Cities in Europe. From City-States to State Cities, and into Union and Globalization.

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Abstract:

Is there still something which may be called the European (type of) city? If so, what would be its current characteristics? And is it sustainable? The answer is rather positive: there still seems to something specific to European cities. And it looks sustainable for the foreseeable future. European cities make a fairly general category of urban space, relatively original forms of compromise, aggregation of interest and culture which brings together local social groups, associations, organized interests, private firms and urban governments. The pressures created by property developers, major groups in the urban services sector, and cultural and economic globalization processes, provoke reactions and adaptation processes of actors, including active public policies, within European cities, defending the idea of a fairly particular type of city that is not yet in terminal decline. The modernized myth of the European city remains a very strongly mobilized resource, and is strengthened by growing political autonomy and transverse mobilizations.

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1. The City Continent

More than anywhere else on the planet, civilization in Europe in the past 2500 years has been shaped by cities. Historical Europe is an urban civilization even if cities are by no means a European invention. They were pioneered in West Asia, in Mesopotamia and had an early bloom in a Western region reaching into today´s Syria, Palestine, Anatolia, and in the East in China. But the links from Sumerian Mesopotamia were broken long ago, and Asia developed in a land-centred direction of empires, intermittently punctuated by nomadic power of horse-borne warriors, such as the Mongols and Turkic peoples, with the Ottomans as the most enduringly successful.

Europe, on the other hand, was created by cities, or city-states. From Athens and the other Greek city-states we derive our conceptions of polity and politics, from the *polis*, the city. European political theory, based on Plato and Aristotle, started out as a theory of city governance. The city-state tradition was continued by the Romans. Rome and its ultimately vast and powerful empire developed as a city-state, always beginning its official history *ab urbe condita*, i.e. from the (mythical) founding of Rome. The Roman empire expanded as a "federation of cities", linking regional and provincial centres with that of the empire (Lafon et al. 2003:140)

The European conception of citizenship derives from the Roman concept of *civis*, originally denoting a burgher of the city of Rome, in 212 A.D. extended to the whole empire. After the fall of Rome, the city-centred conception of the world was continued by the mainstream of the Christian Church, as Augustine´s central 5th century opus *The City of God*, and in the 6-7th work of Isidore of Sevilla, against the tide of "barbarian" ruralization. Church organization had an urban orientation and an urban effect. *Civitates* came to mean cities of episcopal sites.

The rise of autonomous cities, successfully asserting their autonomy vis-à-vis territorial lords, became a major phenomenon of Italy of the 12th century, the centre of Europe at that time. It spawned the first revival of urban republican political thought in Europe (Skinner, 2002). The landlords returned in most cases, but early 2nd millennium Italian urbanism left the enduring cultural legacies of Florence, Siena and others, and the long lived political economy clout of Genoa and Venice. And when the Italian cities started to decline, the relay was passed to cities of Flanders and Holland, Bruges, Antwerp, Amsterdam (Braudel, 1982).

City law was an important part of the city-state formation of Europe. Even when dependent on, tributary to, territorial lords, European cities usually had their own laws. They could also be exported to other cities. Nuremberg law was exported westwards in Bavaria, Lübeck law north into the Baltics, and Magdeburg law, most successfully, eastwards, in Eastern Germany and into contemporary Poland and Ukraine, including Kyiv (Hamm 1993:6-7), where it is still commemorated on the Dniepr embankment by a pre-revolutionary white column with a golden apple.

Collective urban autonomy within larger polities was uniquely European in recorded history, but Max Weber (1922) may have over-emphasized the importance of the medieval *coniuratio* (urban conspiracy). The European urban panorama also included heteronymous cities of various kinds, *untertänige Städte* (subject cities in Habsburg German), (Cerman and Knittler, 2001:183). A remarkable break in urban conception took place in West-Central Europe in the 11th and 12th centuries, whereby classical *civitas*, a concentrated community of citizens, gradually began to be abandoned for *stad/Stadt* in Germany and the Netherlands –soon inspiring West Slavic *miasto/mesto* , and for *ville* in France, i.e. for purely territorial concepts. The Germanic and West Slavic words just meant "place", whereas the French adopted a Latin word for a major country-house, in Carolingian times a major rural residence (Van Loon 2000: 186ff).

In their protracted struggle against landed power and territorial lords, all European cities finally lost out, to dynastic empires and to nation-states, as superior war-makers in the war-driven competition among European polities (Tilly l990). The French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and their outcome sealed the fate of Venice and of the [city-ruled] Dutch United Provinces, presaging the imminent end of the Swiss urban oligarchies of Basle, Berne, Geneva, Lucerne, Zürich.

By early l9th century , the Europe of city-states had definitely been overcome by a rapidly urbanizing Europe of states. What Europe then came to export to the world was not the city-state but the nation-state, and the dual colonial city. However, Athens, Rome, and, to much lesser extent, Florence and Venice have remained proud parts of the European cultural, legal, and political canon. The European classics are Greco-Roman, of philosophy, drama, poetry, law, political theory, architecture, and urban planning. The basics of European construction, of proportions, arches, and colonnades etc., of public monuments, statues, columns, triumphal arches, as well as of modes of governance, democracy, oligarchy, monarchy, republic or tyranny, and citizenship all derive from city-states.

What was the basis of this powerful European urbanism? Classically, it was the force – naval in Athens, terrestrial in Sparta and Rome – of a concentration of free men. Later on it was long-distance trade, banking, and capital accumulation, protected by mercenaries.

The classical city was governed by a sharp distinction between a citizenry of free men – of proprietors free from work -, and, on the other hand, the slaves and the foreigners. The medieval city thrived on another distinction, between town and country, between the burghers on one side and the peasants – servile or not – and the landowners on the other.

2. The Pattern of European Urbanization

Urbanization has had different meanings in European history, from the establishment, diffusion, growth or shrinkage of special legal-political entities with their own jurisdiction and spatially clearly demarcated by walls, entered into only through guarded gates, closed at night, that of settlements of a certain size and density, whose roadside boundary signposts are often deliberately ignored in current

studies of urbanization. But however, defined, European urbanization has its shifting spatial patterning and its variable rhythm over time.

Despite the common European canon of Classicism from Athens and Rome, modern Europe has a spatially very differentiated urban history. There was a City Belt running from Italy to the Low Countries, through largely rural Switzerland, with a set of powerful, autonomous cities, and through the urbanized Germanic Rhineland. Spain and Portugal also had a significant, somewhat lower, urban presence – most notable if the bottom line is set at five rather than ten thousand population ((Epstein 2001:10; de Vries 1984:39), but for the rest of it, Europe in l500 was overwhelmingly rural. This pattern began to change in the 17th century, through accelerated urbanization in the Netherlands and, particularly, in England. But France, the main early modern political power, remained predominantly rural, as did the Germanic lands , not to speak of northern and eastern Europe.

Table 1. The urban percentage of the population, 1500-1800.

	1500	1700	1800
Low Countries	19	29	23
Italy	12	13	15
Spain	6	9	11
England & Wales	1	13	20
France	4	9	9
Germany	3	5	6
Scandinavia	1	4	5
Poland	0	1	3

Note: Urban population denotes populations in cities with 10,000 inhabitants or more.

Source: J. de Vries, European Urbanization 1500-1800 London, Methuen, l984, p. 39.

By the same criterion, of 10,000, Europe did not get an urban majority until after l950. The main growth took place between 1850 and 1950, when the urban population, defined as inhabitants of cities with at least 5,000 inhabitants, increased from 16 to 59 per cent of the population (Pinol and Walter 2003:26 ; Cf. also Lees and Hollen Lees 2007). By then North America and Oceania (Australia) had become more urbanized than Europe. Pre-modern cities thrived on political power, trade, and religious significance, but modern European urbanization was mainly driven by industrialization and industrial empire, a process very

different from the growth of Southern mega-cities in the last decades, generated much more by rural push and consumer dreams than by industrial pull of employment and mobility.

In the late 19th century, the capital cities – which had a first spurt of growth with the Renaissance monarchies and the rise of Absolutism in the 16th and 17th centuries -, in particular, benefited from the consolidation of states, the shift of political life onto the national level, and the strengthening of the states' - and therefore the bureaucracies', including the army-capacity for control, as well as from industrial development and colonization. They absorbed a large part of the flow of migration, thus providing sizeable reserves of labour. They were the first beneficiaries of the transport revolution, from tramways to road and rail networks. Open to the world in an era that saw increasing numbers of different kinds of exchanges, discoveries, and technical innovations, they established their role by organizing universal exhibitions and great fairs. Concerned with public health and safety, governments organized major improvement works, created wide avenues and constructed new public buildings: stations, squares and monuments that symbolized their dynamism and technical progress. These cities were also places of speculation, of public and private investment in housing, and of financial capital. Their cultural influence changed scale because of more rapid diffusion, transports and colonial empires. London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, especially, were theatres of extraordinary physical and cultural transformations. As university cities and cultural centres they were the focus of unrest and the sites of the political and social revolts that punctuated the XIXth century. The great metropolis became the site of consumption, of department stores and wide avenues, of art and entertainment which changed the urban cultural experience. This led also to physical transformation with the ever increasing diffusion of urbanization around those large metropolis, hence the rise of suburbs, either working class ones as the red belt in Paris or bourgeois suburbs where, as in industrial England, middle classes abandoned the center.

Seen from the sky, the European pattern of urbanization is very peculiar with the mix of land and sea. Dematteis (2000:50) reminds us that "in 1822, the geographer Karl Ritter wrote that Africa appears as a limbless trunk, Asia has ramifications on three sides, while Europe seems divided in all directions, with the limbs prevailing over the body". An X image developed in the 1980's to illustrate the metropolitan concentration, in the central part of the European urban X going, on the one hand, from the South of Spain to Scandinavia, and, on the other, from Dublin and Glasgow to southern Italy and Greece thus identifying an urban core of Europe made of the corridor linking London to Northern Italy going through Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany, once imaginatively named 'blue banana" by the French geographer R. Brunet, a clear inheritance of the long term relatively stable pattern of European urbanization. Within the nation state information, Walther Christaller (l950) famously identified territorial hierarchies in Europe within which cities were functional to organization the economic and political control of the political state in formation. As mentioned before, this central periphery model helped understanding at different scales the difference between the European core regions and the rest, urban regions and their periphery, cities and the countryside even if this model was already modified by the influence of the industrial revolution (Dematteis, 2000).

