

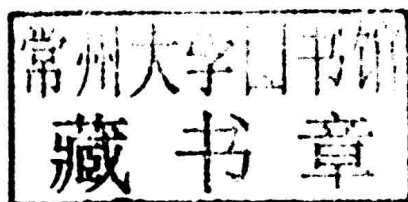
Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe



Edited by Ali Madanipour,
Sabine Knierbein, Aglaée Degros

Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe

Edited by Ali Madanipour, Sabine
Knierbein, and Aglaée Degros



First published 2014
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2014 selection and editorial material, Ali Madanipour, Sabine Knierbein,
Aglæe Degros

The right of Ali Madanipour, Sabine Knierbein, and Aglæe Degros to be
identified as authors of the editorial material, and of the individual authors as
authors of their contributions, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77
and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or
utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now
known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any
information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the
publishers.

Trademark Notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered
trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to
infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Public space and the challenge of urban transformation in Europe / edited by Ali
Madanipour, Sabine Knierbein, Aglæe Degros.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Public spaces—Europe. 2. Urban policy—Europe. 3. Sociology,
Urban—Europe. 4. City planning—Europe. I. Madanipour, Ali.
II. Knierbein, Sabine, 1977– III. Degros, Aglæe, 1972–

HT131.P83 2014

307.76094—dc23

2013017739

ISBN13: 978-0-415-63834-0 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-64055-8 (pbk)

ISBN13: 978-1-315-88049-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Baskerville
by Apex CoVantage, LLC



Printed and bound in Great Britain by
TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe

European cities are changing rapidly in partial response to the processes of deindustrialization, European integration, and economic globalization. Within those cities, public spaces are the meeting place of politics and culture, social and individual territories, instrumental and expressive concerns. *Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe* investigates how European city authorities understand and deal with their public spaces; how this interacts with market forces, social norms, and cultural expectations; and whether and how this relates to the needs and experiences of their citizens, exploring new strategies and innovative practices for strengthening public spaces and urban culture.

These questions are explored by looking at 13 case studies from across Europe, written by active scholars in the area of public space and organized in three parts:

1. Strategies, plans and policies
2. Multiple roles of public space
3. Everyday life in the city.

This book is essential reading for students and scholars interested in the design and development of public space. The European case studies provide interesting examples and comparisons of how cities deal with their public space and issues of space and society.

Ali Madanipour is Professor of Urban Design and Director of the Global Urban Research Unit at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University. In 2010, he was the City of Vienna Senior Visiting Professor at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space (SKuOR), Vienna University of Technology.

Sabine Knierbein is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Vienna University of Technology. She has directed the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space since 2008.

Aglaée Degros is a practising urban planner and co-founder, with Stefan Bendiks, of the office Artgineering, based in Rotterdam. Aglaée has been the City of Vienna Junior Visiting Professor at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space, Vienna University of Technology.

Acknowledgements

This book started in 2010 in Vienna, at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space (<http://skuor.tuwien.ac.at>), headed by Sabine Knierbein, where Ali Madanipour and Aglaée Degros were City of Vienna Visiting Professors for the annual theme 'Urban culture, public space and the state—Politics and planning'. The yearlong collaboration, which included organizing a European conference on public space, was made possible by the generous support of the City of Vienna; the Administrative Group for Urban Development, Traffic and Transport, Climate Protection, Energy and Public Participation; and Vienna Technical University, Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Department for Spatial Planning.

In Chapter 2, while the text results from a joint research, discussion and writing, the paragraphs of this text have been authored as follows: Massimo Bricocoli: 2, 3, 5; Paola Savoldi: 1, 4.

The authors of Chapter 3 wish to thank Tihomir Viderman and Johanna Aigner for their feedback on the text; Georgine Zabrana, Richard Kronberger and Hermann Papouschek—all working for the City of Vienna—provided very helpful information. All translations from German to English are by the authors.

In Chapter 8, the author wishes to thank his mentors, Alejandra Bronfman, Ella Chmielewska, Sherry McKay, and Hans-Rudolf Meier, as well as Dov Berger, Margaret Critchlow, Fiona Hanley, Hanna-Majewska-Elżanowska, Channing Rodman, Sebastian Schmidt-Tomczak, and Jennifer Young for their insightful comments and multidisciplinary perspectives. Earlier versions of this work were presented at the Social Street conference (second edition), 7th Urban and Landscape Days, Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn, September 22–23, 2010. This research has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. All translations from Polish and German are by the author.

