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Urban Lifestyles: Diversity and Standardisation in Spaces of Consumption

Sharon Zukin

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During the past 30 years, the meaning of 'urban lifestyles' has changed from a fairly stable prerogative of social status (Weber, 1946) to an aggressive pursuit of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). For individual men and women, this pursuit encourages various forms of cultural consumption. For cities, it stimulates the growth of both for-profit culture industries and not-for-profit cultural institutions. These shifts relate to a number of structural changes: the rise of post-modernism—as an art form, a post-industrial mode of production and a concern with identity markers; the growth of service industries; and the coming to maturity of the 'baby boom' generation, whose demographic weight and generally high expectations of amenities have fostered consumer demand for distinctive, high-quality goods. Attention to urban lifestyles also reflects other changes. As immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities and gays and lesbians have become more visible actors in both public spaces and cultural fields, they have made a variety of 'alternative' lifestyles more visible, especially in the big cities where they are concentrated. Both at work and at leisure, these groups have had a singular effect on defining 'urban' cultures (Zukin, 1995; Mort, 1996). Further, industries based on designing and producing goods for specific lifestyles are now seen as contributing to a city's

economic growth (Molotch, 1996). Attention to lifestyles has given rise to new, highly visible consumption spaces, such as *nouvelle cuisine* restaurants, boutiques, art galleries and coffee bars. It has also generated new, complex, retail strategies, combining advertising, sales, real estate development and entertainment. Finally, attentiveness to urban lifestyles on the part of city governments has encouraged strategies that 'aestheticise', or focus on the visual consumption of, public space—although this has been accompanied by an increase in private groups' control over specific public spaces.

These changes in the material and symbolic fabric of cities alter previous conceptions of consumption as a residual category of urban political economy. Cities are no longer seen as landscapes of production, but as landscapes of consumption (Zukin, 1991; Hannigan, forthcoming). While most urban consumption still involves the satisfaction of everyday needs, many new urban consumption spaces relate to new patterns of leisure, travel and culture. This raises several questions. First, how do we assess the economic viability of urban redevelopment policies that encourage stores, hotels and not-for-profit cultural institutions? They aim to attract a mobile public that could easily go elsewhere. Further, these institutions create mainly low-wage jobs, which may be fine as entry-points

for a low-skilled, especially immigrant, labour force, but often remain dead-end jobs. The new emphasis on urban consumption also heightens competition between cities that serve as 'branch' nodes for the international distribution of the same standardised, mass-produced, consumer goods—such as clothing and movies—as well as the same generalised 'aesthetic' products, such as art works and 'historic' buildings. At the top of the urban cultural hierarchy, in New York, London and Paris, this sort of urban consumption intensifies competition among 'culture capitals' for tourist dollars, high-price boutiques and firms, individuals and media events that have an effect on cultural innovation.

Cultural strategies of economic redevelopment take many forms, from the encouragement of historic preservation (the 'heritage industry') to creating new museums and tourist zones. Partly, these strategies reflect an absence of traditional resources for competing for capital investment and jobs. Partly, too, they represent a 'cultural turn' in the advanced industrial societies and a corresponding inflation of image production. But cultural strategies of redevelopment also reflect the growing importance, in all mature urban centres, of a symbolic economy based on such abstract products as financial instruments, information and 'culture'—i.e. art, food, fashion, music and tourism. The symbolic economy is based on the interrelated production of such cultural symbols as these and the spaces in which they are created and consumed—including offices, housing, restaurants, museums and even the streets (Zukin, 1995). Thus urban lifestyles are not only the result, but also the raw materials, of the symbolic economy's growth.

The rapid spiral from a spontaneous proliferation of urban lifestyles, in the 1960s and 1970s, to inter-urban competition by means of cultural strategies, in the 1980s and 1990s, raises questions about urban cultures and politics. In what sense are urban populations now divided by lifestyle rather than by race, ethnicity and social class? Is there not a contradiction between the individualism and

privatism that are assumed to surround 'new' urban lifestyles and many urban residents' professed devotion to such traditional urban values as social and cultural diversity (Caulfield, 1994)?

There are no data to answer such questions conclusively. Merely to pose these questions, however, suggests that it is necessary to think about urban lifestyles in a larger structural and institutional framework. One possibility is to relate urban lifestyles to gender dynamics, family and household structures and sexual politics (see, for example, Rose, 1984; Chauncey, 1994). Alternatively, we can relate urban lifestyles to models of modernity, strategies of urban redevelopment and urban politics and cultures. This discussion takes the latter path and is limited to cities in the advanced industrial economies. Although these cities suffer from material inequalities, inadequacy and disrepair of public goods and perpetual evictions of social groups (Deutsche, 1996), they have a different frame of reference from cities in less developed economies. To the degree that cities in those economies now cater to internationally mobile and culturally eclectic residents, both rich and poor, this discussion is also relevant to them.