After 1950 the direction of European urban development began to diverge. While there was accelerated city growth in the south and, above all, in the east, British cities started to decline. The urban share of the population of England and Wales, by national criteria, peaked in the census of l951, at 80.8%, coming back to its l931 level of 80.0 in l961, and then receding to 6.9 by l981, still staying there in l991 (although a new definition raised the percentage to 89.7). The proportion of the population living in the six major conurbations peaked already in l931, at 41%. By 2001 it was down to 35%. (Wood and Carter 2000: 416ff). On the other hand, the decades after World War II were the decades of massive urbanization in France, and in Southern and Eastern Europe. Indexing regional urban population in l950 at l00, the UN (l997) found for l990 a value of 245 in Eastern Europe, of 187 in Southern Europe, and l48 in Western Europe. By l989 USSR was 66 per cent urban, from 18 per cent in 1926 (when the desurbanizing ravages of the wars and the civil war had been recovered), and its number of million-plus cities had grown from 3 in l959 to 22 in l986 (Medvedikov 1990:18)

The European context is now made up of a few declining cities, many dynamic medium size and large cities, and two dynamic large "global" cities. In the mid-2000s, the European rate of urbanization, according to variable national definitions, range from about 45% in Albania and Bosnia-Hercegovina to 97% in Belgium. According to current criteria, the urbanization rate is 76 in France, 88 in Germany, 67 in Italy, 73 in Russia, and 89 in the UK. UN estimates three fourths of the European population to be urban. As a reference it may be added that the rate is 80 in USA, 65 in Japan, 39 in China, and 28 in India (UNDP 2005: table 15).

The UN Population Division is currently working with a habitat conception of "urban agglomeration", which refers to population concentration rather than to urbanity. It is interesting in its findings of the limitations of European urbanization. The main "agglomerations" are now all outside Europe, headed by Tokyo (35 million in 2005), Mexico and New York-Newark (l9 each), São Paolo and Mumbai (18 each). Among the world´s 25 largest conurbations, four are European, on rungs 20 (Moscow, 11 million), 21-22 (Paris and Istanbul), and 25 (London)[1]. The post-World War II growth of these megacities has been much faster than that of European big cities at their period of rapid expansion. Between 1850 and l910 Berlin, for example, grew by about 2.6% annually, while Dhaka and Lagos have had an annual growth of around 6.8% between l950 and 2000 (Zlotnik 2004:63; Berlin growth calculated from Le Galès 2002: 59).

But it still makes some sense to compare administratively defined cities, especially since the agglomeration criteria are rather fleeting. This list of the world´s formally largest cities is topped by Seoul at 10.2 million inhabitants, followed by São Paolo at 10. Among the 25 largest, three are European, Moscow (rank 6, 8,3million), Istanbul (8.3m, rank 7), and London (7.1m, rank 11). Fifteen are Asian, five are Latin

[1] See www.infoplease.com/ipa

American, one is North American, one is African, and Lagos is missing. Paris, by this way of counting is a rather modest big city, with 2.2 million, in Europe behind also St. Petersburg (4.7), Berlin (3.4), Madrid (2,8), Rome (2.6), Kyiv (2.6)[2].

Europe has a distinctive urban pattern in terms of size, with a large proportion of its urban population in medium-sized and small cities. Western Europe has three and half times more urban areas with at least 10,000 inhabitants than he US (Cattan 1999.23).

Table 2. Percentage of Total Population in Cities with Fewer than 500,000 Inhabitants, 2000.

Africa	23
Asia	19
Europe	47
Latin America & Caribbean	36
North America	30
Oceania	34

Source: UN 2003.

As proportion of the urban population of Europe, cities larger than half a million as well smaller than 100,000 lost to the medium cities in between, which increased their share from 21 to 24 % from l950 to l990 (Moriconi-Ebrard l994, Pinol, 2003, 623). Small and medium-sized cities are particularly important in the Nordic countries in Italy, Spain, Netherlands and France, whereas the German and the British pattern is less significant, and similar to that of Japan, but more than in the USA (Kaelble, 1987, 63).

In Western Europe, since the mid-1980s, cities (which are not old industrial cities), and above all the largest cities, have felt the benefits of growth. There followed a recovery and a renewed urban growth in the l990s and the 2000s in most of Western Europe, including a new period of growth for most of the largest cities. All the ten largest cities of France, defined in narrow administrative terms or in terms of urban areas, increased their population in l999-2005 (INSEE). The German pattern was uneven in l990s, even among the big cities, where Berlin lost population, together with Munich, Frankfurt a. M., and, of course, the Ruhr cities, while Hamburg and Cologne were gaining. By the mid-2000s Berlin seemed to have regained a growth track, while city shrinking still continued (Spiegel 2004). After a substantial decline in the l970s and

[2] See www.citymayors.com/features/largest_cities

stagnation for most of the l980s, the population of London is rising again, surpassing its l971 level in 2006 (Population Trends 2006). Eastern European development went in the opposite direction, post-Communist economic depression, de-industrialization, and, in some cases, belated suburbanization led to a general decline of the major cities. The main exception was Tirana, which had an explosive influx of people from a crumbling countryside, a development more similar to, say, Dhaka or Kinshasa, than to Western Europe (Tosics 2005: 67f).

In centralized countries, it seems to be mainly the region around the capital city that absorbs the strongest forces and the economic dynamism: this is true not only of London, Paris, Rome, but also of Madrid, Dublin, Stockholm, Helsinki, Copenhagen, and Lisbon. In the lower echelons of the hierarchy of cities, some regional capitals and other medium-sized European cities have also experienced strong growth: Bologna, Strasbourg, Lyon, Grenoble, Nice, Montpellier, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes, Rennes, Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt, Geneva, Valencia, Seville, Saragossa, Norwich, Bristol, Swindon, Leicester, Turku. In some cases, however, economic dynamism has actually combined with population losses to release the grip previously exerted by certain metropolises, a development that has been particularly spectacular in Northern Italy, where medium-sized cities between Milan and Venice have seen very strong growth. A new feature has been that a number of cities have undergone economic development disconnected from the regions surrounding them. The movement of concentration/dispersal of activities favours smaller cities and rural spaces around cities. By contrast, others - especially smaller cities (which, from a French point of view, might be described as medium-sized cities) - are experiencing changes that tend more towards decline, as if regional metropolises in their turn are largely absorbing the economic dynamism of their region, as in Tuscany and, Emilia-Romagna

There is currently a lively debate about European spatial urbanization pattern. Beyond the representation of cities, many geographers argue that flows and networks are far more important to understand those patterns, hence a process of mapping all sort of flows or making innovative representation of networks. Cities are of course at the same time territorial places and part of global or regional networks. Taking into account this dimension does make the old Christaller order obsolete (with its limits) but all the new visual representation of flows and networks remain in part shaped but the deep and old territoriality of the European urbanization.

3. Economic development

One motor of urbanization is economic development and over the long term, now that the growth of the state seems to be over for a while, this motor is again quite central. The revival of a more “urban “ economy partly remains a puzzle. It remains that cities have become again the key engine of

economic development as they were during most of the middle age years (Hohenberg and Lees, 1985). Two main factors have been put forward: the pressure of globalization processes and the need for agglomeration raised by new forms of economic development. Many observers have therefore taken globalization trends and increasing networks and exchanges as the main factor behind the coming back of cities.

Paris metropolitan area absorbed half the French population growth in the 1980's; London enjoyed accelerated growth. The growth of those large cities was put in parallel with the rise of economic exchanges of the global level. Processes of globalization, including transnational migration, architectural development, financial transactions, transport flux, or dissemination of technological innovations contribute to the rise of mega cities in different parts of the globe. In a different way, the metropolitan revival or growth is explained by the demands of the "new economy". Storper and Manville (2005) suggest that the New Economy's demands for proximity are stimulated by information. Therefore people have to work in close vicinity in big cities with diverse economic sectors to sustain the production of knowledge ad the circulation of talents among sectors.

The development of large cities is related first to the pressure and incentives of globalization trends. They are seen as the new motors of the global economy : issues of competitiveness are central to this notion. They result from the amalgamation of existing localities, to construct inter-territorial organization for collective action which are more or less functionally dependent. Some can be organized around a major urban centre as in the classic model of the metropolis, some may be the network of urban centres (Delta metropolis in Holland, Milan), some may go over national boundaries such as the Sound region, "Örestad". The basic argument behind this version of the mega city is from economic geography : those global city regions are the centre of dense networks of transnational firms, they "thrive on the productivity and innovation enhancing effects of dense and multifaceted urban milieux that are simultaneously embedded in worldwide distribution networks" (Scott, 2001, p. 4).

However, there is little evidence to suggest that, in the European context, global or world cities are a particular category of cities beyond the concentration of networks, headquarters, more diverse interests. In economic terms therefore, the rise of the so called global cities is rather to be related to the more general renewal and acceleration of metropolisation trends which are also valid for medium size cities in the US and Europe alike. There is indeed more to economic development than just the leading services, for instance the financial services. Following Veltz (1996, 2000) we would argue that dynamics of metropolisation can be used to account for both the growth of a good number of European cities, notably regional capitals, and the effects of acceleration and accentuation of these dynamics in the largest of them. Differences are of degree, not of nature, reflecting hierarchies of cities.

