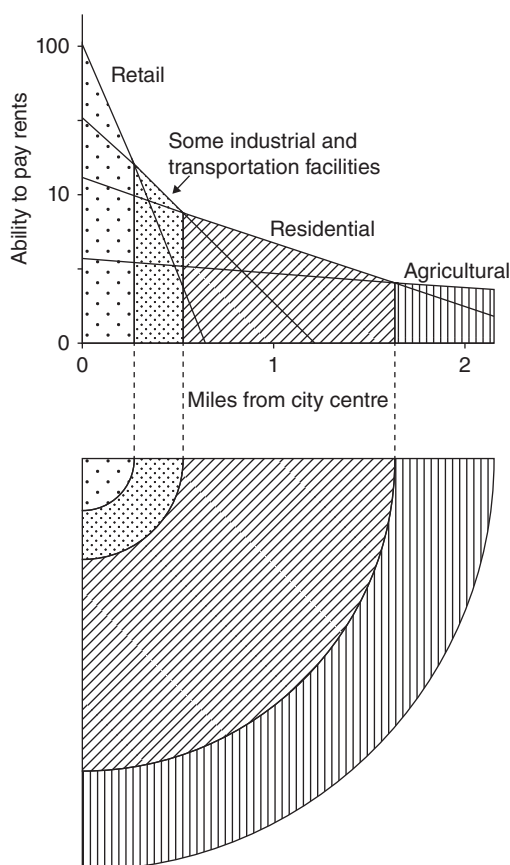
Figure 1.7 The bid rent curve. Source: Pacione (2009), Box 7.3, p.144. Used by permission of Taylor & Francis.

urban geography. These foundational approaches will now form the basis for the remainder of the book.

Outlined in Chapter 2 is the critical approach to urban geography that emerged in the 1970s, grew and flourished in the 1980s and 1990s, and continues to define the discipline today. Only by understanding the foundations of the subdiscipline can we have a good grasp of what the critical approach is being critical *about*. We will see that the notion of "critical" has some different aspects and connotations. Similarly, we will see that, as in earlier periods, legacies of past approaches can still be identified today, often as the basis for new critical approaches. If the city is a social product, continually in a process of change, so is critical urban geography.

1.6   Further Reading

- This book provides a particular approach to urban geography – the critical approach that is outlined in Chapter 2. On the other hand, Pacione's (2009) text, *Urban Geography: A Global Perspective*, is admirably comprehensive it its coverage of every aspect of the

history and current diversity of urban geography. If you are interested in that history, or in other approaches, this is a great resource, as are these urban "readers": Fyfe and Kenny (2005) and LeGates and Stout (2011).

- Urban geographers develop their ideas and publish their research in academic journals. These are worth delving into. Journals with a specifically urban focus include: *Environment and Planning A*; *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*; *Geography Compass* (urban section); the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*; *Urban Geography*; and *Urban Studies*. Also, the journal *Progress in Human Geography* is an excellent source of concise reviews of current research in numerous sub-disciplines, including urban geography.

- Excellent resources for any human geographer are the *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Gregory *et al.*, 2009) and the *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (Kitchin and Thrift, 2009). With access to these, you will almost never be lost for a definition of a key geographical term.

- Engels' book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845/1987) is a fascinating and powerful account of life in the industrial city.

- A key figure in urban discussions in many parts of the world (but especially North America) in recent years has been Jane Jacobs. Rather than simply hear or read about what she said about cities, read her classic book, the *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) yourself. It is well written and powerfully argued.