Urban Lifestyles and Models of Modernity

Of all the social sciences, urban studies have been influenced most by cultural interpretations of modernity. Such analyses draw on literary and artistic texts to create an understanding of the modern city. They combine the methods of art historians, literary critics and sociologists. Like Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, contemporary writers who work in this vein (for example, Berman, 1982; Clark, 1985) usually connect descriptions of urban architecture with observations of forms of sociability in the city (Simmel, 1950, as discussed by Shields, 1992), in order to depict new urban 'types'—i.e. lifestyles that represent both structural change and adaptation. This methodology is useful for sketching models of the institutional contexts that underlie epochal changes

in urban lifestyles—with the understanding that these changes occur in different sequences, in different time periods and in different localities (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 71–73). For each ideal type of modern city, nonetheless, there are correspondences between the built environment, forms of sociability and urban lifestyles.

Modernity (1880–1945)

Commercial culture has greatly shaped the public life of modern cities. Between 1880 and 1920, significant urban spaces were formed around department stores, restaurants, theatres, hotels, public parks, professional ball parks and amusement parks (Barth, 1980). Despite owners' and managers' efforts to maintain an air of exclusivity, in terms of both social class and race, these spaces were fairly 'popular' or democratic (Nasaw, 1993; see also Hannigan, forthcoming). Some, like Central Park in New York City or seaside resorts like Coney Island or Brighton, lost their initial upper-class patrons as they became more accessible to and more frequented by, lower classes (Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992; Zukin *et al.*, 1998; Shields, 1991). Entry prices were low enough to attract a working class with money to spend and time off from work, and norms that previously limited women's public appearances gradually diminished in importance (Peiss, 1986). Women and men customers mingled openly in the *demi-monde* of bars and vaudeville houses and at race-tracks. Commercial culture districts also provided discreet meeting places, such as tearooms, for women and teetotallers who wouldn't patronise saloons (Thorne, 1980, pp. 244–245). Other districts provided discreet meeting places for encounters that were still considered illicit, immoral and illegal—especially when they crossed racial and sexual lines (Chauncey, 1994). New York's Times Square was developed around this time by entrepreneurs who specialised in the distinctive nexus of the modern city's symbolic economy: real estate, newspaper publishing and commercial theatre. Like the

liminal zones that develop around theatre districts, Times Square also developed a reputation for promiscuity and vice, especially when the better theatres closed down during the Great Depression and the better restaurants were closed by Prohibition (Taylor, 1991). The diversity of 'low-class' and 'popular' entertainment around 42nd Street and Broadway gave rise to a concentration of urban lifestyles or social types: from the gamblers and chorus girls described in the short stories of Damon Runyon, to impresarios of the Broadway stage chronicled in gossip columns of urban newspapers and tourists who came to Times Square for "pleasure rather than ... culture" (Harris, 1991, p. 75).

Modern cities were also marked by new shopping spaces, notably, department stores and shopping arcades or galleries. As Walter Benjamin (1973) famously described the arcades of Paris, that were built in the early 1800s, these shopping spaces embodied innovations in the mass production of consumer goods, in technologies of building and display and in strategies of creating and selling 'dreams'. Similarly, department stores placed before the public, in a great big 'bazaar', goods that previously had been confined to small, specialised, elegant boutiques for a custom and luxury trade. The new availability of consumer goods to customers' sight, touch and smell democratised desire and made the exotic familiar. Yet urban consumers also confronted disturbing new longings for goods, new freedoms in strolling around the city to browse and new incursions on their native grounds by things and people that were culturally strange (Leach, 1993; Shields, 1994; Fritzsche, 1996).

The expansion of the urban retail trade created many new jobs for women and places perceived as safe for women shoppers and children (Benson, 1986). But these opportunities presented women with special problems. Like the wages of actresses and nightclub performers, salesclerks' salaries were so low that these occupations often recruited young, unskilled, but attractive

women who migrated to the city. Faced with poverty, some of these women despaired and either tried to marry or turned to prostitution. Meanwhile, women customers, affluent or not, were persuaded by merchants and fashion commentators to buy increasing numbers and styles of things (Auslander, 1996). Thus the varied delights of department stores and arcades comprised morally dangerous 'dream worlds' for both women and men (Williams, 1982). Although merchants created an architecture of modern urban landmarks and greatly expanded access to the urban public sphere, the civility and publicity of shopping spaces were founded on the desire for money and material things.

The measured order of department stores may, in some sense, have represented merchants' desires to instill a 'bourgeois' respectability into an unruly and growing urban public (Miller, 1981). But, overall, these consumption spaces fostered a new urban culture based on

acquisition and consumption as the means of achieving happiness; the cult of the new; the democratisation of desire; and money value as the predominant measure of all value in society (Leach, 1993, p. 3).