What remains unclear is the extent to which there is a direct link between the concentration of headquarters, networks of various sorts, advanced services, diverse skilled professionals, knowledge complex, on one hand, and, on the other, economic development. In other words, is there a clear size effect

which has some impact on the rate of economic development? It may be the case that global city regions are the genuine motor of economic growth and that they have a major comparative advantage. It may also be the case that different pattern of metropolisation may lead to the same result because the combination of network, mobility, diffusion of innovation can take different form. The density of medium sized cities in Europe may be a functional equivalent for those factors identified in the global city regions to the concentration within a large metropolis.

4. Urban Form

Cities are built environments in natural settings, and these nature-located built environments constitute something of a core connotation of what a city is.

After the urban destruction in World War II, a crucial question of European urbanism was, reconstruction or modern construction? On the whole the answer was reconstruction, most emphatically in the Communist East, which had suffered most destruction. The restoration of Warsaw, including its noble palaces and royal castle, set a major example, followed in less damaged Budapest and Prague. In Sofia, the bomb damage to the city core provided the launching pad for building a new political centre of socialist-historicist provenience. Coventry and Rotterdam, the most damaged cities of Europe west of Germany, chose a modernist course, focused on central pedestrian shopping districts, of which the Rotterdam *Lijnbaan* was both the first and the most noticed (Ward 2002: 169, 197).

Cold War- divided Berlin had a divided post-war development, but on both sides re-construction rather than modernist novel construction carried the day. Post-World War II Communism broke the previous links between aesthetic modernism and political radicalism. The showpiece of East Berlin, the *Stalin-Allee* was not a restoration, but it linked up with a historical past (See further Aman l992). In the Cold War competition, West Berlin was happy to house some icons of International Style modernism, like the *Hansaviertel* and the *Philharmonie*, but it too settled for reconstruction, like Munich, Hamburg, and the rest of West Germany, with the exception of Frankfurt am Main, where the old city wall was replaced by American-style business towers (Cf. Dolff-Bonekämper and Kier 1996; Rodenstein 2004).

Re-unified Berlin emits different architectural messages, even inside the new Postdamer Platz project, with a European part directed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano and a part of extra-European modernism around the Sony centre designed by the German-American Helmut Jahn; with a sleek modernist Chancellor´s Office, a post-modern refurbished Reichstag, and a commitment to rebuild the pre-war imperial city palace.

For all North Atlantic Cold War commitment, American urbanism and architecture made little headway in post-war Western Europe, in spite of several study tours to the US by, for example, French planners and architects, focusing mainly on American construction methods. American interwar Art Deco

high rises were quite influential in the Soviet Union, as in the post-war iconic skyscrapers of Moscow or in the Culture Palace given by the Soviets to Warsaw (Cf. Cohen 1995: ch. 7).

With the outcome of the war, the centre of European urban planning shifted from Germany and Austria to Britain, with significant Scandinavian, above all Swedish and Finnish, and Dutch inputs (Ward 2002). British planning was governed by the notion of containing metropolitan London, de facto enormously dominant and never well seated in the ruralistic high culture of Britain (Williams 2004), of "the fundamental need for putting a limit to London´s growth by accretion" (Abercombie 1945:24), and by the "garden city" idea developed half a century before (Howard 1902). A set of New Towns were launched, around London and some other big British cities, the most successful probably being the latest, Milton Keynes, a sort of Los Angeles in miniature, spread out, green, with little centrality. In its objective the Abercombie plan was successful. Inner London declined in population till 1980, and by 2001 Inner and Outer London together had 7.2 million population, to be compared with 8.7 in l939 and 8.3 in l950 (Hartog 2005:93f).

In Scandinavia, post-war suburban development took another course, urban-type density, low-rise apartment blocks, important and multifunctional local pedestrian centres, well equipped with public transport. The original intention that they would also be employment centres was never really realized. Vällingby in Stockholm and Tapiola in Helsinki became sites of l950s architectural pilgrimage (Hall l998: 861ff).

In Eastern Europe a political brake on metropolitan development was also applied, with limited success in spite of the use of administrative residence permits. There was furthermore the project of new "socialist cities", industrial, working-class, well endowed with institutions of culture, Nowa Huta in Poland, Stalinstadt/Eisenhüttenstadt in the GDR, Stalinvaros/Dunajvaros in Hungary (See further Enyedi 2003; Smith 2003).

All European post-war cities had to face the problem of mass housing, generated by industrialisation and urbanizations (Burgel 2003:761ff). Everywhere, the outcome of the considerable efforts turned out problematic, involving new social problems among the new tenants, be they of inner city low rise council estates in the UK, of suburban medium-rise *grands-ensembes* of Parisian suburbs, or medium-to-high-rise suburban apartment blocks of the "million program" – of a million new housing units within ten years of a population of 8 million – housing of suburban Sweden, or the Khrushchev or Brezhnev pre-fabricated apartment complexes of the USSR.

While the housing quality in Scandinavia or France may have been superior, similar problems of concentrated post-industrial unemployment and/or multicultural migration out of poverty governed urban post-l970s problems east and west.

Europe pioneered the department stores, and the big cities have so far more or less

successfully resisted or delimited the suburban mall of American shopping, ironically pioneered by an architect from Red Vienna, having fled the Nazis in l938, Victor Gruen, né Grünbaum (cf. Wall 2005). They still have their fashionable shopping streets in their centres. Post-war Rotterdam pioneered the pedestrian central shopping precinct (Ward 2002:199), a concept early taken up in Coventry, and which has spread on the continent, first northwards, later and much more modestly southwards. What has spread northwards from the Mediterranean south has been sidewalk cafés and restaurants, now a prominent feature also of Nordic cities.

Urban regeneration policies driven by cultural investments and by new

iconic buildings of culture became in the l980s one of the major city responses to urban crisis and decline, to a significant extent inspired by American examples. The most spectacular case is the ex-industrial city of Bilbao, which in l989 adopted a culturally oriented Plan of Urban Renewal, which in the l990s was crowned by a deal with the New York Guggenheim Museum and by a postmodern trailblazer building by Frank Gehry (of l997). Barcelona made very good use of a sports event, the l992 Olympics, for a large-scale renaissance, supported by European and national funds. Increased urban autonomy in Italy spawned ambitious cultural policies in many cities, including Rome.

Northern and Midlands English ex-industrial cities, like Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, and Scottish, such as Glasgow, have made heroic efforts at recycling themselves as vibrant cultural centres (Cf. Bianchini and Parkinson l993). The EU institution of European Cities of Culture, inaugurated in l985 out of an initiative by Melina Mercouri as Greek Minster of Culture, and since l999 renamed “Cultural of Capital of Europe”, has given a big boost to urban cultural policy. In terms of architecture and arts they have, on the whole, been successful, but their overall effect on city development and prospects have so far been more limited.

Waterfront developments, on rivers as well as on seas, have been a major feature of many European cities since the l980s, converting old docks and port areas – rendered obsolete by new container ports – and de-industrialised railway yards into post-industrial areas of finance (London) offices, and leisure and entertainment areas. Vienna, which always had turned its back to the river and its recurrent floods, has developed an ostentatious Donau City (Cf. Rebak et al. 2003). The Liverpool docks and the inner port areas of Amsterdam and Rotterdam have been opened up to urbanization. Barcelona used its Olympic occasion, and Sevilla and Lisbon (cf. Cabral and Rato 2003) their World Expo opportunity to develop their sea and their river fronts, respectively. Oslo has turned its former major engineering plant by the *fjord* into an area of posh consumption and gastronomy (See further Tölle 2004).

European cities have in the last decades tended, unevenly, to de-pollution. The coal-fired London smog disappeared in the l950s. In the l990s it became again possible to swim bacteriologically safe and to catch fish in the waters of central Stockholm. The move towards sustainable development is only recent and often supported by the presence of elected green politicians in city councils. Slowly, bicycle lanes imported for Northern Europe, public transport, waste recycling scheme, energy saving *dispositifs,* electric buses and de pollution schemes are developing in particular in Northern cities but increasingly in southern Europe as well.

4.1. Symbolic forms

In Western Europe, low-keyed sobriety characterized the post-war period in terms of urban symbolism. The heroes and the martyrs of the war were commemorated, but in modest forms, often tacked onto World War I memorials. Germany and Austria gradually came to initiate a novel form of public political iconography, representing guilt and shame, with respect to the Nazi crimes, to the Holocaust in particular. This was all very different from Eastern Europe, where Soviet victory – won at horrendous cost of lives – generated large-scale monumental ensembles, of triumph as well as of mourning of the dead. Gigantic statues of Stalin were erected in Budapest and Prague, and planned for all capitals. A mausoleum monumentality was developed for local Communist leaders, in Prague and in Sofia in particular. Iconic buildings of the new political power were put up, the Culture Palace in Warsaw, the Central Committee building in Sofia, the *Scinteia* print concern in Bucharest, and later Ceausescu´s gargantuan Palace of the People, but not that many.

In the West, grand-scale symbolic building only took off from the l980s. As in the l9th century, Paris led the way, actually starting earlier. The high-rise area *La Défense*, to the west of the city centre, developed from the l960s was at first perhaps only an outsourced business district, its towers not allowed *intra muros*. But later the old plan of linking it with the Triumphal Way from the Louvre westwards was realized, with the Arch of La Défense. The new airport at Roissy, soon named Charles de Gaulle, is still, after four decades, the most spectacular in Europe, arguably in the world, designed by Paul Andreu. The l970s Centre of Modern Art at Beaubourg, now bearing the name of de Gaulle´s successor, Georges Pompidou, by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, became a trendsetter of contemporary cultural buildings in Europe and many parts of the world.

On this already vibrant legacy, Francois Mitterand launched his *grands travaux* of urban monumentality in Paris, including an extension of the Louvre, with the pyramid by I.M. Pei, a new National Library, a new opera, the Parc de la Villette of design etc. Parisian monumentality continued under the Chirac Presidency, for instance with new grand museal constructions, of which the post-colonial of Quai Branly, designed by Jean Nouvel, is the most memorable.