The first research project in Chapter 9 was financially supported by Switzerland's Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) and the participating cities as practice partners, and was conducted by the School of Social Work at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts under the guidance of Emanuel Müller and with the assistance of Barbara Emmenegger, Monika Litscher, Tom Steiner, and Flavia Caviezel (2007–2009). Chapter 9's second research project was financially supported by the DORE (DO REsearch) programme at the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF); the participating cities (practice partners) also provided funding (2009–2011). In Monika Litscher's research team, Beat Grossrieder, Peter Mösch Payot, and Marco Schmutz contributed.

The arguments presented in Chapter 12 are developed in more detail in articles published in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* and *Urban Studies*. The authors would like to thank James Kneale, Russell Hitchings, and Ann Varley for advice in helping them to develop their arguments.

The research presented in Chapter 14 has been funded by the National Research Council of Italy (CNR) within the framework of the Short Mobility Programme and of the IRAT-CNR Project 'Urban strategies'. The fieldwork for the research in Belfast was hosted by the BERI at

the University of Ulster—thanks to Professor Stanley McGreal—and was developed in collaboration with the author's colleagues Claudia Trillo and Alona Martinez-Perez. The fieldwork for the research in Naples was hosted by the Department of Conservation of Architectonic and Environmental Assets, University of Naples Federico II. The text was revised by Stéphane Fournier Mateu. The editors wish to thank Dominique Peck Tihomir Viderman, Corrie-Anne Rounding and Bernadette Williams for comments, formal check and language editing.

Image credits: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 by Giovanni Hanninen, used by kind permission; 3.1, 3.2 by Sabine Knierbein, based on data published by the Vienna City Administration; 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 by Sabine Knierbein; 4.1, 4.2 by Katja Hackenberg; 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 by Gabó Bartha; 5.4 by Levente Polyák; 6.1 by Mila/Jakob Tigges, used by kind permission; 6.2, 6.3 by Nikolai Roskamm; 7.1 by Chloë Voisin-Bormuth; 8.1, 8.6 by Hanna Majewska-Elżanowska, used by kind permission; 8.2 by Hanna Majewska-Elżanowska, used by kind permission. Archival photograph: Bundesarchiv Wehrmacht Propaganda Unit Inventory, 101I-270-0298-14; 8.3 by Hanna Majewska-Elżanowska, used by kind permission. Archival photograph: Bundesarchiv Wehrmacht Propaganda Unit Inventory, 101I-270-0298-12; 8.4, 8.7 by Jerzy Elżanowski; 8.5 by Franciszek Mazur/Agencja Gazeta, used by licence; 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5 by Monika Litscher; 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5 by Maria Anita Palumbo; 11.1, 11.2, 11.4, 11.5 by Khaled Hmeid, used by kind permission; 11.3 by Penny Koutrolikou; 12.1, 12.2 by Feiona Maxwell, used by kind permission; 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5 by Noah Billig; 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6 by Gabriella Esposito De Vita.

Contributors

Noah Billig, Ph.D., AICP, is assistant professor of landscape architecture and planning in the Department of Landscape Architecture, Fay Jones School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas. His research interests are focused on participatory and emergent design and planning, including adapted open spaces, adaptive land-use planning, generative design and planning, informal settlements, and perceptions of environments.

Massimo Bricocoli is assistant professor of urban policy in the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Polytechnic of Milan, and 2009–2010 Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow. His main research interests include planning practices, institutions and local governments in action, housing, safety, and urban and social policies. On these themes he has been developing several research projects, consulting local governments and agencies and publishing books and essays.

Aglaée Degros is, together with Stefan Bendiks, cofounder of Artgineering (2001), an office for urban planning and infrastructure based in Rotterdam. Their work has won several awards, such as the Karl Hofer award of the UdK Berlin. Aglaée currently lectures at the Academy of Architecture in Rotterdam and in the past has been a visiting professor and guest lecturer at several architecture institutions throughout Europe.

Jerzy Elżanowski trained as an architect at McGill University in Montréal. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban and Interdisciplinary Studies, jointly at the Bauhaus University Weimar and the University of British Columbia. His recent projects explore the concept of the contemporary artificial ruin, the politics of commemoration in Warsaw, as well as the re-use of rubble during the city's reconstruction process.