The architecture of department stores and arcades had much in common with that of the new commercial entertainment districts. Both shopping and entertainment spaces used new materials and technologies—plate glass, cast iron and steel construction and coloured electric lights—to display their goods dramatically, especially at night. (For earlier uses of glass and lighting in urban consumption spaces, see Schivelbusch, 1988.) Department stores and shopping arcades embodied the sense of flux, of kaleidoscopic motion, and of unceasing changes of images that many people found unsettling in modern cities. They also institutionalised the identification of urban and commercial cultures. The sociability these spaces fostered was thus highly compatible with, and dependent on, the growth of the modern market economy.

Writers such as Baudelaire (followed by

Benjamin and quite a few contemporary critics) focused attention on the lifestyle of the *flâneur*, an independent but impecunious single man who strolled the city's streets and frequented the consumption spaces of cafes, nightclubs and shops, on the lookout for the new, the exciting and the unfamiliar. Although there is no corresponding literary figure of the *flâneuse* (Wolff, 1985), such novelists as Theodore Dreiser and Edith Wharton created a female urban type—in Sister Carrie (Dreiser, 1917) or Lily Bart (Wharton, 1984 [1951])—who appeared in public spaces, but whose public role was tragically limited by gender and social class. The unsettling character of a pervasive, mass consumer culture matched the unsettled nature of these figures' lifestyles. And often these lives were played out against a backdrop of social and demographic change—of mass migration to cities and the rise of entrepreneurs from ethnic minorities. These different types of marginalities—female, immigrant, ethnic, commercial—combined in a different way in different urban political cultures. In all cities, for a time, they encouraged both spectacle and tolerance as common cultural denominators. But they often gave rise to a heightened sensibility to marginality, even to a sense that marginality was an urban norm. Berlin's Potsdamer Platz, for example, which included highly popular restaurants, cafes, department stores, hotels and shops, seemed visibly to encourage urban cultures that brought "outsiders in" (Ladd, 1997, pp. 110–119)—eventually, with tragic results.

Late Modernity (1945–75)

The period of late modernity that began in the mid 20th century shifted the growth of 'consumer society' from the great metropolises to the suburbs and to a suburban type of decentred, automobile-bound city, especially in the US. This period's archetypal consumption space is the shopping centre—a multi-purpose, greenfields development that maximises rentable retail space in large clusters of stores surrounded by fairly homoge-

neous residential communities. Like early 20th-century urban shopping districts, suburban shopping centres rely on innovations in transport, building and display. Their growth is predicated on systems of highways for distributing goods by truck and commuting to work by car. Evidence indicates that shopping centres were first developed, in Kansas City, Missouri and Los Angeles, as amenities to attract affluent residents to buy homes in new communities (Longstreth, 1997). But they soon became highly profitable in themselves, and sparked both new highway construction and residential development. Similarly, department-store owners who built suburban branches may have initially intended these stores to supplement rather than replace their downtown 'mother' stores (Longstreth, 1997). But suburban locations soon drained investment that would otherwise have modernised and expanded the downtown, and drew both urban and suburban residents who previously shopped in the city. The suburban synthesis of mass consumption and family-oriented lifestyle provided a cultural context for ever more rapid suburbanisation. After 1945, the dense, morally ambiguous and socially heterogeneous consumption spaces of cities were replaced by the suburbs' clean, sprawling, socially and visually homogeneous shopping centres. These shopping centres were called, in an unintentionally ironic homage to the city's historic consumption spaces, 'galleria' and 'malls' (Kowinski, 1985).

Despite the intentions of some of the architects who designed malls—especially the influential Victor Gruen—these shopping spaces reversed modern urban patterns. Instead of being placed at hubs of mass transport, shopping malls were accessible primarily by private transport. They replaced the efficiencies of collective modes of transport and varied clusters of shopping with the inefficiencies of the automobile and limited selections. Yet shopping malls drew customers in droves. Most people found cars more convenient and more 'modern' than buses or trolleys and, since people needed cars to get to the malls, they liked the higher

social status of suburban shops. Exclusivity was reinforced by locating many suburban malls far away from bus lines and train stations, surrounding them with gigantic parking lots, and turning the shops inward, effectively walling them away from the outdoors. Until the 1950s, however, shopping malls were not covered by a roof. Eventually, designers of shopping malls utilised plate glass, electric lights and air conditioning—essentially the same materials as the great department stores—to enclose malls and make shopping in them more comfortable. Designers also landscaped malls with giant potted tropical trees and waterfalls. But they also incorporated such traditional urban elements as quasi-'streets' of shops and benches or 'street furniture'. And, like the designers of the great department stores, they strategically placed escalators to lead shoppers among displays of goods (Leach, 1993; Goss, 1993). They added such amenities as post offices and restaurants (or 'food courts'), as department stores had done around 1900, to keep customers shopping longer.