No European city has matched this recent Parisian investment in monumentality, concentrated on a raft of cultural buildings although the Ministry of Finance has got an impressive location. But there are two other cities comparable to Paris in symbolic ambition, Berlin and London.

Berlin has been driven by its aim at becoming the political capital and the centre of unified Germany. Its effort has had two main foci, and a general idea. The latter has been gentle reconstruction of the eastern centre, with strict rules of size and style. Lately this has taken an explicitly anti-modernist direction, in deciding to re-build the imperial city castle, but before it invited many modern architects to work under the constraints, and many did. The modernist foci have been, on one hand the Potsdamer Platz area, before the war the hub ob Berlin, in the years of the Wall a border wasteland, to be developed as an east-west centre of urban life of leisure and entertainment. On the other, the *Spreebogen* (the inner city bend of

the river Spree), aimed at manifesting the new political centre of re-unified democratic Germany, with a seemingly transparent, distinctively non-pompous but soberly solemn Chancellor´s Office – proudly overtaking the modest Chancellor´s bungalow in Bonn -, a restored old *Reichstag* with a new glass cupola, up to which people and tourists can walk, on top of the MPs, and with an open green field in between.

Political symbolism in Germany has come to mean, first of all, commemoration of Nazi crimes, crimes against Jews above all. The two most symbolically laden constructions in contemporary Berlin, both by American Jews and of striking originality, are, the Jewish Museum by Daniel Liebeskind, and the Holocaust memorial by Peter Eisenmann, at the very centre of the city, by the Brandenburger Tor and the new American Embassy.

London, due to taxpayer influence (the City in particular), always less monumental than the big continental capitals, got a shot in the arm from the "Big Bang" of financial capitalism in the mid-l980s. A new business district with architectural ambitions was developed by North American capital, and in part by US architects, in Canary Wharf, a former docks area in the east. Currently, the most iconic building of London is the "Gherkin", a gherkin-shaped office tower in the original City designed by Sir Norman Foster, originally for the insurance company Swiss Re, which has now sold off. Public building in London came after the end of Thatcherism. Sponsored by the New Labour government, a monumental building of spectacular economic failure was built in Greenwich, also in the east, the Millennium Dome by the other top star architect of current Britain, Richard Rogers, a remarkable post-modern construction for entertainment and/or exhibitions, which so far has not found its raison d´être. More solid, but less spectacular, have been the developments on the South Bank of the Thames, of cultural institutions as well as commercial buildings, and a new, modernist City Hall. Business, rather than public culture as in Paris, has driven recent London architecture.

It has been argued (Jencks 2005, 2006) that iconic buildings are replacing monuments as symbolic landmarks. In Western Europe the golden age of urban monumentalism was the century from the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars – with the Parisian *Arc de Triomphe*, and the London Trafalgar Square until that of World War I and the completion of the Roman *Vittorino*. Eastern Europe is still, after Communism, pursuing another track, with a marked re-sacralization of urban public space, most ostentatiously in the re-built Cathedrals of Christ the Redeemer in Moscow and of St. Michael in Kyiv, and with a very varied post-Communist monumentality. Nationally martyrological in Warsaw, militantly anti-Communist in Budapest, of diverse discretion in Prague, including both a return of a Habsburg statue and a modernist commemoration of people lost by Communist repression. The announced international competition for a new headquarters of Gazprom in St. Petersburg may signal a coming turn to iconic construction, of which post-Communist Europe has so far not seen much more than a twisted Frank Gehry office for a Dutch insurance company in Prague. New architectural ambitions are proclaimed and planned in Prague, Riga, Vilnius, and many other cities. Minsk is already very proud of its new (2006), locally designed library, a big hexagon diamond on top of a low circular structure.

5. The Current "State of European Cities"

The 2007 "State of European cities report" by the Urban Audit of the EU provides evidence of the more recent socioeconomic urban trends within the Europe of 27 (and of increased diversity from the enlargement). Firstly, the population of European urban areas is still expanding more quickly than the growth of the overall population. In most countries, the pattern is mixed : some dynamic urban growth in a majority of cities and some cases of decline (or of shrinking cities). The largest cities in the North of Europe in particular (Netherlands, UK) and in Spain or Greece have expanded more quickly than smaller urban areas.

In the 1990's, the pattern of grown of Western European cities has been quite striking (not everywhere, not in the old harbours or industrial cities) by contrast to Eastern Europe where the overall decline of the population also translated to cities in the Baltic states, Eastern Germany, Bulgarian, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic or Hungary. However, within those countries some capital cities have been doing far much better than the rest of the cities. The overall pattern remains a pattern of urban decline and loss of population.

Following from its historical tradition of urban autonomy, European cities have always had strong centres, very much in contrast to the new US cities of the 19th and 20th centuries. On the continent, even in the industrial era, the upper classes have maintained a strong presence in the centres of big cities, dominating them in large parts. This pattern of the rich in the middle and the popular classes in the periphery has been pronounced in typical Mediterranean cities (Magnier, 1996: 66) but is by and large also a Germanic pattern, from Vienna to Stockholm. London and even more the industrial cities of Northern England, while having proud national and municipal centres (cf. impressive city halls), have had more of a bourgeois flight to the suburbs. Nevertheless, currently Inner London has the highest average disposable income in the European Union, including higher than the surrounding counties and Outer London (Eurostat, 2007). Least sprawl there seems to be in Switzerland, with prosperous compact cities (Bailly, 2004).

Authors of the report are able to distinguish between different pattern of urbanization (State of European cities report: 14, 15). Crucially, there is no unique pattern of decline of cities and massive sprawls. There is a dynamic pattern of urban growth, more growth in the suburbs than in core cities, but the old European city centres are not disappearing and in a number of cases, they are still growing.

- patterns of urbanization (growth of the entire metropolitan area, both the core cities and the outer urban area) : large cities in Spain, Greece, Benelux, in Germany, (overall that pattern applies to a third of European cities within the Urban Audit);
- patterns of urban decline (decline of both) : Some Italian cities and some in the Ruhr but mostly cities in East Germany, Central and Eastern Europe (but not Bulgaria);
- patterns of suburbanization (decline of the centre, growth of the urban periphery) : in Spain, Poland, the UK, Austria, Italy;

- and re-urbanization (core city is expanding faster than its periphery but both are growing) : London, Copenhagen and a few cities in Spain, Greece, Finland.

The report provides a set of figures (from GDP per capita within cities, to economic growth, employment growth and contribution to the national growth) which clearly demonstrate some level of economic concentration to the largest cities London and Paris, and to major cities of the Northwest, Nordic and Dutch cities, or German cities such as Hamburg. However, a whole set of more peripheral and medium size cities are also enjoying very consistent economic growth: capitals of Eastern and Central European countries (Budapest, Prague), Madrid, Barcelona or Athens and Thessaloniki, regional cities in the main countries (Munich, Lyon) and in the periphery (in Ireland). The picture also reveals the remaining transformation, slow growth or difficulties of old industrial areas, port cities, or eastern European cities which do not benefit from the service growth. Services are centrally important, within the five largest urban areas in Europe (i.e. London, Paris, Berlin, Madrid and Rome), “the service sector employment accounts for between 80 and 90% of all jobs” (State of European Cities 2007:44). Most accounts of the productivity of the larger cities conclude that it is superior by about a third to that of the rest of the country (Davezies, 2007). Some regional capitals still have an industrial base. Among them, it is however crucial to make a distinction between rapidly declining industrial cities in Eastern and Central Europe, and dynamic cities with mixed economies including a dynamic industrial part in Western Europe (such as Göteborg, Grenoble, Cork, Tampere, Linz).

In the reading of the coming back of cities and metropolises, the level of education and available diverse skills has been seen as crucial. Cities are seen as giant matrices for recombining resources in order to generate innovations (Veltz l999).

6. The Urban and the Rural.

The city is also a geographical category of space. However, as the world is becoming increasingly urban, does it make sense to identify particular urban characteristics ? With three fourths of the population urban, and the rest very much connected to the urban world – by mobility, travel, media, and by the transfers of the nation-state -, the urban-rural divide had lost most of its socio-demographic, as well as its juridico-administrative salience in Europe. Europe is more or less urban. However, new cleavages are emerging, reinforcing the salience of European cities.

A city is usually distinguished by a certain size and density of population, which statisticians have tried to standardize internationally, with very limited success. New spatial forms of built environment have become salient, to the old suburbs have been added, edge cities, urban sprawl, conurbations, urban agglomerations, urban regions, networked urban space (Cheschire and Hay, 1989, Martinotti, 1993, Richardson and Bae 2004, Kesteloot, 2005). In various countries, statisticians try to develop accurate figures to measure those changes. In Britain, the whole debate on the making of city-regions echo old discussion around travel to work areas. The French statistical nomenclature has been ambitious in trying to systematize complex urban developments from the city centre, to the urban units (defined by density and population), and the *pôles urbains* providing at least 5000 jobs and urban fringe having at least 40% of its working population commuting the to the city (Huriot 2004, 184).

A distinction between cities and the countryside is no longer part of the routine of the major statistical bureaux, be they global, like the WHO, European as Eurostat, or national ones. Urbanity/rurality had been superseded by regionality.

Grosso modo, the long post war disinterest of official statistics for cities corresponded to a major historical change of marginalization of what was one of Europe´s most distinctive divides. The fertility rate, historically and globally still, lower in cities, of London is now (in 2005) almost exactly the same as the UK rate, 1.77 and 1.79, respectively. Life expectancy, in early modernity considerably lower in European cities than in the countryside, can now be at its peak nationally in the capital, as in Paris, or the national average can be forked between the length in the capital (below) and in the second largest city (above), as is the case with Berlin and Hamburg in Germany.

National media, secularization, and de-industrialization have tended to make politics more national and more volatile, although every election still shows considerable spatial variation, including, usually, among different urban areas.