Gabriella Esposito De Vita graduated *cum laude* in architecture at the University of Naples Federico II; she holds a MSc in Urban Planning from the University of Rome La Sapienza, and a Ph.D. in Territorial Sciences at the University Federico II. She has worked at the CNR as a permanent researcher since 2001 and is currently coordinating European-funded research projects. She has taught urban planning in several academic institutions. Her research field of interest is the built environment with a focus on understanding the links between social transformations and city functions and spaces.

Katja Hackenberg is associate professor of civil engineering at the university of Cergy-Pontoise (since September 2011). She obtained her Ph.D. from the Friderician Technical University in Karlsruhe, Germany, and the University of Paris VIII in the domains of architecture and social sciences. She is an architect and urban planner specialising in the sustainable development of port cities. Her primary research interests include sustainable city, urban project, globalisation, and urban governance.

Sabine Knierbein is assistant professor and the director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space, Faculty of Architecture and Planning at the Vienna University of Technology. She holds a diploma in Landscape Architecture and a Ph.D. in European Urban Studies. She has worked on public spaces for fifteen years, and has published in English, German, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Regan Koch is a doctoral student in the Department of Geography, University College London, and works in affiliation with UCL's Urban Laboratory. His research is concerned with matters of urban public space and collective life; his thesis examines changing social practices related to food and dining trends in U.S. cities.

Penny (Panagiota) Koutrolikou is elected as a senior lecturer at the School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, Greece. She obtained her Ph.D. from the University College London in 2009, researching the factors affecting ethno-religious relations in East London, while also working as lecturer at Birkbeck College. Her current research interests focus on questions of ghettoization, marginality, and inequalities.

Alan Latham is a senior lecturer at the Department of Geography, University College London. His research focuses on issues around sociality, mobility and public space. He has published widely in international journals and edited collections, and is the co-author of *Key Concepts in Urban Geography*.

Monika Litscher is a project manager and lecturer at the School of Social Work, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. She studied social and cultural anthropology and international law at the universities of Brussels and Zurich, where she received her Ph.D. in Popular Culture Studies about 'Urban Sceneries'. She has worked as a filmmaker the Museum of Communication in Bern and at the ETH Institute of Landscape Architecture at the Chair of Günther Vogt. Her present research focuses on public spaces, new urban ethnography, and visual anthropology.

Ali Madanipour is professor of urban design and the director of the Global Urban Research Unit, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University. His books on the theme of public space include *Public and Private Spaces of the City* (2003) and *Whose Public Space? International Case Studies in Urban Design and Development* (2010), both published by Routledge.

Maria Anita Palumbo is finalizing her Ph.D. in urban anthropology at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. She has a Master's degree in visual anthropology and a B.A. in ethnology and comparative sociology from the University of Paris X. She is a member of the Laboratoire Architecture et Anthropologie (UMR LAVUE/CNRS) of La Villette School of Architecture, where she also lectures. Maria Anita is also a teaching assistant in social and human sciences at the School of Architecture of Paris-Belleville and Versailles.

Levente Polyák is an urbanist, researcher, and critic. He studied architecture, urbanism, sociology, and art theory in Budapest and Paris, and he has been lecturer at the MoME and BUTE (Budapest) and TU Wien. He is a founding member of the Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre and a doctoral candidate at the Central European University.

Nikolai Roskamm studied planning and urban design in Berlin and Venice and obtained his Ph.D. in planning theory and urban studies in Bauhaus University Weimar, Germany. He is now based at the Institute of Urban and Regional Planning, Berlin University of Technology, where he is engaged in the research project "Die unbesetzte Stadt" [The Vacant City]. His latest publications include "Das Objekt der Bevölkerung" [The Object of Population], in *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* (2013, Springer).

Paola Savoldi is assistant professor of urban policy at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Polytechnic of Milan, Italy. Her main research interests include citizen participation in urban planning processes, local development policies, urban regeneration, and large-scale urban projects. On these themes she has developed several research projects, consulted for local governments and agencies, and published books and essays. Her publications include (with Massimo Bricocoli), *Villes en Observation*, Editions du Puca, Paris, 2010.