Suburban shopping centres depended on a cultural 'package' of family privacy, urban employment and automobiles. Since many women in the suburbs, especially in the US, were non-working mothers, this arrangement isolated them in the 'private' spaces of home, car and mall. In this sense, too, malls reversed modern urban lifestyles, notably, the freedom of ease in public space some women had attained—although often 'in drag' (Wilson, 1991). Yet the private, or even isolated, lifestyle associated with shopping malls conflated private roles and public spaces. We cannot presume to 'read' the thoughts of women we see in shopping malls (Morris, 1988). They may be there to 'check out' what is happening in society—to enter, rather than retreat from, a public sphere (Shields, 1992). Moreover, with a rapid growth of visitors passing through shopping malls, the privately owned, privately policed consumption spaces become—at least, in most people's minds, if not in law—a public space.

On closer examination, it seems that the sociability fostered by shopping malls often depends on groups rather than on individuals. Non-working women arrange to meet at malls to go shopping with their friends. Elderly people exercise in malls, especially in the mornings when business is slow. They sit in the food court or on the benches to watch others and meet with friends, benefiting from the climate control and security guards. Even teenagers who 'hang out' at the mall socialise in groups. Whether they are 'subverting' the lure of the 'neon cages' (Langham, 1992), as some social critics would have it (Shields, 1989), or merely replacing urban 'street corner society' (Whyte, 1981 [1943]) with a more fluid network of friends, teenagers demonstrate the malls' usefulness as public space. The increasing social diversity of groups who use shopping malls brings its own problems. Security guards routinely interrogate all teenagers and pay special attention to minority group members, especially young men. The guards' offices and even police sub-stations are often placed prominently at the entrances to malls. Although some courts have held that protestors and people who hand out political leaflets have the right to do so in shopping malls, mall owners can and do control access to the space—sometimes, by imposing curfews on youths.

During the 1970s and 1980s—at what was, perhaps, the end of late modernity—shopping malls developed two new spatial forms. On the one hand, increasing competition from discount chains inspired some novelty and department stores (for example, Wal-Mart in the US, Auchan and other chains in Europe) to create even larger units featuring a wider array of goods at lower prices. These large units include free-standing superstores, supercentres, warehouse stores and hypermarkets. On the other hand, declining sales in shopping malls led owners and developers to devise new strategies to keep customers shopping longer. New, larger malls incorporated such entertainment elements as theme parks, rides and amusements and multi-screen or multiplex movie theatres;

older malls were refurbished, notably, by enlarging food courts, to become more 'entertaining'.

Thus, as suburban shopping malls assumed traditional entertainment functions, they became more heterogeneous consumption spaces. They attracted racially and ethnically diverse groups of shoppers, who often drove out from the city in search of high-quality goods in a clean, safe environment. Higher divorce rates and the proliferation of single-person households, even in the suburbs, also contributed to the malls' growing diversity. Far from remaining a 'local' consumption space for a homogeneous residential community, malls have developed new forms—superstores, 'regional' malls and outlet malls—that attract urban residents looking for bargains, suburbanites out for a good time and tourists from other regions.

Postmodernity (1975–)

To some degree, after 1980, there was a cultural and geographical shift from suburban shopping malls to urban, mixed-use complexes including offices, shopping and entertainment. Although this renewal of interest in urban consumption spaces may just have corresponded to a new investment cycle, it also reflected institutional changes. During the early 1980s, as financial institutions expanded on their existing urban base, they took advantage of proximity to the city's cultural amenities to satisfy the needs of professional, high-income wage-earners, both male and female, for amusement. Many in this workforce, especially in the newer, more entrepreneurial jobs, were young. Unlike corporate CEOs who lived in the suburbs, these men and women liked living near work and near other single people, and seemed to be enthused about the vitality of urban life. Their salaries and bonuses, moreover, enabled them to pay high prices for consumer goods and consumption spaces—for urban apartments, restaurants and entertainment. Their lifestyle, as young, single people living in urban centres, was widely caricatured with the acronyms Yuppie

(young urban professional) and Buppie (black urban professional). Yuppies did not have many endearing traits. They spent freely and conspicuously on high-status goods and services (Thrift *et al.*, 1987). They were presumed to be as single-minded and self-centred as the speculative investment strategies in which, as investment bankers, stockbrokers or corporate lawyers, they were involved. They were also blamed for raising rents and restaurant prices, since landlords and restaurant owners tended, with their patronage, to price accordingly. Thus, although mobility into this new workforce was limited by far fewer barriers of social class, ethnic origin, race and gender than ever before, Yuppies as a consumption group were blamed for displacing older, poorer, urban residents.

