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Mark Gottdiener is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Riverside. He is the author/editor of eight books, including *The Social Production of Urban Space* and *Planned Sprawl: Private and Public Interest in Suburbia.* Translations of his work are used in several countries. His main interests are urban sociology, contemporary social theory, and the semiotics of culture.

For Jennifer, Felix, and Zev

PREFACE

When I was in graduate school I was introduced to urban sociology by a well-known field researcher, David Street, and became passionately committed to the discipline. It seemed to me that urban sociology offered everything that was attractive about sociology. It required an interdisciplinary understanding of economics, politics, and culture. It was concerned with the reality of everyday life and how people lived. It possessed great themes of immigrant adjustment, neighborhood relations, the nurturing of friendships, the raising of families, community ties, active and exciting politics, economic changes, the making and losing of fortunes, the burden and benefits of work, the dependency of daily life on the environment, the shadow of crime, murder, muggings, and the dark side of human existence. As a graduate student I was eager to learn about it all. From my experience I came to an understanding that remains at the core of my work: Urbanists should be interested in actual reality. We should be inspired by daily life and be able to explain it in its full complexity even if abstraction and theory are also important concerns.

When I was in graduate school I also learned about the theory of urban ecology, because that was the only explanatory paradigm taught at U.S. universities. My dissertation work, a comprehensive study of the development of Long Island (a suburban region adjacent to New York City), later became my first book (1977). While revising this material, it became increasingly clear to me that the urban ecological paradigm was inadequate as an explanatory framework for the changes occurring in the United States since 1950. My great dissatisfaction with mainstream urban sociology and my passionate interest in explaining the patterns of development I had observed led me to reconceptualize the field.

Over the last decade I have devoted myself to introducing new ideas about the role of economics (1985), politics (1986), and culture (1986) in urban analysis. This effort culminated in a new kind of urban theory (1985) and a new paradigm for the discipline (Gottdiener and Feagin, 1988). My work joined the efforts of others (Lefebvre, 1974; Castells, 1977; Harvey, 1973; Pickvance, 1977) in what has come to be called The New Urban Sociology.

Over the last decade I have also devoted myself to the teaching of urban sociology. The discontent that plagued my research also limited my ability to instruct my students in the understanding of contemporary life. Slowly and laboriously I began to frame specific concepts and arguments that I felt improved the approach of urban sociology. This text represents the culmination of my long effort over several decades.

The central organizing concepts of this text were devised in response to the limitations of other textbooks in the field. Without exception, urban sociologists, for example, focus principally on the large central city as an object of analysis. Suburban considerations may be treated, but they usually are reserved for a chapter buried somewhere in the discourse. This bias distorts reality. In the United States the majority

of people live in suburbs, not in large, central cities. This text, therefore, presents a balanced account of metropolitan life and focuses on the entire metropolitan region, including cities, suburbs, recreational areas, small towns, industrial parks, malls, and highways. Each chapter presents as much about what I call the *multicentered* metropolitan region as about the large, central city.

A second feature of this book also grew out of my response to the limitations of other texts. Often discussions about the nature of urban development are biased in favor of economic accounts. I believe all environments function because they are *meaningful* spaces and that cultural considerations play a significant role in metropolitan life. This text seeks to demonstrate these relationships without bias toward a single factor. I have aimed for a balanced view of economic, political, and cultural considerations in the study of metropolitan development.

Often, texts are written as a series of disconnected chapters reporting facts about one topic after another without providing an overarching vision. This book is an exception. While it is perhaps impossible to escape the need to survey many topics that seem to possess little connection, the new urban sociology is an integrated paradigm of thinking about metropolitan life. My version of this approach, the ~~sociospatial~~ perspective, pervades each chapter. Its basic premise is that ~~spatial or environmental and locational considerations are always part and parcel of social relations~~. We cannot talk about one without also talking about the latter. The sociospatial perspective is not urban ecology, although it also stresses the role of location in social relations. Unlike ecology, explanation does not follow biological principles and the drama of development cannot be reduced to the effects of technological change alone. In contrast, the socio-spatial perspective is a synthesis of environmental considerations and the factors of class, race, gender, lifestyle, economics, culture, and politics in the development of metropolitan regions. Each chapter borrows from this thematic perspective to present discussions of specific topics ranging from crime to third-world development and, when possible, makes comparative distinctions.

The goal of this text is not just to be innovative but to be up-to-date. Its chapter topics are the same as those found in other urban texts. The fruits of discontent with the outdated mainstream perspective are realized in the execution of the material. When discussing the development of ancient cities, for example, cultural and political considerations are considered as important as economic ones. In addition, the urban history of the United States is presented as high drama involving fortunes made through real estate speculation as much as through industry. It is as important to know the nature of suburban as well as city crime, just as social problems are best understood as metropolitan and regional concerns rather than being the exclusive product of city living. The diversity of daily life requires the full spectrum of race, class, and gender considerations for its discussion. And, lastly, when we turn our attention to metropolitan policy and the environment, we want to know *why* programs fail, *what* ideologies govern metropolitan growth, and *how* we can improve metropolitan life.