Chloë Voisin-Bormuth obtained her Ph.D. in geography at the University of Lyon, UMR 5600 Espace, Villes, Sociétés, and in sociology at the Dresden University of Technology. Her dissertation was entitled: *The Building of New Public Spaces in the Centre of Dresden and Chemnitz: Which Spaces for Which Society?* Her research interests include the actual conception of European cities; the new tendencies in urban design and urban art; and the relationship between collective memory, city planning, and preservation of historical buildings.

Contents

Acknowledgements

vii

List of Contributors

ix

1 A Moment of Transformation

1

ALI MADANIPOUR, SABINE KNIERBEIN, AND AGLAÉE DEGROS

PART I

Strategies, Plans, and Policies

9

ALI MADANIPOUR, SABINE KNIERBEIN, AND AGLAÉE DEGROS

2 Urban Spaces as Public Action 'Made Durable': Open Spaces and Urban Change in Milan

11

MASSIMO BRICOCOLI AND PAOLA SAVOLDI

3 Vienna: (Re)Framing Public Policies, (Re)Shaping Public Spaces?

23

SABINE KNIERBEIN, ALI MADANIPOUR, AND AGLAÉE DEGROS

4 The Return of the Port as Public Space in Antwerp

38

KATJA HACKENBERG

5 Exchange in the Street: Rethinking Open-Air Markets in Budapest

48

LEVENTE POLYÁK

PART II

Multiple Roles of Public Space

61

ALI MADANIPOUR, SABINE KNIERBEIN, AND AGLAÉE DEGROS

6 4,000,000 m² of Public Space: The Berlin 'Tempelhofer Feld' and a Short Walk with Lefebvre and Laclau

63

NIKOLAI ROSKAMM

7 How to Build the Public Spaces of a Democracy? The Design of New Public Spaces in the City Centre of Dresden After Reunification

78

CHLOË VOISIN-BORMUTH

8	Memorials and Material Dislocation: The Politics of Public Space in Warsaw	88
	JERZY ELŻANOWSKI	
9	Urban Public Spaces in Switzerland: 'Betwixt and Between' Performance and Competence	103
	MONIKA LITSCHER	
PART III		
	Everyday Life and Sharing the City	115
	ALI MADANIPOUR, SABINE KNIERBEIN, AND AGLAÉE DEGROS	
10	Urban Transformation, Social Transition: Barbès, Paris, Where 'Otherness' Takes (Public) Place	117
	MARIA ANITA PALUMBO	
11	Public, Private, and Other Spaces in Multicultural Hackney, London: Spatial Aspects of Local Ethnic-Religious Relations	131
	PENNY (PANAGIOTÁ) KOUTROLIKOU	
12	Inhabiting Cities, Domesticating Public Space: Making Sense of the Changing Public Life of Contemporary London	144
	REGAN KOCH AND ALAN LATHAM	
13	Everyday Life and Sharing of Open Space in Istanbul's Informal Settlements	155
	NOAH BILLIG	
14	Segregative Power of Violence in Belfast and Naples: Exploring the Role of Public Spaces Reconnecting Divided Societies	169
	GABRIELLA ESPOSITO DE VITA	
15	Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe	183
	ALI MADANIPOUR, SABINE KNIERBEIN, AND AGLAÉE DEGROS	
	<i>References</i>	191
	<i>Index</i>	211

A Moment of Transformation

Ali Madanipour, Sabine Knierbein, and Aglaée Degros

European cities are changing rapidly in partial response to the processes of deindustrialization, European integration, international migration, economic globalization, and climate change. Public spaces of these cities, as essential ingredients of the urban image and experience, are increasingly playing an important part in this transition. A key question concerns the role that public spaces are expected to play in political, economic, and cultural transformation of cities, and the impact of these transformations on the nature of public space as a shared resource. How are public authorities addressing the challenges of provision and maintenance of public space, both as a catalyst for change and as a common good?