Although Yuppies became a cultural phenomenon in the 1980s, in many ways they merely assumed an older position—that of gentrifiers—in the urban consumption hierarchy. Beginning in the late 1950s and gaining wide publicity in the 1970s, educated middle-class men and women and artists began to renovate and occupy dilapidated housing in commercial, industrial and working-class neighbourhoods. Their movement into these neighbourhoods—where some of their grandparents had been born or worked—represented a generational movement ‘back to the city’ and an endorsement of the city’s social diversity. It also represented a cultural movement away from the alienated, private lifestyles of the suburbs; a negation of the historical separation—dating back to the 19th century—of home and work; and a desire for ‘authenticity’—in terms of hand-made work, large residential spaces and stately homes—at prices these young, middle-class men and women could afford. When newspapers and ‘lifestyle’ magazines featured stories about gentrification, they emphasised the aesthetic values of historic homes and lofts. They glamourised the lifestyle of people who lived in either brownstone townhouses with their original paneling and wood-burning fireplaces, or in large factory lofts. To some degree, then, the pub-

lic image of gentrification was one of aesthetics and an ‘artistic’ lifestyle (Zukin, 1989 [1982]). In another sense, however, the individual resources of gentrifiers and their ability to mobilise politically—as did the urban critic and author Jane Jacobs, who was a resident of New York City—enabled them to protect and expand their urban base. By establishing an ensemble of urban consumption activities—in housing, in shopping and in supporting cultural amenities from restaurants to art galleries—they laid the groundwork for yuppies and for a private-sector-led model of urban renewal.

Gentrifiers generally worked as teachers, lawyers, artists, writers, creative staff in advertising firms or retail stores and government or corporate managers. Many of them were interested in good food and the arts—the types of cultural consumption that grew so rapidly with gentrification. Unemployed artists and underemployed performers often found jobs in new gourmet food stores, restaurants and art galleries. Writers, who were also urban residents, wrote reviews of these facilities for newspapers and magazines. Thus gentrifiers provided a material base for both new cultural production and consumption. By exemplifying and writing about new cultural trends, they became a ‘critical infrastructure’ for the city’s emerging symbolic economy (Zukin, 1991).

One of the virtues of gentrification, however, is that it made urban neighbourhoods interesting, again, to a broad middle class. By supporting historic preservation, it rescued a significant number of old buildings from destruction. Together with other social and aesthetic movements, gentrification helped cause a sea change in architecture and urban planning away from modernism. Gentrification also made visible and ‘naturalised’ a variety of household structures. Gentrifiers were both single and married, with children and childless, straight and gay. A negative aspect of gentrification is that it did encourage privatisation. Gentrifiers often rely on family savings—rather than bank loans or government grants—to renovate their homes. Their demand for high-quality education for

their children leads them to send their children to private rather than to public schools. In this way, gentrification often reinforces an abandonment of public institutions. Moreover, gentrifiers' endorsement of social and cultural diversity is frequently transmuted into an aesthetic demand for visual coherence (Zukin, 1995). Institutionalised in coherent consumption spaces, this demand effectively displaces lower-income urban residents, who cannot afford higher rents or taxes, and do not want *latte* bars serving an exotically wide variety of coffees with milk.

The near-universality of *latte* bars suggests that many consumption practices related to urban middle-class lifestyles have become widespread. But forms of sociability associated with gentrification—the sociability of streets and shops (Jacobs, 1961)—are only part of post-modern urban consumption. In a highly mobile world of tourists, shoppers and gamblers, the newest forms of sociability are inculcated by Las Vegas and Disney World.

Las Vegas, Nevada and Orlando, Florida, are two of the fastest-growing metropolitan concentrations in North America. It is not accidental that they are also major tourist destinations and the sites of the highest-grossing branches of such consumption chains as Planet Hollywood and the Hard Rock Cafe. Neither is it accidental that both metropolitan agglomerations are heavily oriented toward consumption, services and military production. These are, in short, archetypal postmodern urban spaces.

I have written elsewhere (Zukin, 1991, 1995) about the visual appeal of Disney World's consumption regime. This regime creates a safe, clean, public space in which strangers apparently trust each other and just 'have fun'. The appeal of this accomplishment is universal. It has inspired big city governments to 'Disneyfy' by sponsoring urban 'festivals' and themed shopping districts, by cleaning up public space, by installing private agents of surveillance and control and by turning over the management of public spaces to private associations of commercial property owners. While the gambling casinos of Las Vegas are a less benign environment

than Disney World, they also dramatise the presumed advantages of privatisation. The casino-dominated, *laissez-faire* governments of Las Vegas and Clark County accept a mode of urban development that maximises privately owned consumption spaces (golf courses, gated residential communities), in which residents, especially pensioners with few ties to public institutions, take care of their own needs. These consumption spaces depend on a mainly low-wage labour force, with relatively few immigrants and Blacks—compared to other North American cities; they have managed to delay racial integration (Parker, forthcoming). But most residents consider the social costs of these consumption spaces less significant than the benefits of their new, super-suburban lifestyles. These lifestyles maximise values of individual autonomy and civic pride—within communities limited by age, social class and *de facto* lack of social diversity. Thus, in Las Vegas and Orlando, urban consumption regimes based on mass tourism coexist with privatised urban lifestyles. In this way, the post-modern characteristics of contradiction and disjuncture are institutionalised in urban life.