In contemporary Europe, the historically crucial juridico-political meanings

of a city has lost most of their relevance in post-war Europe. In Sweden, the city (*stad*) was officially abolished as an administrative category in 1971, submerged under the concept of municipality (*kommun*), which are relatively few (290) and more resourceful than most. Swedish cities are allowed, though, still to call themselves cities, which a few of the largest ones do. “Local government” has emerged as a generic term in studies of territorial administration and self-government. In the UK, the administrative distinction between urban and rural areas disappeared with he local government reform of l974.

After World War II, Konrad Adenauer took the initiative of re-establishing the German Cities Congress (*Städtetag)*, which the Nazis had merged with that of other municipalities. In l951 it comprised 151 West German cities, and in l990 133 cities of former GDR entered. However, post-war West German law did not distinguish between cities and other municipalities. The Cities Congress now claims to represent 5500 “cities and municipalities” with 51 (out of 80) million inhabitants. The only distinctive urban unit in

current German administrative law are the larger “county-free” (*kreisfreie*) cities, of which West German had 87, apart from its city-states of Berlin, Bremen, and Hamburg (Hesse l991:364ff).

France and Italy basically have only *communes/comuni,* 37,000 in France, which often makes an informal divide at 30,000 inhabitants, and 8000 in Italy. Spain has a conception similar to that of England and Germany, with a basic trans-urban/rural category of municipality, but with a formal upper tier. In the Spanish case it includes cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants, or which are provincial or autonomous capitals. On the other hand, the actual city of Brussels, at the western end of the medieval-cum modern city belt of Europe, is divided into 19 communes (Hesse, 1991, John, 2001).

The socialist doctrine of the Communist countries included, as an important part of its egalitarian programme, the overcoming of the different conditions of urban and rural life. De facto, Communist development came to reproduce, by new means, the inherited huge gaps between cities and countryside in Eastern and East-Central Europe, through its linking large-scale industrialization with city creation or expansion, by administrative rules of territorial mobility, and by different policies of housing and of social security for urban occupations and for agriculture. Cities were ordered in hierarchies of industrial and/or administrative importance. In the post-Communist era there has been a stark differentiation between winners and losers. Purely industrial cities and the rural areas are usually among the latter, capital cities among the former.

The specific European town has largely disappeared, with its special rights, its internal jurisdiction, its local burgher identity. Everything local has become municipal. Strong city government is not necessarily dependent upon a directly elected mayor as the Scandinavian and Dutch experiences show – Scandinavia with collective party governments, the Netherlands with appointed mayors -, but to politically fragmented conurbations, like the English, and to cities within countries characterised by strong state traditions, as in post Napoleonic Western Europe and in post-Communist Eastern Europe, having directly elected mayors tends to strengthen and vitalize urban governance (Cf. World Bank 2004). The Dutch political *habitus* of consensual politics has implied governmental political sensitivity in appointing mayors of major cities, so Amsterdam, for instance, has a long 20th century history of powerful Social Democratic mayors.

However, in the past 15 years, the reorganisation of urban governments has given salience to the particular status of (big) cities, now comprised in terms of metropolitan areas (Brenner 2004). Firstly, in comparison with a century or fifty years ago, the larger European cities have more autonomy and much more vigorous local leadership. The major capital cities of Europe have only in the last years (London since 2001) or decades had an elected unified government and mayor. Despite some resistance, a metropolitan government is being recreated in Britain, following the London example. The coming of age of city regions is now on the cards with special status, rights, powers. In Italy, the first law on metropolitan governments in 1992 was not successfully implemented. However, the local government laws organising the direct election of city mayors were a major driving force to reorganise local governments. City mayors in Milan, Naples,

Venice, Torino, Florence, Bologna and most importantly Rome, reorganised urban services, developed new strategies for their cities. The new Italian law on metropolitan government establishes a special legal status for ten to twelve large Italian cities.

In France too, the restructuring of local government based on a mix of direct constraints and strong financial incentives is creating an original and powerful structure of inter-municipal urban government benefiting from strategic and public policy delivery powers together with important financial and human resources. Metropolitan government emerged in the Stockholm area in the l970s and has developed in the other Nordic capital regions too (Haila and Le Galès, 2005).

In Eastern Europe, reforms of local government in the 1990's led to differentiated set of legal status, in particular for the capital. During the negotiation to join the EU, a particular emphasis was put on decentralisation reforms supposed to undermine existing bureaucracies and to reinforce the democratisation of the political regimes. Within that decentralisation trend, cities did particularly well in terms of new powers. In the Hungarian two tiers system, the capital has been granted a special legal status with specific powers given to the district government of Budapest and the urban mayors are directly elected. The same applies to the Czech Republic where the 2002 restructuring of local government applies a special status to Prague and to 19 statutory cities. In Poland too, 65 cities were given county status. Relatively high level of devolution were also granted to Baltic state cities.

National and international statistical organisations are redesigning their spatial statistics, into focusing on urban variation rather than on urban-rural differences. The major EU statistical bureau has initiated a long term effort to provide a new kind of urban statistics. The "Urban Audit Pilot project " was started in 1998 based on data collected in 1981, 1991, and 1996 for 58 cities. It was completed in 2000 and was followed by large scale Urban Audit, collecting data on 258 cities and urban areas in Europe, with an improved methodology designed by Eurostat and covering 27 countries and 333 variables[3]. Its latest report, "The State of European cities", was published in 2007.

7. Four dimensions of a new urban salience

There is therefore a new debate in Europe on the urban-rural divide, whether or not it is still a major distinguishing variable of social science, demography, or medicine. In the past decade, many social issues from the integration of ethnic minorities, mobility to economic development have re-emerged with a significant urban dimension in the US and in Europe (Storper 1997, Butler, 2005, Favell, 2008, Kazepov 2005).

[3] See http://www.urbanaudit.org

In socio-economic respects, four dimensions contribute, in diverse ways, to the distinction of cities : migration/ethnicity, education, the labour market for women, and inequality.

7.1. Ethnification of European Urbanity

Multi-ethnicity is not a new phenomenon in European cities. In Eastern Europe it was a rule and a characteristic feature, until the ethnic cleansings of World Wars I and II. In Western Europe Brussels, London, and Paris, and some other cities, have a long historical experience with it. But after mid-20th century national homogenizations, multi-ethnic migration has returned , and in Europe on a scale unprecedented in modern times.

European cities have become gradually more ethnically mixed, a rather recent phenomenon outside large capitals and industrial cities, which date back to the 1980's. Ethnic diversity, so obvious in larger cities all over the world and in the US in particular, is becoming the norm, London being the leading example of a global metropolis (Hamnett, 2003, Massey, 2007), with about a third of its population foreign born. The high density and wide variety of immigrant populations is more a distinctive characteristic of the largest European cities, notably London, Paris but also Amsterdam (28% foreign born in 2005[4]) Frankfurt (25 percent), Rotterdam (20 percent), Brussels (just under 30 percent of the city centre population), and Stockholm. In recent years, London, Madrid, Paris, Berlin, but also cities like Galway, Lyon, Munich Vienna, Copenhagen, and Budapest have attracted the largest influx of migrants, a trend not unrelated to the dynamic economic growth of those cities. Around 10 percent of the European Urban Audit cities residents are non-nationals, mostly (two third) from outside the EU. By contrast, most cities in the eastern and central part of Europe are sending migrants and comprised very low proportions of non nationals.

Inter-ethnic relations – of cultural integration and autonomy, of violence and coexistence -, the proper place of religion, raised by the growth of Islam in particular, have become central issues urban discussion, politics, and policy (Garbaye 2005). Ethnicity also gives a new edge to classical urban problems, of segregation, poverty among opulence – a phenomenon much increased in the l980s, and staying since then -, youth unruliness, crime, and unsafety. Integration, inclusion, and social cohesion discourses have become increasingly widespread in urban public discourse, without being able, yet, to get very far in practice. (Castel, 1995, Mingione, 1996, Paugam, 1996, Harloe, 2001, Lagrange, Oberti, 2006).

There is less segregation in European cities than in American ones, but most of the difference hinges upon the segregation of African-Americans. There are few mono-ethnic neighbourhoods, even areas where there is a high concentration of immigrants are ethnically diverse.

[4] See http://gstudynet.org/gum/Netherlands/Amsterdam2005.htm

German cities have low levels of ethnic segregation, followed by Oslo, Vienna, French, Dutch and English cities (as far as Black people are concerned). The most segregated cities are Brussels, Antwerp and Rotterdam (concerning Turks and North Africans in all three cases) and some British cities, like Bradford, with respect to Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

7.2. Educated Cities Women´s Chances

A second major trend in European cities, and in particular in the largest cities, is the concentration of highly educated populations, of what the American author R.Florida (2002) has called "the creative class". The largest cities in centralised countries in particular such as Helsinki, Copenhagen, Lisbon, Athens, Paris or London, operate like "escalator regions" (A.Cochrane, in Allen et al. l998). Due to their central position they have a more qualified labour market, they attract the highly qualified youth of their country, often educated in those cities, and increasingly highly qualified young foreigners "Eurostars in Eurocities" as Favell (2008) put it. Some of them will progressively leave either around age 30 or when they have a family, or later on during their career, or when they retire. However, those who stay in those labour markets have abetter career, better earnings (30% on average in the Paris in relation to France), and often double careers. These cities function as an escalator in terms of social mobility and income generation.

Big cities are also characterised by the large and diversified job structure which is particularly crucial for women. European rural to urban migration has historically beeen spearheaded by women, less bound to rural property and to rural outdoor pursuits. Qualified women are massively employed in services which are concentrated in cities. The level of women's employment is far higher in cities and large cities in particular. The "State of the European city report" is particularly relevant to make this point. The authors have used as a proxy the proportion of those who have attained the ISCED 5-6 level (i.e. four years of university education or threes for a job specific tertiary course). City inhabitants are on average much better educated than other European citizen. Almost all urban audit cities score higher with regard to completed tertiary education than their respective national averages, and many of them have a significantly better score. having more than 30% of the population with more or less a master degree. Again, capitals such as Paris, Tallinn, Sofia, Helsinki, London, Amsterdam, and Warsaw stand out, together with medium sized university cities.