Public space is a subject with a rising significance, and it is beginning to receive the attention that it deserves in urban research and practice. There are an increasing number of academic books on public spaces, which reflects this development (e.g., Carmona, de Magalhães, & Hammond, 2008; Carmona, Heath, Oc, & Tiesdell, 2010; De Souza, Silva, & Frith, 2012; Delaney, 2011; Eckardt & Wildner, 2008; Jonker & Amiraux, 2006; Lehtovuori, 2010; Orum & Zachary, 2010; Shaftoe, 2008; Stevens, 2007; Watson, 2006). The recent civic unrest and struggles in many European cities and beyond also show the everyday political and social relevance of the topic in professional and cultural practice (Drache, 2008; Iveson, 2007; Knierbein, 2011b). Public spaces are broadly defined as crossroads, where different paths and trajectories meet, sometimes overlapping and at other times colliding; they are the meeting place of politics and culture, social and individual territories, and instrumental and expressive concerns (Madanipour, 2003b). In this book, we investigate how European urban authorities understand and deal with public spaces; how this interacts with market forces, historic legacies, social norms, and cultural expectations; and whether and how this relates to the needs and experiences of their citizens, exploring new strategies and innovative practices for strengthening public spaces and urban culture. By bringing together case studies from Antwerp, Belfast, Berlin, Budapest, Dresden, Istanbul, London, Milan, Naples, Paris, Vienna, Warsaw, and six Swiss cities of Basel, Lucerne, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Winterthur, and Zurich, the book aims to fill a major gap in the literature in addressing the role of the state at its intersection with the multiple roles of public space and the everyday lives of people in European cities. With different backgrounds in anthropology, sociology, geography, architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning and design, urban policy, and urban studies, the authors investigate different moments of urban transformation in European cities with a particular focus on the public space and the challenges that face cities in this process.

Public Space and Economic Revival

The opening words of the European Union's 10-year strategy, EU 2020, hint at the magnitude of the continent's problems: 'Europe faces a moment of transformation. The crisis has wiped out years of economic and social progress and exposed structural weaknesses in Europe's economy. In

the meantime, the world is moving fast and long-term challenges—globalisation, pressure on resources, ageing—intensify. The EU must now take charge of its future' (EC, 2010a, p. 5). The deep economic crisis dropped the European GDP by 4% in 2009, reverting industrial production back to the levels of the 1990s, and left 23 million people, equivalent to 10% of the European Union's active population, unemployed. As a result of the economic crisis, European public finances have severely suffered: Two years of crisis by 2009 erased 20 years of fiscal consolidation, raising deficits to 7% of GDP and debt levels to over 80% of GDP (EC, 2010a, pp. 7–8). The economic meltdown continued afterwards and the crisis of the European currency brought the economic future of a number of major countries into question. Because the majority of Europeans live in urban areas, this also signalled an urban crisis and a moment of transformation for European cities.

The EU 2020 sets out a tripartite vision to get out of the crisis. The three 'mutually reinforcing priorities' of the vision were: 'Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation', which was to be accompanied by 'Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy' and 'Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion' (EC, 2010a, p. 5). The vision is driven by a sense of urgency in responding to a deep economic crisis; therefore, its emphasis is explicitly economic and its keyword is *growth*. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the interconnected nature of the social, economic, and environmental challenges that face European societies at a critical point in history:

Cities are engines of economic development—places where most economic activities of production, exchange, and consumption take place. Basing the future growth of the economy on knowledge and innovation demonstrated the transition from labour-intensive to knowledge-intensive activities, from manufacturing industries to services and higher levels of added value activities (Madanipour, 2011a). The transition involved expanding the information and communication technologies, supporting the development of science and technology, enabling innovation, and encouraging the development of knowledge and skills through research and education (EC, 2010a). Cultural and creative industries are also acknowledged as the drivers of economic development, from intensive use of information and communication technologies, to encouraging consumption through the 'experience economy' and shaping or amplifying 'social and cultural trends, and—therefore—consumer demand' (EC, 2010a), and to offering services to the innovative firms (EC, 2010c, p. 17). Innovation is considered to be the beating heart of economic development and transformation; in its different forms in science and technology, as well as in creative and cultural industries, innovation draws on the encounters between different stakeholders and the meeting of minds, which is partly facilitated by the urban environment.

The European strategy on the urban environment acknowledges the economic significance of urban space. The Lisbon Strategy had aimed at making Europe 'a more attractive place to work and invest', a context in which a high-quality urban environment could play a significant role, making cities 'of key importance to the implementation of the Lisbon Agenda': 'The attractiveness of European cities will enhance their potential for growth and job creation' (EC, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, the European ministers of urban development, in their Leipzig Charter, emphasized the role of public spaces in economic change: 'As soft locational factors, [public spaces] are important for attracting knowledge industry businesses, a qualified and creative workforce and for tourism' (EC, 2007, p. 3). In addition to improving the quality of the urban environment, public spaces are a necessary ingredient of any attempt at strategic urban transformation. The examples of recent strategic planning for European cities, which are based on large-scale urban projects, show the central role that public space plays in urban regeneration. As urban regeneration projects from Genoa to Amsterdam and Glasgow have shown, a focus on public spaces has driven the changes of use and an image of an urban area with significant implications for its revitalization and regeneration (Lecroart, 2007, p. 118).