Strategies of Urban Redevelopment

Strategies of urban redevelopment based on consumption focus on visual attractions that make people spend money. They include an array of consumption spaces from restaurants and tourist zones to museums of art and other cultural fields, gambling casinos, sports stadia and specialised stores. In older cities, such strategies emerge in the absence of specialised alternative business developments. In cities whose economies are still expanding, such as Orlando and Las Vegas, consumption spaces grow along with new offices and homes.

There is some disagreement about the ethical and social value of this new dependence on urban consumption. Gambling casinos, in particular, are associated with serious social problems and place local governments under the influence of the gambling industry (Goodman, 1995). Neither are these con-

sumption spaces entirely profitable operations—at least, not for the local governments that subsidise construction. Sports stadia are especially questionable as public investments. While owners of teams from the New York Yankees to Manchester United reap profits from sales of box seats and products outside the playing field—for example, refreshment franchises, television broadcasting rights and sales of team paraphernalia—all evidence shows that cities derive mixed economic benefits, at best, from subsidising construction, operating and maintenance costs (Shropshire, 1995). But team owners are tough bargainers. They have been able to persuade local governments that, without new facilities, they will relocate their teams. (In the case of US cities, this often means relocation to a new stadium within the metropolitan area, but at a suburban site.) Rarely do mayors or voters reject their ultimatums. Voters in San Francisco, who turned down the chance to build a new football stadium several years ago, are a noteworthy exception.

Neither are there conclusive data about the economic value of expanding resources of art museums and commercial culture, such as theatres. Studies conducted by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (1983, 1993) strongly indicated that many tourists come to New York to see art works and performances, and spend many times the cost of theatre or admission tickets in hotels, restaurants and shops. These studies showed, further, that the wages and operating costs of museums, art galleries, theatres and television and film production add up to a considerable sum. The city government's conclusion—to capitalise on cultural resources in order to maintain New York as an international culture capital and tourist centre—implied a firmly rational point of view. Yet not just New York, but almost every city has decided to promote its art museums, and convert old railroad terminals and power stations to cultural complexes. Although it may make sense in New York or London to develop the synergies of an already-strong symbolic economy, other cities face higher

risks of failure. But what alternatives do they have? These days, as office buildings proliferate in the suburbs and overseas, cities face a difficult choice between casinos, museums and Hard Rock Cafés: truly, a 'fantasy city' (Hannigan, forthcoming).

Economic factors, nonetheless, still motivate investors to create new spaces for urban consumption. Since the 1980s, they have been pushed in two directions: by decreases in domestic shoppers' willingness to buy—asccribed by retailers, in the US, to shoppers' boredom with existing stores and by increases in consumer markets overseas—notably, in Japan, China and the city-states of South-east Asia. Under these conditions, developers have built elaborate, new shopping centres in both Asia and the US—from Canal City in Fukuoka, Japan, to Las Vegas, Orlando and New York City. These consumption spaces attempt to revitalise shopping by dramatising the retail 'experience'. They try to capture shoppers' imagination by inviting them to participate in simulated forms of non-shopping entertainment, such as sports (Nike Town), interactive video installations (Viacom) or even 'wilderness' (REI trekking gear stores) and 'nature' (The Nature Experience). Although these spaces are described by the rubric 'entertainment retail', they really sell an easily recognisable 'brand name'—Disney, Nike, Sony, Viacom—in many different product variations.

So far, most of the prototype entertainment retail stores have opened in the largest cities—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston—where they have become new landmarks on the urban scene. They have replaced the landmarks of the great department stores, many of which went bankrupt or merged during a wave of corporate buyouts in the 1980s. Like the old department stores, entertainment retail stores enjoy favourable coverage in local newspapers for their 'enchantment' of the urban landscape (see, for example, *New York Times Magazine*, Special Issue on "The Store as Theater, Taste Machine, Billboard", 6 April 1997). They exert a magnetic appeal to tourists, especially more affluent foreigners. But their potential to spur

economic development seems limited by the usual market factors: higher prices than outlets and chain stores, eventual overexposure and inevitable reproduction of the same shops in other cities. Entertainment retail complexes in Asia pose a special threat. Using US architects, installing some of the same US store names and financing elaborate, clean and secure facilities (see, for example, "Japanese Mall Mogul Dreams of American Stores", *Wall Street Journal*, 30 July 1997), these super-shopping centres may eventually keep Asian tourists at home as contented consumers, leaving American and European cities empty.

The future development of urban consumption spaces is predicated on a continuously mobile lifestyle. Neither 'niche' shopping nor 'entertainment retail' fully expresses both the standardisation and diffusion of consumption spaces, and the incorporation of diverse groups of consumers into them. The common denominator of all the new consumption spaces is a sociability dependent on visual coherence and security guards, a collective memory of commercial culture rather than either tolerance or moral solidarity. The Disney Company pointed in this direction many years ago. Perhaps that is, at bottom, what makes them such a formidable presence in contemporary urban redevelopment. As recently as 1990, New York City might have seemed immune to 'the Disney touch'; now, however, the redevelopment of Times Square depends mainly on three Disney projects: a Disney Store (one of several in the city), a legitimate theatre for Disney stage productions and Disney's participation in a portion of a time-share hotel. Disney's agreement to establish a presence in Times Square was sufficient to mobilise financing for other projects, and to encourage the city government's support for the entire theatre district. As a critical New York newspaper observes about 42nd Street, this area

aters and other family entertainment fare. Indeed, the transformation is so complete that political figures and real estate brokers have taken to touting the rejuvenated block as the premier symbol of New York City's unquenchable vitality (*New York Observer*, 17 March 1997, p. 1).

In return, when the Disney Company wanted to rent a large part of Central Park for the première of the cartoon movie *Pocahontas*, the Parks Department agreed, and when the company wanted to hold a torchlight parade down Fifth Avenue to celebrate the opening of another animated feature, '*Hercules*,' the Police Department closed the street and provided security. Many New Yorkers protest against the 'Disneyfication' of Times Square, but the greater danger is that a single corporate vision could dominate Manhattan.

This trend is deepened by increased corporate investment in consumption spaces in low-income, minority-group areas such as Harlem. Long ignored by major department stores, big chain stores and retailers selling high-quality goods, urban ghettos have only recently attracted the interest of corporate planners. They now realise that residents of these districts represent large markets for standard, high-price brands—to the extent that, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, certain brands of athletic shoes (Nike) and trekking gear (Timberland shoes) became identified with 'urban'—i.e. 'ghetto'—cultural styles. An investment partnership with the professional basketball-player 'Magic' Johnson has brought Sony Movie Theaters into low-income urban areas. In the past few years, with reductions in social welfare programmes, local governments and community groups have reoriented themselves toward attracting mainstream retailers, including supermarkets, in addition to demanding jobs. Although these urban areas have always been underserved by purveyors of basic consumer goods, encouraging retail stores fits the general social and political context of reducing government's role and enlarging that of the private sector (see, for example, Porter, 1995). The long-term political and cultural

has undergone a miraculous change from a no-man's land of pornography shops and assorted criminal activities into a neon-drenched mecca of theme restaurants, the-

effects of bringing new stores and multiplexes into low-income neighbourhoods remain to be seen.

Urban Politics and Cultures

Ten or fifteen years ago, urban lifestyles might have been analysed in terms of gentrification and its effects on social class polarisation and displacement of the urban poor (Smith and Williams, 1986). Consumption was viewed as a means of driving a wedge between urban social classes and an indicator—although never a cause—of economic and political realignments. By the end of the 1990s, consumption is understood to be both a means and a motor of urban social change. The reorganisation of world markets has expanded the consumption functions of mature urban economies, creating new jobs and new spaces of consumption. Many of these jobs are low-paying jobs in stores, restaurants, hotels and domestic and personal services. While many of the new consumption spaces rely on a high level of skill and knowledge, and provide cultural products of beauty, originality and complexity, others are standardised, trivial and oriented toward predictability and profit (see Ritzer, 1996).

At the same time, individual men and women express their complex social identities by combining markers of gender, ethnicity, social class and—for want of a better word—cultural style. Many of these markers are created in, and diffused from, cities: on the streets, in advertising offices and photography studios, on MTV. Many of the people who create these markers live in cities, too. They are artists, new media designers, feminists, gays, single parents and immigrants—some of the most visible protagonists of ‘urban lifestyles’.

Most women and men live in the spaces between the images manipulated so prominently in the past 30 years by identity politics and ‘lifestyle magazines’ and the desire to live as good a life as possible in their own neighbourhoods. Yet the diversity of their lives is often submerged by the increasing standardisation of consumption spaces, even

at their most spectacular, exemplified by superstores and multiplex movie theatres.

An analytical framework of urban consumption has to be posed in the broad terms of social theory. Like critical interpretations of modernity, this analytical framework should make connections between the production of physical spaces and symbols and between the built environment, sociability and urban lifestyles. Beginning with the various analytical frameworks of gentrification (Zukin, 1987), attempts to think through these connections have generally focused on the urban middle class, especially the educated middle class’ tastes or preferences in cultural consumption. As autonomous social actors, this group thinks through, or is self-conscious of, their lifestyle choices; their ‘reflexivity’ (Lash and Urry, 1994) is assumed to indicate a new mode of collective consciousness. Certainly, there is a fit between demands for more ‘aesthetic’ consumer goods and the reorganisation of some consumer industries. To some degree, consumer industries have strengthened the role of design in the manufacturing process; they provide a large variety of goods and switch production lines quickly; and they advertise their products in a tone of postmodern self-mockery. But these are not their only strategies. Standardisation and mass production have not been relegated to the ash-heap of industrial history. The enormous popularity of fast food, among all social strata, relies on standardised products made in an assembly-line production system. Despite the choices, around the world, between beef burgers, chicken fillets and vegetable kebabs, fast food belies the aesthetic awareness of reflexive consumption. Yet ‘reflexive’ consumers, such as they are, do risk political disengagement and even polarisation. The aestheticisation of their tastes implies stylisation and detachment as well as pleasure (Featherstone, 1991; Sennett, 1990). These attitudes may discourage sympathy with other urban groups, including fast-food workers.

In the current retreat from the welfare state, aestheticisation of the urban landscape

is associated with a collective abandonment of the homeless and exasperation with public stewardship over public space (Zukin, 1995; Smith, 1996; Mitchell, 1996). Streets, parks and even entire districts have been derogated to control by private associations of property owners and patrons. In New York City, for example, the largest parks—Central and Prospect Parks—are partly financed and wholly administered not by the New York City Parks Department, but by private conservancies comprised of individual and corporate patrons. Commercial districts all around the city, beginning with the most expensive, midtown business areas, are managed by Business Improvement Districts. Although these remain public spaces in the sense that they are open to all, the private associations set rules by which entry can be denied. Abandonment of collective responsibility for others also motivates the construction of gated residential communities—graphically connecting privatisation with aestheticisation of an anti-urban lifestyle (Davis, 1990; Ellin, 1997; Judd, 1996).

Alternatively, the shopping streets frequented by immigrants and native-born minorities are avatars of new urban and ethnic identities. On streets in New York City, Los Angeles, Atlanta, or Toronto, shoppers, peddlers, store owners, managers and clerks are likely to be Africans, 'Caribbeans', Koreans and African Americans. These shopping streets create a new African-American identity by interaction among, and fusion between, various traditions of the African diaspora. Although Asians tend to live separately from other minorities, and increasingly in the suburbs, they are active in these shopping streets as merchants—often with both bad and good results (Min, 1996). Storefront telephone and delivery services feature signs in many languages, with prices of services to many lands. Newspaper stands owned by members of one immigrant group sell newspapers written in other languages. Store owners stock distinctive ethnic goods that will appeal to several different ethnic groups, and some goods, such as clothing and cosmetics, are re-exported to the same or even different

countries of origin. 'Aestheticised' commodity worlds are not rejected, but are irrelevant in these streets. Here, 'transnational' consumers interact and develop their own urban lifestyles. They are neither 'detached' nor particularly 'reflexive'. The interaction and juxtaposition among urban lifestyles—especially in spaces of consumption—indicate a 'hybrid' urban culture (Bhabha, 1994) rather than domination by corporations or the middle class. On these streets, diversity thrives.

Questions of lifestyles, public space and sociability return to the theme posed more than 30 years ago by Jane Jacobs: How can cities encourage trust among strangers? For the private-sector managers of public space, the answer lies in aesthetic design and private security guards; for the private-sector managers of entertainment retail, the answer lies in Disneyfication, or selling the experience of pleasure in shopping spaces that are both visually coherent (by branding and themed entertainment) and physically controlled (by cleaning staff, service representatives and private security guards). But on the shopping streets in immigrant and ethnic neighbourhoods, trust among strangers is a result of social interdependence and neighbourhood solidarity. As in the classic visions of modernity defined by both Georg Simmel and Jane Jacobs, this is what urban lifestyle is all about.

Conclusion

Cities hit hard by a long-term decline in middle-class residents and the erosion of commitment by business elites have gradually begun to view the diversity of 'urban lifestyles' as a source of cultural vitality and economic renewal. Elected officials who, in the 1960s, might have criticised immigrants and non-traditional living arrangements, now consciously market the city's diverse opportunities for cultural consumption (Lang *et al.*, 1997). They also welcome the employment offered by new culture industries and expanding cultural institutions—as part of the

cities' new comparative advantage in the 'symbolic economy'. Yet the diffusion of new 'urban' lifestyles may pose problems for city governments' traditional concerns. These lifestyles bring more pressure on public space, including parks and art museums; less desire to finance such public institutions as schools; and continued instability of employment in service jobs that depend on consumers' disposable income. New York City's high-price restaurants wax and wane in response to the stock market, for example, and the city's growth as a 'culture capital of the world' has not brought new financial resources to the beleaguered public schools.

Cities' receptivity to 'destination retail' sites and entertainment facilities have lured them, moreover, into dependence on property developers and multinational corporations that share the same, endlessly repeated vision. There is a Hard Rock Cafe—or at least its retail store—in every major city of the world, new suburban-style shopping centres throughout eastern Europe and a Disney Store even in the duty-free zone of Heathrow Airport. Competition among corporations and cities has led to a multiplicity of standardised attractions that reduce the uniqueness of urban identities even while claims of uniqueness grow more intense. The diffusion of 'urban' lifestyles and the expansion of production sites, throughout suburbs and exurbs, further erode historical spatial differences.

Nevertheless, urban cultural diversity holds a curious and yet wonderously creative mirror to the paradox of polarisation: while cities become more like other places, they continue to attract the extremes of poor, migrant and footloose urban populations and the very rich. Their ability to forge 'urban' lifestyles continues to be the city's most important product.

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