There are some chapters, however, that are contained in this text that depart somewhat from the typical fare of other presentations. I consider the metropolitan changes occurring in the United States since 1960 so unique that I have devoted a separate chapter to their discussion. Furthermore, in the chapters on urban history and

contemporary development, it is necessary to take a global perspective and provide comparative material. In addition to a chapter on the third world, which is now standard in urban texts, I have added a new discussion of changes in Europe and Japan. Finally, unlike most urban sociology texts, this book has a separate chapter on metropolitan politics and another one on metropolitan policy and the environment. Both are important for an understanding of how people manage and how to make better the space of everyday life.

The writing of this text was an extended project stretching over many years. It could not have been done without the crucial help provided by a number of people. I wish to thank friends in academia for their support—Joe Feagin, Bob Antonio, Ray Hutchison, Nestor Rodriguez, Bob Parker, David Diaz, Eric Monkkonen, Leonard Wallock, and Peter Muller in the United States; Phil Gunn, Lena Lavinas, Sandra Lincioni, and Sueli Schiffer in Brazil; Alexandros Lagopoulos and Nikos Komninos in Greece; Chris Pickvance and Desmond King in England; Dorel Abraham in Romania; and Jens Tonboe in Denmark.

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Finally, as any writer of texts quickly learns, the long working hours and need for concentration can interfere with family life. I am very fortunate to have an understanding and supportive family. My wife Jennifer and my two boys, Felix and Zev, have been very patient with me. It is to them that I dedicate this book.

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CHAPTER

1

THE NEW URBAN SOCIOLOGY

It is morning across the United States, and people have brushed off sleep and prepared themselves for the day. While most Americans live within metropolitan regions, they meet their circumstances in different ways. Using composite types constructed from case studies, newspaper or magazine stories, and personal observations, here are several examples of everyday life:

Larry Worthington lives in Costa Mesa, a section of Orange County, California, adjacent to Los Angeles. He is a lawyer and works for the county in another town, Santa Ana. Larry is married and has two children and a pet dog. Both he and his wife work. They own a house, two cars, and a small boat which they occasionally take sailing on weekends. The Worthingtons' combined income is over $100,000 a year, yet they are not affluent. Their housing costs alone amount to $30,000 a year, because housing in Orange County is very expensive. Car payments and maintenance add several more thousand in bills, but life would not be possible without an automobile in Southern California. Because both of the Worthingtons work, they must pay for after-school day care for their children—another expense of several thousand a year. When all costs are added up, this family cannot meet every obligation and so the Worthingtons end each year in debt.

On this typical morning Larry is stuck in the expected, everyday lineup of cars on the freeway. His twenty-mile commute to work takes him an average of 1½ hours each way. He has plenty of time to consider his looming debts as well as the daily needs of his job while waiting for the stop-and-go traffic to advance a few more inches along the road. He tries to focus on music from the car stereo.

Or:

Esther Hernandez wakes up every morning around five o'clock with the first sounds of advancing traffic. She can't help it. She lives outdoors on a subway grate

located on the corner of 40th Street and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan. Esther is homeless. When she first came to New York from the Dominican Republic she found work in the garment center as a sewing machine operator. With the opportunity for piecework (a kind of overtime) she was able to afford an apartment in the South Bronx.

Several years ago she lost her job when the company she worked for declared bankruptcy. Due to the decline in garment manufacturing within New York City, she has been unable to find another job since that time. For a while she collected unemployment insurance and when that ran out, she thought about going on welfare. Last March her building in the South Bronx burned down. She lives now on the street with all her possessions piled into a shopping cart. She has already been raped twice. As winter sets in she thinks about going back to the Dominican Republic, but then she remembers that her family sent her to New York because there were no jobs at home. "Maybe things are better there now," she wonders.

Or:

Dave, Sean, Felix, and Hakim are playing free video games at the Nintendo booth in a mall located in Gwinnett County outside of Atlanta. It's a half hour after high school began, but few people notice that the boys should be elsewhere. They've already spent well over one hour playing games at the video arcade. Few adults bother to look in there, and the arcade itself is tucked away on one of the more isolated arms of the giant mall. It's a perfect place to hang out while the school day is still on.

Dave, Sean, Felix, and Hakim are good friends. They were born and brought up in the affluent suburban area outside the city of Atlanta. Children of privilege, they still have their complaints. Above all else they are terribly bored. They do not have enough exciting things to do. Every Friday, in the early evening, they pile into one of their cars and drive to Peachtree Plaza in downtown Atlanta. It's very much like their own mall at home, only bigger and constructed underground. There is more crime to worry about at Peachtree. The girls that hang out there are cuter and more sophisticated, too, say the quartet. The boys don't always know what to expect, and that makes it exciting.

Or:

Nancy Wright and her husband, Irv, live in Chicago. They've been married for less than a year. Nancy and Irv met in college at Northwestern and, having dated for three years, were married after graduation. Nancy has a job she likes at a branch of the public library. She majored in library science and considers herself lucky to have found a permanent position so soon after graduating. Irv also likes what he does. He's a manager for a well-known department store in town. He majored in business administration and also considers himself fortunate to have a job. Irv and Nancy have more money than they spend. In fact, they are saving up to buy a house. Right now they rent. As part of their budget plan, they've decided not to purchase a car. Irv takes the elevated train to work. He worries about being mugged. Usually he wears a beat-up trench coat over a nice suit and he abandons the coat as soon as he gets to work.