It is partly for this reason that many cities around Europe have developed policies and projects for public spaces, paying attention to their urban environment as a necessary component of urban competitiveness. It is a vision based on competition between cities, in which cities behave like private corporations in search of new investment, a new workforce, and new markets; expanding their productive capacities is a prerequisite for this competition. This entrepreneurial approach has been widely adopted by public authorities, but it has caused alarm over its social, political, and environmental consequences.

The challenge that this entrepreneurial turn has put forward is over the nature of urban transformation: an emerging orthodoxy about the necessity of market-based thinking and continuous controversy over the social and environmental consequences of this approach. Public spaces serve as a vehicle of change, and it seems highly underestimated so far that they can carry various roles and symbolize different meanings at the same time. So rather than hollowing out the need for critical reflection on public spaces that are under pressure, especially during phases of rapid transition, how can we emphasize their potentials as bearers of this change? Do they serve as interfaces between local needs (Franck & Stevens, 2007) and global pressures (Knierbein, 2010; Madanipour, 2010)? Is their potential overestimated and instrumentalized by the makers of urban political agendas, or do decision makers and implementers rather underestimate the opportunities that public spaces offer to meet very different policy goals, such as combining social inclusion and economic development, which are the joint ingredients of the European social model? Is gentrification an unavoidable outcome of economic revitalization, or can ways be found that are not necessarily dichotomous and can illustrate the challenges cities face when dealing proactively with manifold paths of transformation?

Public Space and Social Inclusion

Recent audits of European cities show an uneven pattern of urban change in which some regions and urban areas grow, while others stagnate or decline (ECOTEC, 2007; RWI, DIFU, NEA, & PRAC, 2010). The Second State of European Cities report, which used data from 356 European cities (including 47 non-EU cities), shows a changing population pattern in which the largest metropolitan areas continue to grow rapidly, while the regional centres stay almost stable, and the smaller centres and lagging regions decline (RWI et al., 2010). It also shows that in all cities the outer urban areas have grown faster than the core areas, either through suburban expansion or through an overall loss of population in the core. Lower birth rates, smaller households, and the ageing of the population are distinguishable features in many cities.

This population trend maps onto the economic circumstances of European cities. Economic activity and wealth are concentrated in core zones in western and northern Europe, northern Italy, parts of Spain, and the capital cities of central Europe, with 'an exceptional agglomeration of wealth in the capital city' of most European countries (RWI et al., 2010, p. 14). Larger metropolitan areas are also the location of the key administrative and political functions, with some such functions performed by the regional centres. Larger cities offer favourable conditions for the development of services, which dominate the urban economy, and the growth of knowledge-intensive activities. The report argues that the agglomeration process in the European core zones has not accompanied a parallel degree of poverty and disparity within those urban areas (RWI et al., 2010, p. 17). An urban paradox, however, has been noticed since the 1990s, in that wealth and job creation have not gone hand-in-hand in European cities: Employment rates are considerably higher in some second-tier regional centres, rather than in the largest metropolitan areas (RWI et al., 2010, p. 17).

Since its beginning, the European Union has emphasized the need for social cohesion to coincide with economic development. However, research has shown a rise in income inequalities

within most member states, similar to the trends elsewhere in the United States, China, and India. Indeed, for most European countries, socioeconomic inequalities were higher in 2007 than in 1980, explained by the growing imbalance between pay increases and productivity increases, resulting in a decline in labour's share of added value. The low-paid workers, therefore, have not been able to benefit from upturns in productivity (EC, 2010d, p. 18). In this period of economic growth, fuelled by economic modernisation and labour market deregulation, employment has polarised and earning inequality has widened, without being offset by social transfers and other policies (EC, 2010d, p. 44). Research, however, shows that less-unequal societies benefit from more social and economic advantages, which is why it is argued that a new model of development is required that reduces, rather than intensifies, socioeconomic inequalities. As the development of the welfare state in the period between the 1930s and the 1970s showed, socioeconomic inequalities are not inevitable and they can be addressed: 'socio-economic inequalities are not an automatic consequence of modernity, they can be reduced and kept at bay' (EC, 2010d, p. 3).