7.3. Inequalities and social segregation

Dynamics of inequalities formation or reduction have to be analysed from different angles and by looking at different groups. The most educated and wealthiest individuals have great resources to oppose redistribution, to organise politically to limit tax, inheritance or to move to exclusive areas, gated communities. The middle classes are the motor of spatial segregation.

Cities are classically characterised by inequalities, where the richest social groups co-exist with the poorest. However, within continental Europe, the high level of welfare expenditure played a major role for a long time to limit urban poverty and to limit urban inequalities. As is well known (Atkinson and Piketty 2006), national inequalities are rising due to the increase revenue of upper classes and the decrease of the income tax. Average income is usually highest in the capital cities or regions, although it is rarely weighed by cost differentials in housing and other respects (Eurostat 2003). The World Bank (2004) study of poverty in post-Communist Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia found a thoroughgoing urban-rural difference, with less incidence of poverty in the cities, except in the Caucasus and in Moldova.

European cities differ significantly from US ones on this point. Historically – and this is linked to the role of the city centre in European cities – the most privileged social strata (the cultural, political, and economic elites) have remained in the cities and in their centres, except in the UK. They have maintained and reproduced their presence, and they have accumulated economic, social, cultural, and political capital. New groups of managers and professionals have followed the same logic but they have settled less systematically in the centre, they also moved to residential suburbs. European cities are rarely distinguished by urban crisis in the city centre, except in 19th century industrial cities, ports, and some special cases such as Brussels or Frankfurt. On the contrary, their bourgeoisies have often been sufficiently active to push the building of factories and social housing out towards the periphery – more so in France and southern Europe, and less so in Scandinavia. Areas of suburban houses or peri-urban developments and small, ethnically and socially homogeneous residential towns, largely of owner-occupiers, have developed on the periphery of cities, and these benefit from the two movements of urban growth and dispersal. Horizontal dispersal has gradually affected European cities but has not led to the decline of city centres, except in the cases mentioned above.

Socio-economic segregation is smaller in Europe than in the US. Even highly segregated areas such as Antwerp or British cities are far behind American urban areas. The poor are not detached from the middle classes in Europe, there is much social mix (Cf. Wacquant and Howe 2007). Of course there are differences between states (Denmark is less segregated than Belgium), cities (unemployed people are more segregated spatially in Leeds than in Manchester) and groups (higher social class positions lead to a higher level of segregation).

In the European context, we now see at the same time dynamics of gentrification in the classic sense of city centres, continuous embourgeoisement of historical bourgeois neighbourhood, the political construction of middle classes brand new neighbourhood close to city centres, corporation headquarters and financial districts and also some trend toward suburbanization and the making of more or less gated communities. In France, Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot (1989, 2000) working on the upper class (in

other words, a narrower and more elitist group that the one we identify) have identified the 'spatial stamp' of the bourgeoisie – a way of building and organizing 'good districts' in cities, especially the largest ones. This has not disappeared. This geographical mutual reinforcement enables them to deploy inheritance and reproduction strategies: 'this spatial segregation, pushed to the extreme, is in fact an aggregation, the choice of a social group, of a class, through which it is expressing its awareness of the group's deep community of interests' (2000: 54). The same thing was shown by Savage and Butler's research on the UK middle classes (1995), particularly in relation to educational strategies, and Savage (2000) has hypothesized a "spatialization of class". Trends making sense of those different dynamics, identifying what Lockwood (1995) used to call "the urban seeking", versus the "urban fleeing" middle classes seems to us a fruitful way to understand inequalities.

The link between globalisation trends and inequalities within cities rose in the 1990's and was structured by the seminal work of Saskia Sassen on global cities (1991) which made a link between rising inequalities and globalization. She argued that :'… these cities now function [as centres] in four new ways: first, as highly concentrated command points in the organization of the world economy; second, as key locations for finance and for specialized service firms, which have replaced manufacturing as the leading economic sectors; third, as sites of production, including the production of innovations, in these leading industries; and fourth, as markets for the products and innovations produced.' (1991: 3-4). Sassen provides a new definition of 'global cities' describing them in terms of their central role in exchange flows - flows of travellers and of merchandise, and as headquarters of the largest firms and of cultural and political institutions, banks, and insurance companies: in other words, on the basis of their functions and their power to exert economic and political influence. Thus, growth in exchanges of goods and persons, which has accelerated since the 1970s, gives cities at the heart of these exchanges a special position. The development of multinational and then global firms means the concentration of economic power within these firms, which establish their headquarters - and therefore the power of highly aggregated economic command – in a small number of very large metropolises. These metropolises are thus integrated into the most globalized part of the economy, which gives them a special role.

Sassen (1991) goes further, by stressing that the dynamic of economic globalization requires capacities for control and co-ordination, which are changing scale. Global cities are cities within which these modes of control and co-ordination are organized, giving such cities increasingly extensive influence. Above all, global cities have an original dynamic of producing innovations for the leading services of capitalism - financial and legal services, consultancy, and communication. The global city is a particular environment, producing specialized, innovative services that enable co-ordination and control of the globalized economy, thanks to the concentration of global firms' headquarters and of these services. For Sassen, the dispersal of activities increases the need in the global city for a social and economic environment that can produce its own codes and its own culture, thus contributing to co-ordination. She deduces from this that there is a new social structure, distinguished by the concentration of social groups involved in the global city dynamic, who need a whole set of professional and domestic services: hence the proliferation of low-paid, insecure workers cleaning offices, providing various domestic services, and staffing

restaurants and cafés. This dual structure is characteristic of advanced capitalism and the global cities that are its command centres: New York, London, Tokyo, and, to a lesser extent, Los Angeles, Paris and Frankfurt.

Her thesis of a dualization of global cities has however been contested by Hammett (2003) on London and Préteceille (2000, 2005) for Paris, who confirmed a dynamic growth and segregation of the most privileged groups, but who did find an accentuation of polarization, nor a decline of the middle strata. This is due in particular to the role of the welfare state. In his analysis of changes in post-industrial social structures, Esping-Andersen (1993) very clearly reveals the role of the welfare state and of education in structuring Western societies, in combination with the structure of production and the industrial relations system. The figures for Scandinavian states are obviously more spectacular than those for the UK or, to a lesser extent, Germany. Up to now, public employment, as a relatively stable form of employment, has been maintained, providing a solid pillar of stability for national and local societies, and benefiting women especially.

These observations take on their full meaning when applied to cities. In the European context, cities are most often either the capitals of small nation-states, regional capitals, or centres of economic regions. In all these cases, the cities have played a particularly important role as local or regional bases for a welfare state organized at the national level. This general trend and structural component masks great diversity among European cities, and particularly between cities in northern as against southern Europe. Statistics on employment in cities, although difficult to compare from one country to another, express this reality. In French regional capital capitals over 50% of jobs are in the public sector. At the level of the urban area, figures are close to 30%, similar to Scandinavia. Thanks to public services and the welfare state, European cities have a stable employment base. Broadly, a third of city employment is rooted in the public or quasi-public sector, sometimes beyond 40 % which means that, in the short- and medium-term, a large section of the workforce is escaping the logic of the market, globalized as these now are. In addition, these jobs offer social services to the population, provide a substantial proportion of female employment, make life easier for households, and partly protect populations from the effects of economic risks (even though this last has proved less effective since the 1980s). The situation in the UK is somewhat different. State public expenditure there is traditionally lower than in continental Europe (but not in comparison with Ireland or the south of Europe). This trend became more pronounced after Mrs Thatcher came to power in 1979, with the introduction of market mechanisms, privatization (of housing, transport, and energy), and tax reductions.

Up to the present day, European cities have been able to count on an element of stability: local government, state agencies and services, hospitals, schools, universities, social and cultural centres, research centres, and the forces of law and order have together contributed a great deal to the

organization and stability of cities. In more sociological terms, based on the Italian case, Bagnasco and Negri (1994) have attributed a dual role to the middle classes and lower-middle classes (*classi medie e ceti medi*) in stabilizing local urban societies and in social innovation. This means that, in some cities, from the point of view of the production of goods and services, public or quasi-public sector employees - or some of them - may organize as a social group. Looking at these individuals from the point of view of consumption of collective welfare state services, the 'Thirty Glorious Years' from 1947 to 1976 allowed the middle strata to gain in strength; the stratum that includes both blue-collar and white-collar workers (who have become more similar by virtue of their increased purchasing power) is relatively more uniform and stable, with lifestyles and consumption patterns that are now closer, centred on leisure and working hours. The middle strata have always been the main beneficiaries of public services. By contrast, those who did not get in at the right time (by the 1970s – those who came too late have been identified as 'a sacrificed generation') or who have remained outside this system (some women, young people, those who have left the labour market early, immigrants, lone-parent families, unskilled people) may find themselves on exclusion trajectories, from which they run the risk of forming social groups of 'the excluded' in various European cities. Without stretching things too far, this second line of social demarcation could be described as status stratification, a term that traditionally relates to particular ways of life and to consumption possibilities recognized socially or through political guarantees. Setting aside the most industrial cities, medium-sized European cities have been and largely remain cities where these status groups have played a central role. From the 1970s onwards, evidence of this has appeared through urban social movements linked to public amenities, schools, and housing, complemented by research on issues of urban poverty and the process of exclusion.

These public sector middle classes and lower-middle classes have gradually gained influence in many European cities. A whole literature in political science has studied the decline of the working class as the main supporters of social democratic parties in the 1970s. The rise of the middle strata has translated into social movements, associations, and new political élites in social democratic and Green parties, particularly in cities (Sellers 2001), as well as into public policies.

8. Cities as Actors

The old European conception of self-governing urbanity implies that cities may be taken as collective actors. Max Weber famously emphasised what he saw as a distinctive characteristics of European societies, i.e. the medieval occidental city defined in terms of "sworn confraternisation" based upon a fortress, a market, bourgeois associations, specific rules in terms of land ownership and tax sometimes courts and armies (Weber,1978). Cities became institutionalised associations, autonomous and

autocephalous, active territorial corporation characterised by autonomy and capacity for action towards the outside (the lord, the prince, the state, the emperor, rival cities) and led by urban officials.

Later, in industrial cities, for instance in the UK but also in Germany, France, and Scandinavia, the scope of social problems became such that elites in urban government pioneered policy programmes in housing, planning, basic elements of welfare, education (de Swaan,1988) and hygienist and circulation concerns led to the "haussmanisation" movement of city rebuilding. Urban governments played a key role in providing basic utilities and services such as water, sewage, street lighting, later gas and electricity, firemen and transport not to mention slaughterhouse This development was diverse, fragmented, contested between a conservative petty bourgeoisie and the municipal socialism movement, and more consistent in the North of Europe than in the South. The rise of urban government was not just a local or national phenomenon. Exchanges of experiences of ideas for instance in planning and social housing were crucial.

In their classic comparative research, Goldsmith and Page (1987) have suggested that local government autonomy in Europe should be analysed in terms of autonomy through two major criteria which encompass or are closely related to other dimensions : legal status and political status. That analysis clearly stressed the differences between the welfarist northern European urban governments and the more political (sometimes clientelistic) Southern European urban governments.

Urban governments were contested in the 1970's and 1980's by urban social movements. The bureaucratization, hierarchies, urban regeneration projects, complex and fragmented decision making process of urban government were attacked in cities all over Europe. Conflicts entered the realm of urban politics in relation with housing, planning, large infrastructures projects, economic crisis and cultural issues. New groups, beyond class basis, organised to raise new issues (quality of life, democracy and participation, economic development and culture) to promote urban change against elected urban leaders. New middle classes were gradually incorporated within political parties (social democratic and green) and played an important role in many European cities to promote a new set of urban policies to deal with those issues. In the most radical cases, squatters in Amsterdam, Berlin or Copenhagen for instance, urban government politicians and officials learnt to cooperate or accommodate , to provide sources of funding and to try incorporate those groups in more loosely defined structure of governance (Mayer, 2000). Preventing large social conflicts and including various groups has become the norm for urban governments, although the long-lived squatters community of Christiania in Copenhagen remains a sore in the eyes of the national government.

Those movements and changing patterns of governing elites led both to structural changes and experiments in new forms of urban governments all over Europe. Most urban governments have initiated management reforms including neighbourhood councils and the decentralisation of services management as new mechanisms for citizen participation in decisions despite the twofold difficulty of giving up power and budgets (uneasy for councillors) and of sustaining citizen interests in running day to day business. Beyond the UK, market friendly ideas associated to "new public management" are having an impact in urban government, in particular in the North of Europe, marketizing but not necessarily reducing the northern welfare states. Issues of citizen participation in urban governments and governance are associated to growing issues of management efficiency in the delivery of services to customers (Heinelt and Kübler, 2005). The restructuring of the public sector leads to increased confusion in public policies and the fragmentation of urban governments, hence the growing interests for issues of leadership, management, coordination and governance (Borraz and John, 2003).

One can first notice the blurring of national frontiers and identify common modes of governance in groups of cities, usually articulated in part by national patterns. What is interesting in the European case is the attempt made by urban government elites to deal with increased fragmentation, to balance the politics of growth with social issues, to strengthen governments and processes of governance. Urban governments in most European countries have become more complex organisations, more fragmented, and to some extent, more responsive to the demands of local groups and neighbourhood but also more dependent upon firms and utility firms in particular. In other words, the issue of articulating urban government and urban governance in different ways is central. That attempt to bridge the gap between politics and policies and to define some collective urban interest is at heart a political process.

The ending 20th century saw a series of legislation strengthening the competence as well as the popular legitimacy, if less frequently the resources, of local government, and first of all big city government, first in Western and then, after l989-91, in Eastern Europe. This was a challenging time for local urban leadership, with pan-European de-industrialization and new still unsettled economic sectors rising fast, finance, tourism, information, entertainment. An impressive set of urban initiatives did ensue, which dramatically changed the townscape of many cities. How far they are socially sustainable and encompassing may be too early to assess properly.

Most crucially, various local actors, voluntary sector, organisations, firms, have engaged in various strategic planning exercise to enhance the collective capacity of the city. The increased legitimacy of political urban elites sustains and re-invents this presentation. European cities are still strongly regulated by public authorities and complex arrangement of public and private actors. European cities appear to be relatively robust, despite pressures from economic actors, individuals, and states (including welfare states) being reshaped within the European Union.

Beyond the relevance of the category “European cities” (Bagnasco, Le Galès, 2000, Le Galès 2002, for a debate see Kazepov, 2004), the updated Weberian perspective on studying cities has proved fruitful to understand medium sized cities. It suggests going beyond the fluidity of day to day interactions and encounters on the one hand, and determinist globalisation trends on the other (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000). Cities may be more or less structured in their economic and cultural exchanges and the different actors may be related to each other in the same local context with long-term strategies, investing their resources in a co-ordinated way and adding to the wealth of social capital . In this case the urban society appears as well structured and visible, and one can detect forms of (relative) integration. If not, the city reveals itself as less structured and as such no longer a significant subject: somewhere where decisions are made externally by separate actors.

This analysis suggests looking at the interplay and conflicts of social groups, interests, and institutions, and the way in which regulations have been put in place through conflicts and the logics of integration. Cities do not develop solely according to interactions and contingencies: groups, actors and organizations oppose one another, enter into conflict, co-ordinate, produce representations in order to institutionalize collective forms of action, implement policies, structure inequalities, and defend their interests. That perspective on cities highlights the informal economy, the dynamism of localized family relations, the interplay of associations, reciprocity, culture and ways of life, the density of localized horizontal relations, and local social formations (Saraceno, 2002; Kazepov, 2004).

European cities are collective actors in the making, (not to be reified) composed of a diversity of actors, groups, and institutions. The myth of the European city feeds the imaginary picture - and frequently the strategies - of European actors, but these cities are also diverse and riddled with conflicts. Anthropologists highlight multiple identities, the urban mosaic, the diversity of experiences. The city does not have a single will to act, and conflicts lie at the heart of the social and political dynamic. Some groups have no territorial base and are of little or no consequence to the city.

The term ‘actor city’ may lead to privileging instrumental rationality and a desocialized, depoliticized view of the world in terms of consensus and decision-making. Just like the common good of the state, the common good of a city is a fiction created and sustained by the actors at a given moment and expressed through strategic document, planning in particular (Pinson, 2008, Healey, 2007). Although the development of a common good for a city may enable collective strategies to be put into effect, it is also intended to reduce conflicts between the different social groups and organizations, even to impose an hegemonic plan – in the Gramscian sense – in the aim of legitimizing the domination of certain social groups, which develop an instrumental vision of unity in order play the game of competition between cities (Préceceille, 2000).

Cities are also social structures and institutions that guide actors’ anticipations, structure their interests, and influence their view of the world. Following the Italian sociologist of organizations, Pichierri (1997), five elements seem to be important in identifying a collective actor: a collective decision-making system, common interests (or those perceived as such), integration mechanisms, internal and external

representation of the collective actor, and a capacity for innovation. Moreover, Pichierri stresses that this type of collective actor is all the more relevant when applied to particuliar types of organization with '*legame debole*' and 'weak ties' - situations where there are weak hierarchies, strong interdependence, or strong autonomy, for instance a European governance in the making. Some of the problems of defining a collective actor are problems of a political order, of defining common interests and collective choices, of integration of local society, and of the selection and exclusion of actors and groups which are central within contemporary European cities (Kazepov, 2005, Perulli, 2007).

Coalitions are mobilised within European cities and pursue public policies. Several issues are central in the mobilisation of leading groups within different modes of urban governance in the making : competition between cities organised by the state or the EU (Brenner 2004), attraction of capital, visitors, public investments ; social policies, the making a of a common good, of getting various groups to live together ; security, police, control, surveillance ; urban renovation, and development, insfrastructure ; sustainable development.

9. The Impact of the EU

At a superficial level, the category "European cities" makes sense because those cities are part of a political union, the European Union, which has developed over time a set of powers, norms, representations, law, political elites, institutions, statistical categories which are progressively, unevenly, creating a multilevel polity within which cities have the opportunity to mobilise resources, to play with constraints, to develop their own strategies. The making of Europe goes together with a vast movement of reallocation of authority. The changing scale does not suppress the narrow legal and financial relations between urban government and nation states but include them within a wider set of intergovernmental relations, networks, interdependent bodies. Urban governments have to deal with an increasing amount of actors and policy tools (contracts and partnership for instance) together with more diverse networks and actors. The making of a European polity implies not just a more complex structure of vertical intergovernmental relations but also horizontal ones.

Networks of cities are flourishing in Europe, including policy best practices exchanges financed by the Commission, or old twinning arrangements modified in multi-dimensional cooperation between cities in Europe. In this multi-level governance in the making, the constraints imposed by the state are often lessened, urban governments tend to get more discretion (not always) but also a different set of constraints : "Multilevel governance processes are illustrated inter alia by : an increase in the density of interdependence; a redistribution of political resources; an acceleration of policy transfers; a diffusion of policy "ideas" between different level of authority: the emergence of new public policy instruments;

challenges to transnational policy styles" (Carter and Pasquier, 2005). The EU therefore sets new parameters, within which urban governance modes may be organized and are encouraged. The Europeanisation literature emphasizes the transformative process through which "EU styles, ways of doing things, and shared beliefs and norms" (Bulmer and Radaelli 2004) are becoming part of the logic of urban governance.

Looking at the meaning of the EU to cities in Europe one first has to deal with the general impact of EU integration and top down urban policies. A second perspective concentrates on the vertical and horizontal mobilization of cities within Europe.

In the first decades of the EU, the urban policy was a marginal issue. However the making of the common market and then the industrial restructuring of the 1970's put pressure on the EU to deal with some impact for cities in industrial crisis for instance through competition law (see Grazi, 2006). Regional imbalance was more central and the urban question emerged in the EU within the framing of regional policies and regional inequality, a perspective which fully came of age in the 1980's with the enlargement to the south and the inclusion of Portugal, Spain and Greece. Since the late 1980s, the urban question has found a place within a formerly reticent DG XVI (in charge of regional policy - now DG Regio). Studies were commissioned to provide some intellectual background, early experimental schemes were designed (Urban Pilot Projects, *quartiers en crise*) which progressively led to the URBAN programme, targeting cities in restructuration and promoting a transversal, partnership approach to urban renovation.

An urban coalition has gradually been organized, finding intermediaries among Commissioners, Member State representatives to the Commission, and in the Parliament. Despite DG XVI's reservations, German hostility, and early expressions of reservations by southern Member States, the URBAN Programme for the renewal of urban neighbourhoods started in 1994. The Commission then put out a paper entitled 'Towards a European urban agenda' (1997) and later issued the 'Agenda 2000' document, which proposed the reorganization of the Structural Funds. In this, the Commission reaffirmed the importance of cities, including in terms of legitimacy (cities as close to citizens, and as actors in the success of European policies), as well as the principles for action enshrined in the Treaties or promoted through policies: subsidiarity, partnership, social cohesion and economic efficiency, sustainable development, and strengthening the local capacity to act. The most important point to be established was the promotion of the transverse urban dimension within all European policies, including economic and social cohesion policy.

The Commission also produced a document entitled 'Europe's cities, community measures in urban areas' (1997), which has strengthened this dynamic. URBAN (1994-1999) is a Community Initiatives programme. The first phase included a budget of 880 million ECUs for 110 cities, including depressed neighbourhoods (Halpern, 2005). The URBAN programme has as its objectives: promoting local employment, revitalizing depressed neighbourhoods both socially and economically, providing social and other services, improving living conditions and the urban environment and public spaces, and improving

local strategies and decision-making processes so as to involve local communities. A second phase (URBAN II) included 70 projects between 2001 and 2006 with a budget of 748 million Euros.

However the enlargement of the EU was made with no increase of the EU budget and no substantial increase of the regional policy budgets when the need to deal with territorial imbalance became even more striking. The whole urban policy is being sidelined and it is loosing its momentum, resources and political support. The solution was to strengthen the urban dimension in a transversal way within regional and the rest of EU policy. According to the EU, the new regional policy for 2007-2013 (now dealing with 27 countries) has recognized the role of European cities as engines of growth and employment, but also as places of social inequalities and key sites for a sustainable development strategies. The EU is thus developing or reinforcing networks and organization to produce some intellectual framework for EU cities in Europe (ESPON project but also the Urban Audit), it will provide about 20 million euros for urban development over the period.

It is argued that the aim is to spend a third of cohesion policy money in EU cities, in particular in Eastern Europe. An urban dimension is put forward in all kinds of EU policy areas from competition law to transport, from the environment to employment. This new urban mobilization of the EU was symbolically marked by the signing of the Leipzig charter on sustainable European Cities and the making of the new ”Territorial Agenda of the EU”, both in the spring 2007. The Leipzig charter signed by 27 urban policy ministers designs a sort of ideal European city where cities are mobilized to deal with climate change, quality of life, youth unemployment, neigbourhoods in crisis and to become more attractive and competitive, with some emphasis put on the importance of city centres.

Cities are therefore mobilized by a weak EU policy to implement various policies and in particular the Lisbon agenda. In the process, many networks are organized, norms and categories are diffused (e.g., Partnership in urban renovation), ways of doing things disseminate, and competition between cities become more codified. Politically, cities are organized in different ways: they are parts of hundreds of European networks, most importantly Eurocities, to develop cooperation, exchanges of experience, and to lobby the EU. Although regions and cities are now sidelined in the governance of the EU, their representation is institutionalized within the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). A House of Cities was even opened in June 2007 (housing CEMR, Eurocities) to reinforce the visibility of cities interests within the EU. They tend to operate through the lobbying of MEP and the commission. All in all however, by contrast to the expectation of the 1990’s during the heyday of the Delors dynamics, the EU urban policy is not very significant.

However, indirect impacts of the EU, local mobilization and the diffusion of norms within EU networks are slowly having an impact on the ways cities are organized. The whole business of competition, benchmark and performance evaluation may not make much sense but it feeds the making of documents, of statistics, of categories which progressively unify, give some coherence to the EU political space. Magnier (2001), reports for instance that the strategic organization of large cities is more and more

influenced by EU norms deriving from interactions between urban elites. Some policies issues (like agenda 21) are also diffused through horizontal networks. A slow integration process is in the making.

A difficult question remains which is to assess the degree of Europeanisation from below which is achieved by all this city networks ad cross border organisations beyond the diffusion of norms, the making of European categories or the circulation of elites. As shown by N. Fligstein (2008), Europeanisation is first and foremost supported by the 15% who are the richest and the most qualified, able to take full advantage of the European construction. Providing robust evidence to support the view that all those city networks have had an impact has so far eluded social scientists and the EU commission alike. However, transborder cooperation or cities networks allow for the mobility of not just the elite but middle range local officials, representatives of the voluntary sector or cultural groups. In most European cities, the European circulation of groups and individuals is probably slowly giving roots to the bottom up Europeanisation. New bus routes and cheap flights connect Eastern European cities, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, with Western European ones, from Manchester to Madrid. In the first years of the eastern enlargement this new connectivity became a mass phenomenon.

However, this is only one part of a larger process including the circulation of students, tourists, immigrants, and that may not lead to further support for the EU as a political construction. In other words and in line with most of the work on Europeanisation, cities and city networks do contribute to a significant Europeanisation of elites and may pave the way for further developments, but one cannot, so far, identify a spectacular and enduring impact for the rest of the population, the less educated and the social excluded in particular.

10. Conclusion: The European City and Its Sustainability in a globalised world

Is there still something which may be called the European (type of) city? If so, what would be its current characteristics? And is it sustainable?

Our answer is rather positive: there still seems to something specific to European cities. And it looks sustainable for the foreseeable future. European cities make a fairly general category of urban space, relatively original forms of compromise, aggregation of interest and culture which brings together local social groups, associations, organized interests, private firms and urban governments. The pressures created by property developers, major groups in the urban services sector, and cultural and economic globalization processes, provoke reactions and adaptation processes of actors, including active public policies, within European cities, defending the idea of a fairly particular type of city that is not yet in terminal decline. The modernized myth of the European city remains a very strongly mobilized resource, and is strengthened by growing political autonomy and transverse mobilizations.

The robust characteristics of European cities include the long term meta-stability of the urban system, the role of public policies (including planning, land ownership and planning). Inheritance is central to European cities (Häussermann 2005; Häussermann and Haila 2005). On the less glamorous side, the relatively slow growth of Europe and its ageing societies are factors which contribute to the reproduction of this model of cities.

While individual rankings can differ from one evaluator to another, there is a widespread expert opinion, that together with cities of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, (i.e. part of the developed world) Western European cities provide the best urban environments, the highest quality of urban life in the world. US, other American, and Asian, and African cities are far behind in such rankings.

Table 3 The Ten Cities in the World with the Best Quality of Life in 2007

Zürich

Geneva

Vienna, Vancouver

Auckland, Düsseldorf

Frankfurt

Munich

Berne, Sydney

Source: Mercer Consulting (www.citymayors.com/features/quality_survey)

According to the same source, the best US cities, Honolulu and San Francisco, ranked 27 and 28, the best Asian cities, Singapore and Tokyo, 34 and 35. Paris was put on place 33, London on 39, and New York on 48.

Such rankings had better not to be taken too seriously, as they usually express some contingent selectivity. The style magazine *Monocle* (no. 15, July 2008), for instance, ranks the 25 “top livable cities” of the world differently, including three Japanese cities (with Tokyo as no. 3), Singapore, and three US cities (Honolulu, Minneapolis, and Portland, on rungs 12, 19, and 25, respectively).

But from different angles, the two lists converge on Western Europe. Thirteen of the top twenty-five on the *Monocle* list, and like the Mercer ranking seven of the top ten, are Western European, including the two “most livable cities” of the world, Copenhagen and Munich. In a new sense, Europe is still the city continent.

However, as emphasized above, pressures, tensions and conflicts are central to the urban dynamics of Europe: in many cities the integration of immigrants still raise opposition and political conflicts.

Urban riots, conflicts about Roma or gypsies, intolerance about foreign influence have not disappeared. Inequalities flourish and social housing is crucially lacking. The privatization of once public utilities is threatening one of the invisible mechanism of cohesion within urban areas. Gated communities appear, in southern and Eastern Europe in particular, raising questions about the durability of the urban fabric and the generalized surveillance within British cities reveals a lack of urbanity. European cities are not immune from pollution threats, virus dissemination, or financial crisis. Central state restructuring may put increasing pressure on their political capacity.

European cities are not obsolete or decaying. They are robust, legitimate, and politically strongly organized, with great capacities from a massive accumulation of social, economic and cultural resources. The uncertainty around the future of European societies and the European Union, increasing pressure of competition and market rules in particular, are bound to have some impact on European cities. But European cities are also world models. The current mayor of Seoul (Oh Se-hoon), for example, with an ambition to make his city into “one of the top four cities in the world”, formulated it thus in 2006: “The Seoul that I dream of is a city with economic strength like New York, culture and art like Paris, majestic beauty like London, fashion and style like Milan, and powerful landmarks like Sydney” (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2006:5). European cities are not only subject to globalization processes, they are also significant parts of them.

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