Therefore, the challenge for the larger urban centres is managing growth, and for the peripheral areas it is arresting decline and stimulating development. Managing growth in the larger metropolitan areas involves coping with high densities, traffic congestion, atmospheric pollution, high costs of living, uneven distribution of resources, and responding to the growing demands on public services. Stimulating growth in the peripheral areas, smaller centres, and lagging regions involves keeping their economically active population and attracting new people by creating attractive conditions. Urban areas, however, are not homogeneous, and there are pockets of growth and decline in all cities, reflecting their patterns of uneven development. In all cities, the challenges of addressing environmental degradation, cultural diversity, and social exclusion are paramount. The global economic crisis has also intensified the problems of economic development and regeneration, which are on the agendas of all cities.

In the context of social challenges such as ageing, inequality, and cultural diversity, what roles can be envisaged for city authorities? As European municipalities have argued, problems of social exclusion are often created at structural levels, but city authorities are expected to address them without the appropriate levels of power and resources (Madanipour, 2003a). In cities, furthermore, what roles can the public spaces play to face the urban social challenges? Would it not be naïve to expect that public spaces be part of a solution to a structural problem? One answer is that the provision and maintenance of public space is part of the delivery of public services, which in turn is one of the central ways with which social challenges can be addressed. Furthermore, it is part of the quality of the urban environment, which is a social asset for all. In particular, the quality of the urban environment in deprived neighbourhoods has been one of the priorities set by the Leipzig Charter and other European strategies and policy documents, as a necessary ingredient of sustainable development and social cohesion. Building and maintaining accessible and high-quality public spaces in all urban neighbourhoods is one of the ways of making a city fairer and more democratic, in which all parts are given equal treatment and investment in public space is not a pathway to displacement and gentrification.

Public Space and Cultural Diversity

An Urban Audit, which was analysed in the first State of European Cities report, set out the question: 'what is characteristic about living in Europe's cities?' (ECOTEC, 2007, p. 119). In response, it outlines a picture characterised by diversity:

Diversity appears to be the main characteristic of urban life. A growing number of people [are] living alone, particularly in the core city areas. Families tend to be coalescing in suburbs at the periphery of urban agglomerations and this group too [is] following increasingly

varied lifestyles. Although city dwellers are considerably better educated than the population at large, the benefits flowing from economic wealth generated in cities is not evenly distributed. Many urban residents face the uncertainties of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty, and these problems are strongly concentrated in particular neighbourhoods. Life expectancy is also lower in urban areas, and this can be partially blamed on pollution of the living environment. Clearly creating and maintaining prosperity while ensuring social cohesion and tackling environmental problems continues to be the central challenge facing Europe's cities today. (ECOTEC, 2007, p. 119)

Cultural diversity is a primary feature of the contemporary European urban experience, caused by the breakdown of some mass routines associated with manufacturing industries, the struggles for more freedom by different social groups, the diversification of lifestyles, the opening of national labour and education markets, migration within and between European countries, and international immigration from around the world. In this context, European cities are pulled in different directions. On the one hand, cities are the historic creations of European civilization, their buildings and public spaces symbolizing the identity of cities and nations, icons around which proud narratives are echoed down the ages. On the other hand, the cultural diversity of the modern city demands adjustment and transformation to a new social reality. How far should the urban environment change to reflect its current cultural diversity, without losing its historic character? How can the contemporary public spaces signify the increasingly diverse cultural mix?

The choice, however, is not only limited to looking to the past or the future; it also involves a selection from the different periods of the past, deciding how far back to go and which layer of the palimpsest to adopt as the more authentic. Each of these past layers, meanwhile, is loaded with historic significance, with wars and struggles that may still be alive in people's memories. The question may be formulated as a dilemma between the eclectic diversity of the present and the authentic purity of a past. As it has been repeatedly shown, however, such pure identities have been imagined and constructed at some point (Anderson, 1991; Hobsbawm, 1990), and the dilemma becomes which narrative of the past the city should embrace and embody. This is particularly significant for public monuments and public places, where collective memories may not converge into one agreed narrative, especially when they are associated with collective suffering and loss of life.

Another way that the distinction between a modern eclectic identity and an authentic historic identity may be formulated is in the distinction between the centre and periphery. The centre is taken to be the symbol of the European city, with its often magnificent and well-kept monuments and public spaces, whereas the periphery is disregarded as bland, characterless, and insignificant. In their centres, modern European cities have displayed a peaceful coexistence of the old and the new, where simple boxes of steel and glass may stand next to an elaborate medieval building, and modern means of transport give access to ancient monuments. Rather than one historic layer deleting another, they sit next to one another, or even on top of one another, creating a complex urban composition. The centre may display a seemingly easy coexistence of historic layers as part of its identity, but how can the periphery make a more positive contribution to this multilayered identity? Should the periphery not be equally taken as an integral part of the European city's identity?

These dilemmas problematize the image of the European city. Much research has been carried out to portray the (ideal type) nature of the 'European city' or the current aporia related to the European cities, and the crucial roles of public spaces in this context (Clark, 2006; Siebel, 2004). However, there is a need for systematically connecting research on public space to an investigation of particular European cities in various regions of Europe in order to ask for their differing roles as important ingredients in democracy and as local vehicles for change.

Public Space and Environmental Care

Public space provision and maintenance is a central theme of sustainable development in the European strategic policy documents. The Aalborg Charter, signed at a meeting of European towns and cities in 1994, sets the scene for the environmental problems caused by cities:

We understand that our present urban lifestyle, in particular our patterns of division of labour and functions, land-use, transport, industrial production, agriculture, consumption, and leisure activities, and hence our standard of living, make us essentially responsible for many environmental problems humankind is facing. This is particularly relevant as 80 per cent of Europe's population live in urban areas. (EC, 1994, p. 1)

The charter identified the lack of open space as one of the main environmental problems, alongside noise and air pollution from traffic, lack of amenities, and unhealthy housing, particularly affecting the poor neighbourhoods (EC, 1994). The Bristol Accord, which was produced at an informal meeting of EU ministers in 2005, outlined the qualities of sustainable communities in Europe: active, inclusive, and safe; well run; well connected; well served; environmentally sensitive; thriving; well designed and built; and fair for everyone (ODPM, 2006). Public spaces are mentioned as an essential ingredient of 'cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhoods' (ODPM, 2006, p. 19) as part of the vision of 'providing places for people that are considerate of the environment' (ODPM, 2006, p. 18) and contributing to healthy and safe environments that are well designed and well built (ODPM, 2006, p. 20). In the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, signed by the EU ministers responsible for urban development, creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces is one of the key recommendations for maintaining high-quality urban environments (EC, 2007). Open areas and green spaces are, therefore, 'important building blocks for promoting quality of life in urban environments' (EC, 2010b, p. 14).

The provision of public space is directly linked to the quality of life in compact urban environments. Urban sprawl is driven by individual search for better quality of domestic space, but with adverse consequences for the society as a whole through higher rates of energy and land consumption, higher levels of traffic, air and noise pollution, and heat waves and climate change (EEA, 2009). If unregulated, urban sprawl can 'lead to dependence on private car use, increased land-use and higher demand on resources, as well as detrimental effects on the services nature delivers to us' (EC, 2010b, p. 14). To address these problems, it is essential to restrain urban expansion, which can reduce transport and energy use and protect the countryside for agriculture, recreation, and wildlife. The compact city, however, needs to offer a high-quality and healthy urban environment. The European vision of a sustainable compact urban environment is one in which city centres offer 'safe areas, green and other public spaces, as well as . . . short distances to facilities and services', making them 'sufficiently attractive to counter urban sprawl' (EEA, 2009, p. 40). Provision of public space plays a significant role in persuading the citizens to adopt a sustainable way of life inside the city, rather than leaving the city in search of open space: 'Urban areas need to provide for their citizens the foundations for choices leading towards more sustainable life styles, such as affordable housing in more compact urban areas that provide high quality public spaces and a healthy environment' (EEA, 2009, p. 102).

The environmental, social, and cultural challenges come together when dealing with the legacy of the modernist road infrastructure and mass-produced buildings and their impact on cities. Wide roads had been cut through cities to open them up to the fast movement of cars. Now, with the awareness of environmental problems, the tide is turning against the motor car, taming it rather than seeing it as the engine of urban transformation. In this context, public space plays a key role in reintegrating the fragmented pieces left by these gigantic transport projects, reshaping the city for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists.