Urban Justice
Principles for a Just City Life and the Implementation of Change

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Abstract

Since 2007 more than half of the world’s population has lived in cities. The United Nations estimates that by 2050, more than 70 percent of all people will live in cities. In these accumulation points of social interaction a just way of life is of major importance for political philosophy in present times and the future. In this thesis the differences and roles of ideal and non-ideal theory will be discussed and two theories of justice will be introduced. Six principles for a just social life in cities will be presented. Not only social circumstances, but also spatial conditions are constituent for a just city life. Therefore, spatial requirements for just cities will also be analyzed. Besides the content of justice in cities, ways of implementing change are relevant for a just city life. In this thesis, three approaches to effecting change will be analyzed and evaluated. By discussing the example of high modernist planning in the twentieth century, one way of achieving change will be argued for.
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1 Introduction

Since 2007 more than half of the world’s population has lived in cities. The United Nations estimates that by 2050, more than 70 percent of all people will live in cities.  

Therefore, a just social life in these major accumulations is of great relevance for political philosophy. Cities are the places in the world where the greatest part of human interaction takes place. They are centers of political action and social relations. As Lewis Mumford wrote: “The city, as one finds it in history, is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community.” Thus, cities have great potential, but they also give rise to a wide range of conflicts.

As human interests conflict, there are many values which must be weighed against each other. For example, the values of privacy and security, of anonymity and community, of sustainability and comfort frequently stand in opposition to each other. It is a question of justice how differing interests are weighed and dealt with. Most people would agree that acknowledging a conception of justice is important. Justice is a central value for people living together, privately and politically – be it in villages, tribes or cities.

In philosophy there is a debate about the relationship between ideal theory and non-ideal theory. While ideal theory assumes strict compliance, non-ideal theory anticipates partial compliance. I assume that philosophy takes its starting point on an abstract level. It can be regarded as important that in ideal theory concepts can be developed without distraction by non-ideal circumstances. For everyday life implementation, however, non-ideal theory is of great importance. It allows us to come closer to just results in reality which, only relying on ideal theory, could not be obtained. I hold that it is crucial to have basic principles which a non-ideal theorist can rely on, but for people’s lives in the present circumstances, respectively in cities, non-ideal theory is a central issue. This thesis is situated in the area of tension between principles of justice in ideal theory and their implementation on the non-ideal terrain of the city. As an example of ideal theory John Rawls’ theory of justice will be presented, and as an example of non-ideal theory the Capabilities Approach will be discussed.

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To concretize the notion of justice in cities, at first, manifestations of injustice in cities will be considered. Then, principles for social city life will be introduced. The principles are liberty, which is a central issue for groups of people living together, fairness, which is also an important principle in John Rawls’ work, democracy, as a basis for political systems, non-discrimination, which is an important principle in areas where people of various cultures live close to each other, rule of law, which secures a safe life together, and respect for human needs in economic and political decisions.

Additionally to these principles, spatial requirements for urban space will be analyzed. Not only social mechanisms, but also spatial circumstances influence city life in regard to justice. It will be shown that architecture and spatial organization of city space have a direct influence on how people feel and perceive their surroundings. The spatial requirements for just cities will be discussed in sections on adequate housing, room for interaction, safety, traffic and transport, health, and sustainability.

But not only the content of strategies for creating just cities is relevant to the outcome; the processes which take place so that change is achieved are also debatable. In the latter part of the thesis three approaches to achieving change will be weighed and evaluated. First, the concept of revolutionary change promoted by urban geographer David Harvey will be presented. At its contrary stands the concept of self-curing cities advocated by Benjamin Barber. This concept can also be elaborated in an anarchist direction presented by Richard Sennett. On a middle ground between these two extremes Susan Fainstein and Nancy Fraser argue for reforms which alter a system from within, but have the potential to eventually change the system itself.

The final part of this thesis is a critique of urban utopias of the twentieth century. As the most striking example of high modernist architecture the city of Brasilia will be discussed. By analyzing this example it will be shown how principles of justice are relevant and I will argue that the way to effect change promoted by Fainstein and Fraser promises to be the most successful.
2 The Need for Ideal and Non-Ideal Theory

When theorizing about justice there are two levels on which concepts can be situated. Either on an ideal level, or on a non-ideal level. The Ideal level implies strict compliance, which means that participants in these theories of justice act exactly as they are supposed to, and the circumstances are assumed to be constant. Non-ideal theory, in contrast, factors persons being non-compliant and circumstances being inconstant and potentially difficult.

In philosophy there is a debate on the roles of ideal and non-ideal theory; especially since the publication of John Rawls’ theory of justice. Rawls makes very clear that he operates on the level of ideal theory because he finds it fundamental to every consideration about justice. Others, however, criticize this position and question the role of ideal theory.3

Ingrid Robeyns emphasizes the importance of non-ideal theories of justice. She compares ideal theory to a myth of a paradise island: we suspect it to be somewhere, but no one has ever been there, and no one knows the route to get there. Despite these insecurities, we dream of reaching it because it would be the perfect place to be – translated to ideal theory, it would be the place of perfect justice.4 However, as emphasized by Robeyns, this paradise island is only the endpoint of our journey, and no one tells us how to get there. It might be dangerous to try and take a direct route towards the destination. Similarly, she argues, it might be dangerous to draw guidelines for political action directly from ideal theory. For this task, it is noted that we need non-ideal theory which can guide us to a more just, or ideal, society.5

In the city the roles of ideal and non-ideal theory are debatable. The great amount of human interaction in urban areas and various other circumstances such as the allocation of space and the political organization of the area make the city a place full of complex systems and connections. Every-day life shows that non-compliance is prevalent rather than compliance. Thus, non-ideal theory is needed for organizing a just city life. But it is possible that city planning is guided by ideal principles none the less.

On the level of cities non-ideal theory is central because non-compliance is prevalent. Susan Fainstein relates different aspects of ideal theory which play together in forming values for a just city life. I also take the stance that ideal theory is the basis for non-ideal theory and

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4 ibid., 344–45
5 ibid., 345–47
can provide guidance. Nevertheless, I hold that non-ideal theory needs to be focused more intensely in questions of social justice.

Some theories propose to leave people to themselves in terms of justice because it will be attained naturally. I hold that it is important to agree on certain maxims of ideal justice to guide action. Following non-ideal principles alone would not necessarily lead to a just life. Human rights, for example, are needed in every society and not left open for debate.

As a proponent of an ideal theory of justice, John Rawls’ work will be presented. It was a milestone for the discussion of justice in political philosophy. The theory is highly praised but also challenged by philosopher Amartya Sen who occupies a non-ideal position regarding justice.

2.1 John Rawls’ Theory of Justice

“Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought”, John Rawls writes in his Theory of Justice. But what is justice, and how should it be furthered? These questions are difficult to answer, but vital for life in cities.

Rawls is of the opinion that every person possesses an inviolability founded on justice which cannot be overridden by the general welfare of a society. In his theory there are certain rights secured by justice which cannot be overruled. The liberties of equal citizenship are not to be subject to political bargaining. According to Rawls, injustice is only justified if it is necessary to avoid an even greater injustice.

In A Theory of Justice, Rawls elaborates how contentions which seem intuitive to him can be accounted for. Thereby, he focuses on two principles of justice. They are necessary to guide the assignment of rights and duties in society and to distribute benefits and burdens of social cooperation appropriately.

The main idea of Rawls’ theory is to abstractly generalize social contract theories. In his conception of a contract theory, the principles of justice are the object of the original agreement. They are what rational persons would accept in an initial position of equality in

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7 ibid.
8 ibid., 4
9 ibid.
order to further their interests, Rawls contends. These principles of justice regulate further cooperation. Regarding the principles of justice in this way is called “justice as fairness”. The situation of initial equality is, of course, hypothetical. It is assumed that, in this situation, all persons are under a veil of ignorance so that they do not know their class position, social status, intelligence, abilities, preferences and the like. Chosen in this initial situation, Rawls states, the principles of justice are fair.

In order to agree on certain principles in the initial situation, it is assumed that every person is rational in the sense of “taking the most effective means to given ends”. Given that nobody knows their social status, Rawls argues, the principle of utility would not be agreed upon because no rational agent would sacrifice herself for the overall well-being. In Rawls’ view, the persons in the initial situation would agree on two principles: firstly, equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties, and secondly, that inequalities of wealth and authority are only just if they lead to benefits for everyone, especially the least advantaged members of society.

Rawls proposes two principles of justice that he believes people would agree on in the original position. His first statement of the two principles reads as follows:

“First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.

Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.”

According to these two principles, social structure can be viewed as having two parts, one defining and securing equal basic liberties, and the other concerning social and economic inequalities. It is important to note that in Rawls’ theory, the first principle has priority over the second. The equal liberties of persons such as freedom of speech and of assembly, and the right to hold personal property cannot be violated in order to achieve greater social or economic benefits. According to this conception of justice, “All social values … are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution … is to everyone’s advantage.” It logically follows that “Injustice, then, is simply inequalities that are not to the benefit of all.”

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10 ibid., 10
11 ibid., 11–13
12 ibid., 53
13 ibid., 53–54
For urban areas the second part of the second principle is especially relevant. Rawls specifies the second part of the second principle as “the liberal principle of fair equality of opportunity”. The principle that everyone should have the possibility to reach the position they strive for, in Rawls’ interpretation, is not to be confused with careers open to talent. Rather, according to the principle, everyone should not only have formal access to the same positions, but also the same chance to attain them because otherwise one would be barred from the realization of the self.

The second part of Rawls’ second principle of justice is aimed at preventing social positions and natural endowment from having an impact on distributive shares. Therefore, Rawls states, free market arrangements must take place within a system of regulation which makes sure that everyone has the same opportunities. For example, education should be designed so as to avoid class barriers. Education is one of the fields in cities where social inequalities manifest themselves the most, as we shall see later. The principle of fair equality of opportunity in Rawls’ theory is combined with the difference principle; so he arrives at a democratic interpretation of his second principle of justice. The difference principle embraces that an unequal distribution is only just if it makes both parties better off.

How to arrive at a just distribution is shown by Rawls with a simple example: If a cake is to be shared between a group of people, the most just way to do it is to let one person cut it and let the others choose a piece before her. In this scenario, the person who cuts will size the pieces of cake equally in order to get the biggest possible piece herself. This task is assigned to the principle of equality of opportunity in a society; it ensures that the system of cooperation in a society is one of pure procedural justice. This conception of procedural justice seems to be very much in line with affirmative action measures as they exist for example in college admission programs.

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14 ibid., 73
15 Such an interpretation of the second principle would imply formal equality; this means that everyone has equal access to attractive social positions, without regarding natural capabilities and talents. Therefore, after some time, the natural endowments of people would fasten and a distribution would prevail which disadvantages the less fortunate (ibid., 62–63).
16 ibid., 63
17 ibid., 73
18 ibid., 63
19 ibid., 65–66
20 ibid., 74
21 ibid., 76
Rawls holds that inequalities reached by birth and natural endowment are not deserved and therefore should be compensated for. Accordingly, society must give special attention to less advantaged persons; be it because of their familial or social background or due to mental or physical disadvantages. The reasons for supporting the worse off are not only economic efficiency and social welfare, Rawls contends, but also to enable persons to develop a sense of their own worth.\(^\text{23}\)

2.1.1 Political Participation

Relevant for my thesis is the notion of political justice. What makes political procedures just? Rawls explains the meaning of his principle of equal liberty to the political procedure defined by the constitution. He calls it the principle of equal participation. This principle “requires that all citizens are to have an equal right to take part in, and to determine the outcome of, the constitutional process that establishes the laws with which they are to comply”.\(^\text{24}\) Rawls’ theory of justice includes an initial situation in which everyone is fairly represented. He transfers this notion from the original position to the constitution, the most important system of social rules for making rules. This fair representation implies that one person has one vote and that votes are weighted equally. Liberties such as freedom of speech and assembly are to be secured by the constitution.

Rawls discusses the principle of participation with regard to its meaning, its extent, and the measures that enhance its worth. Firstly, concerning the meaning, it is noted that each vote is to have the same weight, and therefore practices such as gerrymandering are not permitted. The meaning of the principle also includes that everyone has equal access to public office. If there are qualifications, they should fall evenly upon everyone, and not just a certain group of the population. Secondly, concerning the extent of the principle, the definition of political liberty is in question. Depending on the degree of authority of majorities, political liberties can be defined in several ways. Thirdly, the worth of political liberty lies in everyone having the same chance to participate. Now the question is how these fair liberties can be secured.\(^\text{25}\) It is crucial that those who have great private means are not permitted to control public debate and thereby gain a larger influence over the development of legislation. Political parties must be independent from private economic interests. In the past, far greater disparities in the


\(^{24}\) ibid., 194

\(^{25}\) ibid., 194–97
distribution of wealth have been tolerated than is compatible with political equality, Rawls underlines.\textsuperscript{26}

Rawls’ principle of equal participation is not absolute; there can be limits to it. It can be limited through removing certain liberties from majority regulation. It can also be limited in inequalities of political liberty. These inequalities must always be justified to those in the disadvantaged position; for example the greater protection of the other liberties would be a reason. For Rawls, equal participation is not only a means but also an end in itself. It lays the foundation for civic friendship because it makes people feel connected and recognize their own worth.\textsuperscript{27}

This feeling of community is helpful for the well-being of citizens in cities. In urban areas people live very close to each other, and still they sometimes feel isolated living in high rise buildings and barely knowing the people who live around them. A lack of opportunities for political participation can reinforce feelings of isolation. The right to participate in political decisions they are affected by Rawls assigns to people is a step towards a more just life in cities – places which should be shaped together by the persons who live there according to their needs. Political participation will be discussed below as a criterion for just city life.

2.1.2 Stability and a Well-Ordered Society

A well-ordered society, in Rawls’ view, is designed to advance the good of its members, and it is regulated by a public conception of justice. Thus, everyone in such a society accepts principles of justice which they know are also accepted by the others and are satisfied by basic social institutions. Rawls’ concept of justice is framed to accord with such a society.

One condition for a well-ordered society is that everyone knows that the principles of justice are widely accepted – they have to be public. The idea of a well-ordered society in Rawls’ theory is ideal. It is regulated by its public conception of justice. It is a precondition that the persons living in it have a desire to act as the principles of justice require. This precondition is not fulfilled in today’s cities, which makes it clear that Rawls’ contentions are situated on an ideal level. Upon this desire to act as the principles require depends the stability of a conception of justice, Rawls explains. A conception of justice must provide an effective balance of motives to further justice: the content of its principles must encourage people to act justly and make the motivation for just acts win out over unjust ones. The stability of a

\textsuperscript{26} ibid., 198–99
\textsuperscript{27} ibid., 200–206
conception of justice thus depends on the relative strength of the opposing tendencies. Urban environments provide numerous situations where motivation to act justly rather than unjustly is required.

Given that a conception of justice should be stable, moral psychology is relevant for its evaluation. Rawls aims to show that his own conception of justice “is likely to have greater stability than the traditional alternatives, since it is more in line with the principles of moral psychology.” Therefore, he sketches how persons in a well-ordered society acquire a sense of justice. The notions of stability and equilibrium are used by Rawls in an intuitive way in this context. By his definition an equilibrium is stable if external disturbances are followed by forces within the system being activated to reestablish the equilibrium. An equilibrium is unstable if changes within it lead to an even greater movement towards change.

Now, the basic structures of well-ordered societies must be evaluated in terms of stability for Rawls’ argument. The well-ordered societies we are speaking of are closed groups of persons in one nation. It is also important to note that in such a society the basic structures of institutions are just. They may change over time, but even if they change they remain just. For this to be granted, the moral sentiments of the society’s members play an important role.

At this point, Rawls explains how these moral sentiments are formed in his view. He highlights that there are two main traditions in this field of research. The first one stems from empiricism and is found in utilitarian theories. The main idea in this tradition is that moral sentiments are learned by training and parental influences in early years. The second one derives from rationalist thought and holds that moral learning is the free development of our innate, natural intellectual and emotional capacities.

Rawls does not explicitly defend one of these theories, rather he contends that “it seems preferable to try to combine them in a natural way”. In his discussion, Rawls lays out in which way moral development may occur in a well-ordered society so that the principles of justice as fairness are realized. Thereby, he distinguishes between the moralities of authority,

28 ibid., 397–98
29 This description of equilibrium and stability can be compared with the notions of vulnerability and resilience; an unstable equilibrium thus is socially vulnerable, whereas a stable equilibrium can be called resilient.
30 ibid., 399–400
31 This point refers to one of the boundaries of Rawls’ theory. An international application of the theory is not discussed here.
32 ibid., 401
33 ibid., 401–2
of association, and of principles. The aim of the argument is to show how moral psychology affects the choice of principles in the original position.

The first stage in moral development is referred to as morality of authority. It comprises things a child learns from its parents without being able to question or evaluate the parents’ authority.\textsuperscript{34} The second stage in moral development is the morality of association. Its content is given by the moral standards appropriate to an individual’s role in certain situations. Disapproval or approval is expressed by other society members or by those in authority.\textsuperscript{35} The third stage in moral development is the morality of principles which comprises the motivation to act according to basic principles of justice.\textsuperscript{36}

Particularly interesting for my discussion is Rawls’ account of the basis of equality. What is, in Rawls’ view, the basis of people’s equality? The bases of equality are “the features of human beings in virtue of which they are to be treated in accordance with the principles of justice”.\textsuperscript{37}

2.1.3 Equality and Envy

In urban areas social inequality between citizens can lead to envy. In his theory of justice as fairness John Rawls copes with this problem. An outbreak of envy, according to Rawls, can be due to three conditions: Firstly, persons lack confidence in their own value. Secondly, they are painfully reminded of their inferiority due to social structures, and thirdly, persons do not see any alternative to change their situation.

Many aspects of a well-ordered society defined by Rawls, he contends, avoid the declared conditions which lead to envy. Concerning the first condition, he writes, it is clear that even if there are differences in wealth, they are not attributed to moral desert. All people have the same basic rights, and they have feelings of civic friendship. Therefore, the less fortunate are supposed not to consider themselves inferior in a well-ordered society.\textsuperscript{38}

Concerning the second condition, Rawls contends that, first of all, the differences allowed between people are probably smaller than in other societies. In theory, Rawls’ difference principle permits large differences between persons as long as they also advantage the worse off. But in practice, the differences will not pass a certain level due to the prevailing

\textsuperscript{34} ibid., 404–5
\textsuperscript{35} ibid., 409
\textsuperscript{36} ibid., 414
\textsuperscript{37} ibid., 441–42
\textsuperscript{38} ibid., 469–70
background institutions. Also, Rawls points out, in a well-ordered society the visibility of differences between people is minor. The various associations in such a society divide people in numerous non-comparing groups. In addition, when persons from different groups meet, the principles of equal justice are acknowledged. Also, the better off would not show off their wealth. This point seems not to be granted in cities because different groups of persons live door to door and differences necessarily become visible. It is obvious, though, that the differences between groups are not too great in Rawls’ well-ordered society and that big differences are justified. A critical issue is that factors such as effort cannot be measured easily and therefore certain justifications may seem subjective.

Concerning the third condition, Rawls thinks that a well-ordered society offers alternatives to outbreaks of envy, even though rivalry is possible in any society. He sees no reason why other societies should fare better in this respect than a society shaped by justice as fairness. Having explained how envy arises, Rawls goes on to discuss equality with respect to envy. Some conservative writers, he contends, hold that the wish for equality is rooted in envy. However, in Rawls’ conception, envy is not the reason why principles of equality would be adopted in the original position: “the conception of justice is chosen under conditions where by hypothesis no one is moved by rancor and spite”. Also the content of the principles of justice and the nature of envy show that equality does not spring from envy.

There are conceptions of justice which rest upon envy, as Rawls states, for example that of strict egalitarianism. But the possibility of a form of equality based on envy does not affect his principles of justice. It only shows that, if people in the original position are assumed to be envious, such a conception of equality would be possible. A view like this, however, is not coherent for Rawls. Adopting such a view would mean believing that the social system is a zero-sum game – one person’s gain is another person’s loss. Only in such circumstances would justice require exactly equal shares for everyone.

There are two limits to the scope of John Rawls’ theory. As he contends himself, firstly, the theory is applicable only to a society conceived as a closed system which is isolated from other societies. Secondly, Rawls points out, his theory considers strict compliance rather than partial compliance theory – he assumes a well-ordered society. The reason why he

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39 A potential flaw of this principle is that almost no inequality is to everyone’s advantage as most changes have some negative side effects.
40 ibid., 470
41 ibid., 471–72
42 ibid., 472
works within ideal theory is that he thinks it is the basis for further reflections on non-ideal theory with only partial compliance.43

It seems that Rawls’ general principles of justice can sensibly guide non-ideal action and planning measures in urban areas. The principle of fair equality of opportunity is relevant for cities, for example, because most jobs are available in cities and many people of different age and social groups live there. The principle says that access to jobs and education must be open. This can be a guideline for the creation of a just city. Also, Rawls’ principle of equal participation is of central importance for cities. Persons should have the possibility to shape the city quarters they live in and be a part of the political processes in their surroundings. The concept of the “Right to the City” by sociologist Henri Lefebvre also refers to people actively creating the place they live in. It will be elaborated later in this thesis. Another part of ideal theory which can guide action for a just city life is Rawls’ principle of securing equal basic liberties. As in cities people live close to each other it is all the more important that they respect each other’s liberty. For concrete problems such as envy between citizens, however, I hold that non-ideal solutions must be sought, because Rawls’ well-ordered society does not exist.

2.2 Sen’s and Nussbaum’s Accounts of Equality

The difference between ideal and non-ideal theories of justice consists in what their aims are. While ideal theory aims at identifying what perfect justice is, non-ideal theory aims at finding ways to reduce injustice. As we have seen, John Rawls promotes principles of ideal justice because he holds that ideal justice is the foundation for any account of non-ideal justice. Amartya Sen disagrees with this view.

In his book The Idea of Justice Sen presents “a theory of justice in a very broad sense. Its aim is to clarify how we can proceed to address questions of enhancing justice and removing injustice, rather than to offer resolutions of questions about the nature of perfect justice.”44 Sen addresses flaws and critical points in Rawls’ theory. Firstly, he challenges that two unique principles are chosen in Rawls’ original position, regardless of the potential cultural differences between actors.45 Furthermore, the absolute priority Rawls gives to liberty is

43 ibid., 7–8
44 Amartya Sen, The Idea of Justice (London: Allen Lane, 2009), ix
45 ibid., 56
questioned\textsuperscript{46} and also the capabilities to use primary goods, when for example somebody is disabled, are thought not to be sufficiently considered in the theory.\textsuperscript{47}

Sen praises Rawls’ work as foundational for discussions about political philosophy, but sees it confronted with substantial problems which, he claims, address the core of the theory. One of these problems is the inevitable relevance of actual behavior. Further, Rawls’ choice to situate his theory within the contractarian tradition and his lack of global perspectives are challenged.\textsuperscript{48} Sen’s own approach to deal with the non-ideal circumstances in the world is based on human capabilities.

Justice is mainly about finding a balance of equality. As Sen points out, equality is a central element of all ethical theories. The crucial question here is: “Equality of what?” Utilitarians demand equal weight of utilities, income-egalitarians demand equal income, and welfare-egalitarians demand equal levels of welfare. Sen insists that the ethical debate is not about being in favor of equality or being against it, rather, it is about different specifications of equality. It is also central to note that a social theory requiring one variable of social life to be equal tend to be non-egalitarian regarding other social standards.\textsuperscript{49}

Besides this difference in specifying the variable of equality, a central point for the idea of equality is human diversity, as Sen points out. The inequalities between humans regarding social circumstances and characteristic differences are the reason why a strictly equal treatment of all persons would be non-egalitarian. Therefore, equal consideration of individuals can include very different treatment in favor of the disadvantaged.\textsuperscript{50}

Sen shows that being egalitarian is not a unifying feature.\textsuperscript{51} As mentioned above, all theories for social interaction are egalitarian in some point. Even Utilitarianism, which is compatible with unequal distributions as long as total utility is increased, is egalitarian in that it gives the utility of every person exactly the same weight. Thus, the form of equality one promotes must necessarily be clarified.

Following from the above discussion, the common understanding of equality as opposed to liberty is mistaken. Libertarians are often called anti-egalitarian because of the importance they place on liberty, and so-called egalitarian thinkers are supposed to be in contention with

\textsuperscript{46} For example: Is starvation less important than the violation of personal liberty?
\textsuperscript{47} ibid., 65–66
\textsuperscript{48} ibid., 67–71
\textsuperscript{49} Amartya Sen, \textit{Inequality Reexamined} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), ix
\textsuperscript{50} ibid., 1
\textsuperscript{51} ibid., 14
liberty. But Sen shows that equality can be a part of a libertarian theory because liberties can be attributed to all in the same way. He underlines that a contrasting opposition of the two concepts is faulty, as they are not alternatives: “Liberty is among the possible fields of application of equality, and equality is among the possible patterns of distribution of liberty.”

2.2.1 The Capabilities Approach

Answering the question “Equality of what?” Sen proposes a theory which is focused on the possibility for people to reach well-being: the Capabilities Approach. He regrets the ‘unattractiveness’ of the notion of capability and explains: “The expression was picked to represent the alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or be – the various ‘functionings’ he or she can achieve.” Functionings are the realization of a capability. For an example see below.

Martha Nussbaum also promotes the Capabilities Approach, which is relevant for all nations, not just poor countries: “All countries are ‘development countries,’ although that phrase is sometimes used to refer to poorer countries: every nation has a lot of room for improvement in delivering an adequate quality of life to all its people”, Nussbaum states. Her discussion begins with the question ‘What are people actually able to do and to be, and what real opportunities are available to them?’ The approach is based on choice and freedom: it is about options which societies should provide for their members, which can then be exercised if wished. The task which it ascribes to policy is to improve people’s quality of life.

Nussbaum differentiates between two sorts of capabilities: internal capabilities and combined capabilities. The former are things which a person has learned, for example sewing skills or language skills. The latter are internal capabilities which can actually function in the political or economic context. The two types are interrelated, but it is possible for either the one or the other to be denied. Internal capabilities are not to be confused with innate equipment, which Nussbaum calls basic capabilities. The Capabilities Approach holds that all persons in a society should get over a certain threshold level of combined capabilities.

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52 ibid., 22–23
55 ibid.
56 ibid., 18–19
57 ibid., 21–22
Therefore, persons with disadvantaged innate equipment, a handicap for example, are to be supported more intensely. The counterpart of capabilities are functionings: They are an active realization of a capability. Lying in the grass can be a functioning; it is the realization of a capability.\textsuperscript{58} Translated to urban areas, going to a park to play basketball can be a functioning because it is the realization of one’s capability to play.

Functionings are important in addition to capabilities, Nussbaum states, because existing capabilities which are never used would be pointless. Nevertheless, it is underlined, capabilities seen as freedoms have an intrinsic value. The emphasis on the value of capabilities as opposed to functionings makes clear that the Capabilities Approach values freedom and personal life-style choices – it values the capabilities people have to do something, not what they actually do.\textsuperscript{59} The only functioning (as opposed to capability) Nussbaum is ready to promote is treatment of people with respect and appreciation.\textsuperscript{60}

The Capabilities Approach elaborates which capabilities are the most important ones – the ones which a minimally just society should promote. Nussbaum explains that humans have many basic capabilities, that is, innate equipment, but that only some of it is valuable (for example, not the desire for killing). Here the question arises how the important capabilities should be selected. For this task, Nussbaum introduces the notion of dignity.\textsuperscript{61} “In general, then, the Capabilities Approach, in my version, focuses on the protection of areas of freedom so central that their removal makes a life not worthy of human dignity”,\textsuperscript{62} Nussbaum states.

Now the question is, what a life of human dignity requires. Nussbaum’s answer is a list of ten capabilities of which government must assure at least a minimum level. These ten central capabilities are: (1) life, (2) bodily health, (3) bodily integrity, (4) senses, imagination, and thought, (5) emotions, (6) practical reason, (7) affiliation, (8) other species, (9) play, and (10) control over one’s environment.\textsuperscript{63}

It is to be noted that the capabilities belong foremost to individuals, and only subsequently to groups. Even if persons identify with their nation, each person must be seen as an end: “The approach, however, considers each person worthy of equal respect and regard, even if people don’t always take that view about themselves.”\textsuperscript{64} Nussbaum underlines that each of

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 23–25
\textsuperscript{59} Nussbaum notes that, however, children are different in that one can require functionings such as compulsory education from them because this strongly influences adult capability.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 25–26
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 28–29
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 31
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 32–34
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 35
the ten central capabilities is important – an overflow of one of them cannot make up for the lack of another. This is the basic claim of Nussbaum’s account of social justice: every citizen must be placed over a specified threshold of capability in all the ten central capabilities because respect for human dignity requires it.  

Setting the thresholds for the Central Capabilities is a matter Nussbaum leaves to the different nations. Within certain limits they may vary according to the nation’s history and traditions. The levels chosen should be “aspirational but not utopian, challenging the nation to be ingenious and to do better.” Various cities can face different challenges in realizing the capabilities, depending on their circumstances. Political, economic and spatial structures certainly influence the realization of the capabilities.

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65 ibid., 35–36
66 ibid., 41–42
3 Principles for Just Cities

Justice as a basic concept can be applied universally; at any time and any place. But in given circumstances, there can be differing challenges regarding justice. For example, in cities there are different issues than in the countryside. Cities are accumulation points of social and political interaction; very dense settlements full of human life. The following section will present various challenges for justice in urban life. Despite the great variability of urban life certain criteria of justice are overarching.

3.1 What is a city?

There is no exact definition of the concept of cities, but there are several characteristics of the urban we can agree on. The United Nations mention in their World Economic and Social Survey 2013 that one must be careful when assessing and comparing facts about cities. This is because every Nation, for their surveys, adopts different concepts for the term ‘city’.

Kaplan et al. use a rural-urban continuum to define what a city is. On the two extreme sides of the continuum, everyone will agree upon what an urban area is and what a rural area is. However, in between the two poles, when rather small towns and villages are in question, the answer is less obvious. Central differences between rural and urban spaces lie in population density, population number, social, political, economic and cultural structures. No matter which threshold one chooses in population numbers and the other criteria defining a city, I hold that agreement on the two poles of the continuum is enough as a basis for a discussion about cities.

3.2 Manifestations of Injustice in Cities

At first, I would like to concentrate on the manifestation of injustice in cities, so that afterwards principles which further justice can be discussed. A large part of urban injustice consists in inequality among city residents concerning job opportunities, housing and social contribution. The inequalities may result in or arise from problems such as ghetto formation. Benjamin Barber has worked on six types of manifestations of urban inequality: housing,

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67 Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “World Economic and Social Survey 2013,” 54
68 Dave Kaplan, Steven Holloway and James Wheeler, Urban Geography, 3rd ed. (New York: Wiley, 2014), 18
transportation, jobs, security and crime, education, and access to nature. In the following, these types will be described and joined with concrete examples from London and New York out of Susan Fainstein’s analysis.

Let us begin with housing. Housing can be responsible for urban segregation and determines one’s access to nature, work, education, and so on. Therefore, political decisions made in regard to housing also influence other manifestations of inequality. Barber contends that it is necessary for equal housing to find “clean, affordable, and livable housing that does not extinguish street, neighborhood, and community” in order to make it possible for residents to embrace their quarters. It is also important that housing is not separate. Residential zoning is not to be endorsed, no matter how much money is spent on it. Equal housing requires a sense of community for all residents, Barber states. Also, architecture plays an important role in housing questions; Barber evaluates high rise buildings as not ideal for the feeling residents have for their surroundings.

An example by Susan Fainstein in her analysis of London including housing issues is the Docklands Redevelopment. In this project, an urban development corporation promoted investment in the mainly vacant Docklands of East London without having concrete plans in mind, but responding to initiatives from developers. The result was many new housing units for owner occupation. Formerly, only lower and working class people had lived in the area, and due to the departure of shipping and manufacturing jobs to modern port facilities, unemployment was high. Through the new housing units, the area became more diverse and inhabited by a mixed income group. Gentrification did not take place in a direct sense because initial residents were not displaced. Still, the original residents did not welcome the change and had preferred the “cultural domination by the long-established community of dockers and factory workers,” as Fainstein found out. She concludes that diversity is a desirable aim in a city, but the way to get there is fraught with pitfalls.

The next manifestation of inequality Barber introduces is transportation. The term “public transport” implies that this transport is available to everyone in the city to the same extent. In reality, however, schedules and routes of public transport clearly advantage certain residents and neighborhoods over others – for example, direct metro lines from slum areas to middle-class shopping malls practically do not exist. In this sense, the city is segregated

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70 ibid., 194
71 Susan S. Fainstein, The Just City (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 119
by lack of transportation facilities in some areas. As some slum areas lack transporting
stations altogether and the facilities are scarce, poor residents are hindered from travelling
to potential working places.\footnote{Fainstein, The Just City, 121 (My Emphasis)}

In terms of transportation, the London Docklands example is as relevant as in housing.
During the project, a company invested to build Class A office space in the docklands, an
area generally regarded as lower class and distant from central London. The company,
Olympia & York (O&Y), went bankrupt because only few firms were willing to settle in the
development. Fainstein puts this down to a transportation deficit: “Although the government
had paid a substantial sum to provide a road connection to the development, its refusal to
assume the front-end costs of putting mass transit in place before the complex opened meant
that there was no reliable way by which people could get to work. The consequence was that
firms were reluctant to occupy the development.”\footnote{Fainstein, The Just City, 121 (My Emphasis)}
This makes clear that accessibility by public transit is a decisive factor not only for people getting to work, but also for working
spaces to be successful.

Relevant to the topic of transportation as well, a noteworthy example was brought forward
by Edward Soja: The Bus Rider Case. This significant court decision concerning public
transport in Los Angeles took place in October 1996. A coalition of grassroots organizations
brought a class action lawsuit on behalf of those who depend on public transit for their basic
needs. It was resolved in an unprecedented consent decree. It was decided that the Los
Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) had to give their highest budget priority to
improving the quality of bus services and guaranteeing equitable access to all forms of public
mass transit. This decision was a major step after decades of discrimination against the
transit-dependent urban poor in LA. The outcome of the case which was called the Bus Riders Union (BRU) decision was extensive, as the MTA was required to purchase new environment-friendly buses, reduce overcrowding, freeze fare structures, enhance bus security, reduce bus stop crime, and undertake other changes to the benefit of the bus riding community. 800 jobs were created, and bus ridership increased.\footnote{Edward W. Soja, Seeking Spatial Justice, Globalization and community series 16 (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), vii-ix}

In a section about jobs, Barber states that employment is crucial to civic status – even more
important than voting. Employment is directly linked to public respect, as if working is a

\footnote{Barber, If Mayors Ruled the World, 195–97}
justification for voting. It is underlined that the existence of jobs alone is not a cure for inequality; it is well-paid jobs with prospects of longevity which promote urban justice.  

Critics of the office building development by O&Y mentioned above argue that the development would not even have worked if there had been public transport because the jobs in the high end office building were not suitable for the people living in the area. This shows that jobs alone do not help the problem of unemployment – it has to be adequate jobs for the unemployed, local population.

A further manifestation of inequality introduced by Barber regards security and crime. It is stated that poor people do not enjoy the same level of security as middle-class residents. Young men killed in gang fights scarcely get any media attention at all, while one or two persons killed in a rich neighborhood are a “medial inferno”. Downtown skylines and high crime-rate areas in the same city feel worlds apart.

In Susan Fainstein’s Analysis of New York City the example of Times Square Redevelopment is discussed. After the Second World War, Times Square was mainly characterized by drug dealers, prostitutes, and pornography purveyors. Middle class men and women did not, or only unwillingly, access the neighborhood. The government aimed at transforming the area into a sober business district. Fainstein contends that the redevelopment was an economic success, but it was not justifiable that great amounts of tax money flowed into the project, even to prestigious firms who actually were not dependent on low rent through subsidies. It was also unjust that small firms had to move out and make place for the project. An improvement would have been to construct more affordable housing in the district. All in all, it remains to say that the district is now more vivid; there are entertainment screens on the office buildings and a lot of popular entertainment facilities such as cinemas and themed restaurants. The buildings could be smaller and leave more open space for pedestrians, but still, one former drive-way was pedestrianized and equipped with seats. Critics of the development find that the place is now too orderly, but what changed is that former denizens of the area are still around, mixed up with a lot of middle class people. So, Fainstein concludes that the project has made the neighborhood more diverse. It has certainly reduced crime in the area.

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75 Barber, If Mayors Ruled the World, 197–201
76 Fainstein, The Just City, 121
77 Barber, If Mayors Ruled the World, 202–4
78 Fainstein, The Just City, 100–104
Also São Paulo is a city where crime and homicide have strongly decreased in the past years, especially in the first decade of 2000. In this case, the decrease was less due to urban construction than to other factors which Melina Ingrid Risso has presented. One of these factors is structural change in the military police. Residents of São Paolo are now allowed to participate in policing. They help, for example, to define the priorities in an area and report what the real situation looks like. The civil society is also allowed to participate through an advisory committee. Internal reforms have ensured that more resources are devoted to crime prevention and a further point which is thought to have strongly improved the situation is changes in police training. Police are now taught to make use of their firearms only as a last resort. Other factors which reduced crime in São Paolo are information technologies which can geo-reference incidents, and arms control.79

Education is the next manifestation of inequality addressed, and it is of great significance because education is crucial for economic success, and civic empowerment depends on education as well. It is known that the number of years spent in school have an impact on political participation. Barber underlines that the city has a special role in providing education facilities such as libraries, universities, and cultural institutions. He insists that these facilities must be public and free because they are vital for achieving democracy and justice.80

This seems to be an approach compatible with the notion Right to the City which can include a politics of research, promoted by Éva Tessza Udvarhelyi, which assures that research is accessible for everyone and prevents researchers from holding fast to the status quo.81 If everyone has the possibility to read, research and study for their own good, the city will be a more just place. In order to make this possible, not only educational facilities must be public and affordable, but employment for slum dwellers and transportation facilities and also the other components leading to just city life must be granted. It is not possible to solve the city’s problem by ameliorating a single point, because the city’s real sorrow is a whole net of problems, each linked to the next. For this reason it was argued in the beginning that ideal theory is not enough for the terrain of the city; non-ideal theory can lead to just solutions in complicated circumstances. The characteristic of the urban to be complex influences also the consideration of how one aims to effect change. It will be argued below

80 Barber, If Mayors Ruled the World, 204–5
that step-by-step solutions are necessary to react adequately to the circumstances in urban areas.

The last manifestation of urban inequality addressed by Barber is the access to nature by a city’s residents. 82 It is stated that this manifestation is less discussed as a problem of justice in the city, but Barber calls it a key to urban injustice. Elsewhere he contends that the western metropolises pull future residents into the city with a siren song of urban opportunities. 83 These future residents often have the potential to afford a middle-class life in the city and live in areas which have sufficient parks and green areas to make well-being in the city possible. In contrast, mega-cities in the third world have the characteristic not to pull potential residents into the city with special offers, but people are pushed off their land because of the economic impossibility of leading a life there. And these people will likely end up in slums with no single tree or lawn to improve air quality. Remarkable statistics discussed by Barber show that green space in cities is distributed very unequally: “In Los Angeles, for example, areas with predominantly Latino populations have 0.6 park acres per 1,000 population and areas with predominantly African-American populations have 1.7 park acres per 1,000, while white-dominated areas have 31.8 park acres per 1,000. High-poverty neighborhoods suffer the most: 300,000 young people in tracts with 20 percent or higher poverty have no access at all to parks.” 84

Susan Fainstein addresses one project relevant for the access to nature by city residents in New York City: The Battery Park City (BPC) project. It consists in a new complex of office and residential buildings near Hudson River and the Wall Street financial district. The project falls short in terms of democracy, as no citizens were involved in the planning. Its account of diversity and equity, Fainstein’s other two criteria of justice which will be discussed below, is not completely negative. The office buildings are linked to a winter garden open to the public and flanked by open space. The south end of the development is linked to Battery Park, a heavily used public space of Manhattan. When residents opposed the opening to maintain exclusivity, the authority nevertheless built the connecting walkway and thus supported equity and diversity. Even though Manhattan is not easily accessible to lower income residents of New York City, Fainstein observed that, on sunny weekends, a variety of users can be seen in BPC. 85

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82 Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World*, 205
83 ibid., 188
84 ibid., 206
85 Fainstein, *The Just City*, 96–98
3.3 Principles to Counteract Injustice

In order to mitigate the problems of injustice in cities discussed in the previous section, several principles for just city planning will now be introduced. The principles define reasons to counteract inequality, yet they do not propose a way to approach the issue to achieve change. The varying possibilities of achieving change by implementing all or some of the principles will be addressed afterwards.

3.3.1 Liberty

In liberal theories, individual liberty is a very important value for people living together. Libertarians make the protection of individual liberty the primary concern of the state. Anarchists do not even accept a state because it restricts people’s liberty. The problem here is that if there are no restrictions, some will be stronger and seize the liberty of others.

In Hobbes’ conception of the natural condition of mankind, interactions are likely to be risky. Hobbes holds that if there was no regulatory state, humans would try to rob one another and nobody would have the opportunity to live an orderly and comfortable life.\textsuperscript{86} In addition, I see it likely that Mafia-like conditions would arise without an official state being established.

If we stick with Hobbes’ conception of the natural state, some restrictions on personal liberty through a (democratic) government are justifiable. In Hobbes’ times, of course, an omnipotent ruler was imagined to be necessary in order to prevent chaos. But adapted to present times, Hobbesian contract theory can also be used to justify other forms of state governance, such as democracy. Kantian tradition proposes that a person’s liberty may be restricted only so far until it reaches the boundary of someone else’s liberty. This concept of minimal restriction serves to secure fairness between participants in a society. Also in Rawls’ theory fairness is a central value and liberty is a basic principle.

In his introductory work on liberty, Tim Gray differentiates between several conceptions of liberty: freedom as absence of impediments, freedom as availability of choices, freedom as effective power, freedom as status, freedom as self-determination, freedom as doing what one wants, and freedom as self-mastery. Furthermore, he introduces several ways of justifying a claim for freedom, and varying concepts for the measurement of freedom.\textsuperscript{87}


Gray argues that there is only one concept of liberty, namely “X is free from Y to do Z”, but that there are many value-laden conceptions of liberty; they are interpretations of the value-free definition of liberty (Gray uses the terms liberty and freedom synonymously). In the conceptions of freedom listed above, the former four have to do with the position an individual has in society, while the latter three concentrate on individuals’ psychological, inner workings. For this thesis, the former four conceptions of liberty are more interesting. The first conception, freedom as absence of impediments, was popularized by Hobbes and is a rather minimalistic conception of liberty. It says that someone is free to do something if there are no obstacles in their way. It is a negative approach and concentrates on what hinders liberty. The second conception, freedom as availability of choices, is more positive in that it emphasizes the Z factor rather than the absence of the Y factor. The third conception, freedom as effective power, focuses on how freedom can be realized rather than on formal freedom. It comprises not that impediments must be absent, but that they can be overcome. The fourth social conception of freedom is that of freedom as status. It views the individual as part of a group in society and concentrates rather on who one is than on what one does. It stands in contrast to the first conception which sees individuals atomistically.

Gray argues that it would be pointless to adopt one single conception of liberty as the “true” one, but that every one of the conceptions includes aspects of the concept with its many facets. As it is present in all plausible conceptions of justice, I take liberty to be necessary for a just city life. In cities, fulfilling the principle of liberty can take many shapes. For example, neighbors need to respect each other’s right to privacy. They have a right to make noise, but also a duty to their neighbors to keep quiet at certain hours. They need to take into consideration the liberty of others. City residents should also be free to dress as they like and pursue their own lifestyles. The government must not restrict individual liberty for unnecessary ends.

3.3.2 Fairness

Under the criterion of fairness I subsume what is required by social justice in terms of equality. Rather than equality of outcome, I hold that for urban areas equality of opportunity is more important. John Rawls has put great emphasis on equality of opportunity in his
theory of justice, as we have seen above. Not careers open to talent, but real equality of opportunity must be provided. This means that natural assets and brute luck are taken into account. What might and might not be considered as relevant for persons being responsible for their own situation, however, is another discussion. For example fairness in job application processes is one feature of a just city which has to do with fair equality of opportunity. The ideal principle of fairness is important to guide action on the non-ideal terrain of the city.

Also Susan Fainstein refers to Rawls’ ideal principles which can guide action in non-ideal circumstances. She introduces three criteria of justice in her book *The Just City*, one of which is equity. She uses the word equity instead of equality for several reasons: Equality would be too complex and unrealistic a goal to reach; and the policies Fainstein supports may not have sufficient scope to ensure equality. Another reason is that equity, in comparison to equality, is a better political strategic term than equality because it seems less aggressive towards the wealthy. Equity implies fairness and builds on a striving for greater equality.92

The account of fairness of urban geographer David Harvey stands in contrast to Fainstein’s notion of equity. Harvey points out that geographers generally use elements of location theory to approach location problems. As location theory builds on the criterion of efficiency, deliberations of social justice have not been part of geographical analyses.93 Harvey, in contrast, applies principles of social justice for his normative theory of spatial or territorial allocation. He does not, however, propose criteria of social justice as a replacement for the efficiency framework, but promotes both. This is because in the long run using only one of the two criteria would lead to deficient results: Focusing on efficiency alone would lead to the groups bearing the social cost being an inefficiency in the future, and pursuing solely social justice would lead to a diminution of the resources to be distributed. "In the long-long-run, therefore social justice and efficiency are very much the same thing", Harvey concludes.94

For his analysis Harvey lays aside questions of efficiency. He suggests three criteria of justice for city life. They are concerned with a just distribution of resources. The three criteria are: “need” as the most important criterion, “contribution to common good” as the second criterion, and “merit” as the least important criterion. Harvey defends them by situating them

92 Fainstein, *The Just City*, 35–38
94 ibid., 97
in a geographical context. The general definitions of the three criteria shall be presented briefly:

“Need – individuals have rights to equal levels of benefit which means that there is an unequal allocation according to need.

Contribution to common good – those individuals whose activities benefit most people have a higher claim than do those whose activities benefit few people.

Merit – claims may be based on the degree of difficulty to be overcome in contributing to production (those who take dangerous or unpleasant tasks – such as mining – and those who undertake long periods of training – such as surgeons – have greater claims than do others).”

Harvey contends that need is a context-sensitive value, and the minimum needs vary in different times. He seeks to establish a socially just definition and measurement system for it. He grants that in different categories such as health care or education varying methods for assessing need can be adequate. Contribution to common good, regarded as a spatial factor, concerns effects of measures in one region on another region. The effects can be positive or negative, pollution being an example of the latter. Thus, an allocation of resources which benefits other regions at the same time is preferable. The concept of merit, translated into a geographical context, refers to circumstances such as drought or flood posing difficulties to human activity. Extra resources can be allocated to endangered areas (but only if the other two, more important, criteria, need and contribution to common good, are fulfilled).

These three principles are supposed to be the foundation for a normative theory of spatial organization based on territorial distributive justice, but, they still need to be elaborated in detail and applied to concrete situations, as Harvey contends. In order to arrive at a distribution justly, Harvey underlines that it is necessary to make the prospects of the least advantaged territory as great as they can be. If this is fulfilled and the three listed principles followed, it results in what Harvey calls a “just distribution justly arrived at”.

Harvey’s first criterion, need, is similar to a distribution according to the Capabilities Approach discussed in the first chapter. It is intuitively right to distribute resources according to individual needs. His other two criteria, contribution to common good and merit, are more
controversial, they are open for debate. Maybe parts of these latter two criteria can be incorporated in the first one. It is not my aim to identify an exact definition of fairness which must be pursued in cities. I hold that a basic account of fairness must be pursued globally. Extensions and specifications of fairness may vary from town to town, always considering the present circumstances and never disrespecting human rights. Non-ideal circumstances can influence the local application of principles of justice.

3.3.3 Democracy

What makes cities just, many think, is the people who live there contributing to their organization. Several movements have had citizen participation as their goal, but most of them did not really offer empowerment for those in need of it, as is stated by researcher Sherry Arnstein.99 In her influential article *A Ladder Of Citizen Participation* Arnstein defines what citizen participation really is: empowerment of the underprivileged. Whenever participation processes do not lead to change, they are depressing experiences for those who participated, she argues.100

Susan Fainstein also advocates citizen participation; one of the criteria of justice she introduces in *The Just City* is democracy. Persons who live in an area affected by change should be involved in the decision-making process, Fainstein contends. She promotes participative deliberation because thereby local knowledge can be incorporated in the decisions and political mobility is encouraged.101

Theorists like Jane Jacobs and Richard Sennett also promote the power for city residents to change and create the city quarters they live in according to their preferences and needs. This quest for a right for city residents to shape their surroundings has quite a long history; and it is visible in the concept of the Right to the City. First popularized by sociologist Henri Lefebvre in 1968, the term Right to the City has been discussed in contexts of urban reflection ever since. Initially, the concept stands for a city created and constantly reimagined by its residents. Its primary aim is to serve the residents’ needs. The term Right to the City stands for dynamic collective life, solidarity, and significant human contact.102

Researcher Éva Tessza Udvarhelyi states that the concept of the Right to the City conflicts with the presently dominant reality of cities, which is ruled by economic processes,

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100 ibid.
101 Fainstein, *The Just City*, 24–34
102 Udvarhelyi, “Reflections on a Politics of Research for the Right to the City,” 386
privatization, and in which cities are themselves commercial products. Inequalities and suffering are meant to be overcome by the possibility of broad participation in planning and decision making – everyone should be able to participate in shaping and forming urban life.

Life in cities can have different forms: Lefebvre differentiates between the two terms habiting and habitat. Habitat is defined as an ideology which is imposed from above on residents of a city. Under this term, there is no room for residents to participate in the top-down planning process and in governing a city. In contrast, the term habiting refers to a communal and consensual solving of co-habitation conflicts by the residents themselves in a participatory and democratic process.\(^{103}\)

Peter Marcuse analyzes Lefebvre’s rather vaguely formulated concept of the Right to the City by raising three questions: whose right, what right, and to what city? For the first question, whose right, Lefebvre had stated that the Right to the City is a cry and a demand. Marcuse now defines this statement in more detail: it is a demand by those who are in need; the homeless, the hungry, or the persecuted on gender, religious or racial grounds. And, it is a cry by those superficially integrated into the system who enjoy material benefits but aspire to something more. The demand for basic needs should be first on the priority list, before the cry out of aspiration for creative activity and a fulfilled life, but both are necessary for a humane life. Marcuse uses the example of the Russian Revolution having arisen out of the demand for something more, and the fall of the Berlin Wall to be a manifestation of the cry out of necessity.

To the second question, what right, Marcuse answers that the Right to the City is a moral claim, founded on fundamental principles of justice and the good. It is not a legal right but many rights in one; the right to public space, the right to information and transparency in government and a right to access to facilities in the city. All of these rights are part of the complex of the Right to the City. This collectivity of rights concerns not only a legal but also a moral level.

Concerning the third question, what city, Marcuse states that Lefebvre has been quite clear about this in his work. He did not intend to define a right to any existing city, but to a future city which can evolve out of urban reality now. Concerned is “not necessarily a city in the conventional sense at all, but a place in urban society in which the hierarchical distinction between the city and the country has disappeared.”\(^{104}\) This is to say that the Right to the City

\(^{103}\) ibid.

\(^{104}\) Peter Marcuse, “From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City,” *City* 13, 2-3 (2009): 193
is not bound to geographical indications, but that anyone living on the globe has a Right to
the City, no matter where he or she lives. Given that Lefebvre’s concept was developed back
in 1968, he seems to have been a very progressive thinker; he must have seen globalization
coming.

The ideal city in Lefebvre’s sense, a city where aspirational and material needs are met,
might include justice, democracy, and the possibility for creative living for everyone
according to their potential and needs, and the recognition of human differences – these
concepts being incorporated in the pursuit of goals rather than aims in themselves. In any
case, the exact characteristics of such a city cannot be predicted in detail, as Lefebvre
underlined himself: such a city evolves out of the participation of its residents.105

David Harvey also notes that active participation is central to shaping the cities we live in,
and that pressure for change is not reserved to certain groups: “By confronting our situation
directly we become active participants in the social process. The intellectual task is to
identify real choices as they are immanent in an existing situation and to devise ways of
validating or invalidating these choices through action. This intellectual task is not a task
specific to a group of people called ‘intellectuals’, for all individuals are capable of thought
and all individuals think about their situation. A social movement becomes an academic
movement and an academic movement becomes a social movement when all elements in the
population recognize the need to reconcile analysis and action.”106

Udvarhelvi links the Right to the City to the right to research, which can ensure equal access
to information for everyone and therefore make co-habitation in a city more just. This will
prevent the status quo from being reproduced by dominant researchers and research being
defined by power relations.107 Democracy and citizen participation are fundamental values
in just cities. It is to be noted, however, that one must be careful with the outcomes of
deliberative processes. If, for example, only certain social strata take part in the process, the
rights of minorities might be ignored. Therefore, real democracy which acknowledges
everyone’s rights in the same way, must prevail.

Harald Stelzer also sees cities or city quarters as centers of participation. On the local level,
participation of residents is very helpful for just decisions because complex situations in
small areas must be evaluated for just political action. Stelzer emphasizes that nevertheless,

105 ibid., 189–93
106 Harvey, Social Justice and the City, 149
107 Udvarhelyi, “Reflections on a Politics of Research for the Right to the City,” 387–88
local decisions are subordinated under higher levels such as the city government and the
nation state. He also stresses that participation is not the solution to all problems: firstly, not
all citizens are inclined to participate in decision processes in the same way – they have
varying interests and also varying amounts of time and other resources which make political
participation possible. Secondly, deliberative processes may not be means enough to make
unjust structures more just. Ideal principles are necessary sometimes to guide non-ideal
action.

3.3.4 Non-Discrimination

Under the heading of non-discrimination I address issues such as segregation, cultural
diversity, open-mindedness, discrimination, tolerance, openness and inclusion. It stands for
impartiality towards different ethnic groups, personal styles of life, and preferences. It also
concerns the allocation of city space which should not discriminate against certain social
groups. I could have chosen the term respect instead, but non-discrimination seems to be
more plausible to be realized and less demanding.

It is necessary for justice to be granted in cities that people can move freely throughout the
territory without being discriminated against. Housing questions are tricky in this respect, as
poor social strata cannot afford housing in certain areas. This is where guidance from
principles of justice is necessary – we cannot leave city residents to themselves to solve
issues of this kind.

Not only housing questions, but also issues of education and access to jobs must not be
discriminatory for the principle of non-discrimination to be satisfied. The principle to
counteract discrimination introduced by Susan Fainstein in her book *The Just City* is called
diversity. She states that Marxism and Liberalism are criticized for treating individuals
atomistically and ignoring their social background. In the poststructuralist era, differences
became important and notions such as multiculturalism and cosmopolitism became popular.
Fainstein’s diversity criterion aims at mitigating ideal, as opposed to material, oppression.
When poststructuralist approaches are implemented too strongly, this can lead to problems
such as social division. Therefore, Fainstein promotes a combination of the aims for
distributive justice and the recognition of differences.109

108 Harald Stelzer, “Kann es eine "gerechte" Entscheidungsfindung in Städten geben?,” in *Mediation und
BürgerInnenbeteiligung: Konsensorientierte Verfahren im urbanen Bereich*, ed. Sascha Ferz, Hanna Salicites
and Stefan Storr, Forschungen in Appropriate Dispute Resolution Band 2 (Wien: Verlag Österreich, 2015),
20–24
109 Fainstein, *The Just City*, 42–48
The term diversity as a criterion of justice can be contested. Some prefer the word tolerance, but Fainstein thinks it has a paternalistic connotation. Diversity can also be challenged as an aim to reach, because it may be just a tool to reach equality. However, Fainstein takes diversity as a virtue, even if it is a lesser virtue than equity, especially in times of spatial mobility and many migrants moving to cities around the globe. Diversity as a virtue can also be argued for by claiming that it promotes creativity and therefore economic growth.\footnote{ibid., 67–69}

Even if we grant that diverse neighborhoods are valuable, it does not satisfy requirements of justice to forcibly relocate persons to obtain a mixture of cultures in all city quarters. Jane Jacobs holds that in order to make neighborhood relationships possible, time is needed. Persons are severely shaken if they are forced to leave their neighborhoods, even if they are ghettos, for renewal planning programs and the like, Jacobs contends. She asserts that neighborhoods have the capacity to absorb newcomers, but the displacements have to occur gradually. In order for people to stay in a neighborhood even if they change their tastes and occupations some time, neighborhoods must be as diverse as possible.\footnote{Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 137–39}

Non-discrimination towards other cultures, preferences and ethnic groups is an important part of just cities. It is the necessary foundation for respect among city residents and between residents and authorities. In every-day life the foundational principle of non-discrimination can be extended to tolerance and respect. Education and the possibility to get to know each other encourage people to tolerate each other. Cities as melting pots of many cultures are territories which combine both the need and the possibility for tolerance.

3.3.5 Rule of Law

Persons living in a just city must have the reassurance that there is a well-functioning, impartial police corps and other instances which protect the inhabitants’ rights. It is crucial that people can feel free when they move around the city, and even if they are in less secure neighborhoods, they need not fear to be left alone with their problems if something happens. When crimes are committed, there must be trust that punishment will take place and that the problems will be sorted out by an official authority.

Scholars belonging to the anarchist tradition such as Richard Sennett promote a city which is disordered in such a way that residents themselves are their own police force which sorts out conflicts. This picture of a city, however, does not allow persons to feel safe in city
quarters they are not familiar with. In order to fulfill the criterion of liberty, people should be able to feel free to move around the city. What Sennett might overlook in his anarchistic account of city life is that if there is no official police, illegal organizations such as gangs or mafias might arise. Therefore, it is more suitable to install a police force which restricts the residents’ liberty as little as possible.

Another value which must be protected by rule of law is privacy. Privacy can stand in conflict with other values of city life such as security. Therefore it is important that there are institutions which protect privacy and defend individual freedom. If an anarchistic account of city life is adopted, it is not granted that all problems are solved by the community, especially not those which concern only small numbers of people and do not incline others to care.

Thomas Bingham formulates the principle of the rule of law as follows: “The core of the existing principle is, I suggest, that all persons and authorities within the state, whether public or private, should be promulgated and publicly administered in the courts.” He grants that this principle ought to allow exceptions in certain cases. But it can also be summarized so that in a free country, “the law is king”, and there ought to be no other.\textsuperscript{112}

Bingham proposes eight sub-rules for the principle of rule of law: First, the law must be accessible to all, clear, and predicable. Second, questions of legal right should not be resolved by exercise of discretion, but by application of the law. This sub-rule is intended to ensure objectivity. Third, “the laws of the land should apply equally to all, save to the extent that objective differences justify differentiation.” It is clear that children ought to be treated differently than adults, but, for example, red-haired persons must not be treated differently than others, obviously.\textsuperscript{113} Bingham’s fifth sub-rule is that the means must be provided for resolving “bona fide civil disputes which the parties themselves are unable to resolve.”\textsuperscript{114} This rule addresses the feeling of unease when thinking of a society without a law one must obey – justice would be a very subjective matter there. Bingham’s sixth rule is that ministers and public officers must exercise their powers reasonably and without exceeding the limits of these powers.\textsuperscript{115} It seems clear that ministers must obey the law just like ordinary people. This sub-rule prevents corruption. His seventh rule says that “adjudicative procedures provided by the state should be fair.” This implies that the outcome of an adjudicative

\begin{footnotes}
\item[113] ibid., 69–73
\item[114] ibid., 77
\item[115] ibid., 78
\end{footnotes}
procedure should not depend on lawyers’ skills, but on the law itself. Bingham’s last sub-rule requires “compliance by the state with its obligations in international law”\textsuperscript{116} This last sub-rule may not be of prior importance for a just life in cities, but in general, it is crucial that there is a law and execution of the law that one can rely on. It contributes to a feeling of security for a valuable common life in cities.

3.3.6 Meeting Human Needs

This principle requests that just cities endorse human needs and ensure that individual needs are acknowledged and respected. Other than egalitarian theories which assume that everyone is the same, the social structures of just cities are required to react to special needs adequately. When a person has a disability, for example, an adequate health system should provide help for this person. Doorways to public facilities must be fit for accommodating persons sitting in wheel-chairs and parents with strollers. This request is supported by Rawls’ theory of justice which aims at mitigating the biological lottery and helps to grant everyone equal access to advantages. Ronald Dworkin is also a proponent of equality of resources\textsuperscript{117} which holds people responsible for their actions, but not for brute luck.\textsuperscript{118}

When public money is spent on social matters, like subsidies for families, it should be granted that the subsidies fulfill every family’s need in a similar manner, or that the differences are evened up in other ways. Sen’s and Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach explains how individual needs and opportunities are different, and therefore the same amount of support may have a different meaning to people.

Cities which meet human needs must consider their residents in all planning processes. City planning should not take place without citizen participation or at least taking into account citizen interests. The interests of investors must not overrule the purpose of city planning to further the interests of the humans who live there. Citizen participation is not only important for the creation of urban space which fits human needs but also for the principle of democracy, as is noted above.

Economic, political and social structures in cities should meet human needs. This goal is not only important for a just life in cities, but also for a safe life in cities. Blaike et al. point out that natural disasters are not always completely “natural”, but become disasters because of

\textsuperscript{116} ibid., 80–81
lacking underlying social structures. They show that sometimes disasters really have a purely natural cause: for example when a cloud of carbon dioxide gas bubbled up from a lake in Cameroon and killed nearly two thousand people in their sleep. This disaster could not have been prevented by improving any social or political structures, and poor and rich persons were affected alike. On the contrary, an earthquake in Guatemala in 1976 was called a “class-quake” because poor people and slum dwellers suffered the most destruction and many died. Blaikie et al. underline that the disasters caused by nature alone are very rare, and that in most cases the underlying conditions are the reason for a great part of the harm caused.

Media and popular interpretations usually focus on the natural causes of disasters, but Blaikie et al. state that the “manner in which assets, income and access to other resources, such as knowledge and information, are distributed between different social groups, and various forms of discrimination that occur in the allocation of welfare and social protection” are relevant factors which determine the impact of natural hazards. Many people are forced to live in earthquake zones or on the slopes of volcanoes, which makes them more exposed to natural hazards. But not only force of nature, but also problems caused by humans such as violent conflict are a great threat to people living in the affected areas or cities. A just city life with political, economic, and social structures which accommodate human needs is crucial for the well-being of city dwellers, and most important for a city’s sustainability.

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119 Piers Blaikie et al., *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People’s Vulnerability and Disasters* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 4
120 ibid., 9
121 ibid., 5
122 ibid., 3–5
4 Spatial Requirements for Just Cities

In order that just processes can take place in cities, the spatial circumstances must be able to accommodate them. Spatial circumstances are the basis for a just social city life. City planning should consider human interests and give more importance to them than to economic interests of investors.

The human dimension of city planning has been largely overlooked in the last few decades, states Danish architect and planner Jan Gehl. He points out that planning ideologies such as modernism have neglected pedestrianism, supported car traffic, and concentrated on single buildings instead of city space as an assemble of buildings, squares, and greens. Unfortunately, “The traditional function of city space as a meeting place and social forum for city dwellers has been reduced, threatened or phased out”, Gehl remarks.

The global challenges of the 21st century give importance to the concern for the human dimension in city planning, Gehl states. He thinks ideal cities must be lively, sustainable, healthy, and safe. For furthering all four of these criteria, pedestrianism and cycling must be encouraged to be integrated into daily activities. Thereby, urban quality is augmented. Also, by furthering health, the costs for medical care will drop, Gehl predicts. Since the main investments in promoting the human dimension of planning are consideration and concern, improvements are not very costly – on the contrary, they would even save money in the long run.

4.1 The Importance of Spatial Structures for Social Conditions

Changing spatial structures usually has effects on the social life taking place in the area. Jan Gehl underlines that after planners have shaped cities, the cities shape the persons who live in them. Thus, it is stated that more roads lead to more traffic, and vice versa, fewer roads lead to less traffic because people react to invitations. Moreover, city space which is inviting to spend time in is itself a creator of more city life. Therefore, car traffic and parking space in city centers should be made available to city users for walking or sitting. Copenhagen was a pioneer in changing city space in this way. By examples in Melbourne, where the center was revitalized with large sidewalks and trees, and Oslo, where a great number of benches

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124 ibid., 6–7
led to a great number of people sitting, Gehl shows that investments in invitations for people to spend time in cities are fruitful around the globe.\textsuperscript{125}

Wolfgang Meisenheimer, in a book about architecture and bodily reaction, states that our senses when we are looking at architecture always create impressions and feelings. There is no way of walking into or looking at a building without having some impression of unease, liberation, comfort or what so ever, he claims. Architectural space is a constructed atmosphere. For example, it is a carpet which creates a feeling of softness or warmth, the feeling does not arise by itself.\textsuperscript{126} A tension between narrowness and wideness is inherent to architecture and respectively city planning. Whenever we enter into or leave a building, this tension is notable. The way different buildings are arranged creates a certain impression of compression or expansion. According to cultural expectations in a certain area, Meisenheimer states, a high step may seem challenging and a low doorframe may seem humiliating, as the person who passes it must bend down.\textsuperscript{127}

An example of big distances between buildings are cities designed in the fashion of architect Le Corbusier, which will be discussed in the final part of the paper. They include very big buildings scattered in vast parks. In extreme cases, Meisenheimer contends, subjected to strong feelings of spatial compression or extension, people can develop illnesses like claustrophobia, the fear of narrowness, or agoraphobia, the fear of vastness.\textsuperscript{128} Modernist cities like Brasília might be exemplary for such an extreme case with their vast and deserted public spaces and immense buildings.

Planner Stefan Netsch differentiates between the two notions of urban planning and urban construction. The former is concerned with the social and spatial organization of a city. It must focus on sustainable land use and organize economic and ecological functions of a city. The latter is centered on city architecture: it works on the levels of buildings, open space, and infrastructure and aims to create coherent spatial structures. Urban construction is closely connected to architecture, while urban planning maintains a strategic view of the overall development of a city.\textsuperscript{129} Both of these dimensions of urban planning are relevant for questions of justice.

\textsuperscript{125} ibid., 9–17
\textsuperscript{126} Wolfgang Meisenheimer, \textit{Das Denken des Leibes und der architektonische Raum} (Köln: König, 2004), 18–21
\textsuperscript{127} ibid., 44–48
\textsuperscript{128} ibid., 48
\textsuperscript{129} Stefan Netsch, \textit{Handbuch und Entwurfshilfe Stadtplanung} (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2015), 11
4.2 The Profit-Problem of Urbanism

A necessary premise for justice in cities is that city space is justly distributed, so that spatial segregation does not prevail. Here I need to refer to the problematic fact that city planners do not have the freedom to act only with regard to city residents’ interests. Rob Krier rightly points out that a problem with city planning lies in the dependence of city planners on their clients. They can only plan what the investors find profitable. Similar to the media market, they serve two audiences: the consumers or city dwellers, and the financiers. The same problem is acknowledged by Wend Fischer who states that as long as private interests dominate urban planning, planners who want to serve the city residents are excluded.

Fainstein and Defilippis also discuss the ethical dilemma urban planners face: If they work for the private sector, are they still responsible to a large public? Planners in most countries must abide by a professional code of ethics. But it is problematic to stick to it when diverse publics and investors have differing interests. Additionally, planning for the future is always confronted with uncertainty. The discipline is not only concerned with technical activities, but is also confronted with social, environmental, and economic challenges. This multitude of values which sometimes clash has created tension within the field of planning and between planners and the outside world.

Josef Lehmbrock attributes fault to the architects when impracticable city structures are created only insofar as they are citizens partly responsible for democratic, political decisions. The non-political stance of most architects is the actual problem, he claims. Even if we grant that Lehmbrock is right, architects are certainly not the only culprits in this mechanism.

4.3 Spatial Criteria for Just City Life

As has been illustrated, spatial structures have a significant input on social conditions in cities. So that just city life can take place, just spatial structures must be provided. They need to evolve out of just processes such as participative planning – planning processes which

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131 Wend Fischer, “Zum Thema und zur Ausstellung,” in Lehmbrock; Fischer, Von Profitopolis zur Stadt der Menschen, 7
132 Susan S. Fainstein and James DeFilippis, “Introduction: The Structure and Debates of Planning Theory,” in Fainstein; DeFilippis, Readings in Planning Theory, 10–11
133 Josef Lehmbrock, “Von der Verantwortung des Architekten,” in Lehmbrock; Fischer, Von Profitopolis zur Stadt der Menschen, 9
incorporate the above introduced principles. The following aspects of just spatial conditions, once established, reinforce justice in social contexts.

4.3.1 Adequate Housing

If many persons are forced to live in certain areas, the allocation of city space is not just. Many problems of injustice in cities result in ghetto formation, and many injustices arise from the problem of ghetto formation. People living in slums or ghettos do not have adequate access to infrastructure and the benefits of the city. The free market seemingly gives equal opportunities to everyone – but not in reality because through the free market, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. An old saying cited by David Harvey says: “There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals”. 

As Benjamin Barber points out, more than half of the world’s population lives in cities. In well-developed cities only 6 percent of the inhabitants live in slums. On the contrary, in cities in poorly developed countries 78 percent of the inhabitants live in slums. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) defines a slum household “simply as a ‘group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area who lack one or more of the following:’ durable housing, sufficient living space (not more than three per room), easy access to safe water, adequate sanitation, and security of tenure (no forced evictions)”, as is remarked with concern by Barber.

David Harvey also addresses the problem of ghetto formation. He notes that, following a theory elaborated by Alonso and Muth, urban land use is determined through a process of competitive bidding for the use of the land. It is assumed that employment takes place in the city center and that central housing is more expensive than suburban housing. If the population is split up into one rich and one poor group, according to this theory, the poor population is forced to live in the more expensive area near the center in overcrowded conditions because it cannot afford the transportation costs to get to work otherwise. On the contrary, the rich group can afford the higher transportation costs and therefore can access relatively inexpensive housing. If the rich group changes its preferences, the theory shows, poor populations have to adjust and, for example, walk great distances to work, as is actually the practice in some South American cities.

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135 Barber, If Mayors Ruled the World, 178
136 ibid., 179
Considering the rapid suburbanization of employment in the United States since 1950, one would assume that the low income employees would have moved to suburban areas, close to their working place. However, this has not been the case due to exclusive residential zoning in suburban areas.\textsuperscript{137}

Urban inequality is in most cases affected by segregation. Sadly, it is still linked to race in American cities, as is shown by statistics in Barber’s book; the greatest part of people living in poverty is Black, Latino, or American Indian population. Part of the reason may be segregation, because segregation is a common feature of urban inequality. It can be mitigated by initiatives such as gentrification for integration. But one has to be careful because segregation can be veiled as gentrification in the name of integration, which actually allows market forces to push poor residents out.\textsuperscript{138}

A just housing situation is a central spatial requirement of justice in cities. The home is the starting point for peoples’ everyday life, and disadvantages in this regard carry a great weight. Rawls’ theory of justice as fairness seems to require a just housing situation as well. A just way of transportation for everyone in cities is linked to the housing issue, and together they form a big part of urban spatial justice.

4.3.2 Room for Interaction

One of the criteria Jan Gehl requires for cities which are suited for human life is that they are lively. A city which Gehl defines as lively enables people of different social groups to interact by using public space. He states that life in public places is a vital urban attraction. People enjoying a place send a certain signal – similarly, places void of life signal that something is missing. Therefore, the size of squares must not be too big so that people do not get dispersed. Furthermore, various functions should be combined in one area.\textsuperscript{139} In the last chapter of this thesis we will see that modernist city planners failed to provide spaces for interaction and therefore were strongly criticized by theorist Jane Jacobs and others.

When city space allows it and, additionally, the weather is good, many social contacts take place. They are important for the well-being of humans, and also enhance the possibility for residents to be innovative and creative. Direct contact with others, and also watching and perceiving others in their daily life can be very enriching for people. As Jane Jacobs shows, the failure to provide public space which invites interaction is a core fault of modernist city

\textsuperscript{137} Harvey, \textit{Social Justice and the City}, 134–36
\textsuperscript{138} Barber, \textit{If Mayors Ruled the World}, 186–89
\textsuperscript{139} Gehl, \textit{Cities for People}, 63–67
planning. As will be illustrated in the last chapter, the streets and buildings in modernist cities did not allow for social interaction and spontaneous contact between residents because traffic was planned exclusively for automobiles and housing units were too big to show any personalized elements. It follows that social interaction largely takes place only in spatial conditions which allow for it.

Street corners, little cafés and bars along the streets, and benches for sitting down, further face-to-face relationships. The importance of spontaneous relationships must not be underestimated, because they are significantly different from organized contact. In high modernist architecture, as will be discussed later, social contact through meetings in private apartments was foreseen. But this was shown not to be able to substitute for casual contact with, say, the shopkeeper downstairs, who, in these plans, was replaced by exclusive shopping areas.

Spontaneous social interaction in cities mostly takes place in public space. Public space is divided by Netsch into streetscape, open space (parks and public places), and water areas (lakes or rivers). He emphasizes that public squares have changed their uses in the course of time. In medieval times, market squares buzzed with city life, whereas in the 1960s many such places were converted into parking lots, as automobile traffic increased. Today, the market and leisure functions of such places are often revitalized.

In the historical development of cities, green areas within the city were generally not needed. The city was a compact whole bordered by city walls. As cities were not as big as they are today, it was easy for residents to reach the countryside. Since cities grew a lot bigger, green spaces now are a vital part of urban space. Cities have expanded spatially, and the border between city and countryside is no longer clearly demarcated. As leisure space, parks in big cities such as Hyde Park in London or Central Park in New York are relevant recreational areas, places for social encounters and cultural events for city dwellers. Historically, parks were not always accessible to the public; they were reserved for the nobility. Since the industrial revolution most parks in city centers are publicly accessible.

Not only parks, but also waterfronts are often places which invite people to gather. We can find water in cities in three manners: punctual, linear, and extensive. Punctual water is frequently found in ponds with sometimes great importance in cities; think for example of

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140 Netsch, Handbuch und Entwurfshilfe Stadtplanung, 107
141 ibid., 115
142 ibid., 125
Fontana di Trevi in Rome. Not only ponds, but also rivers and lakes in cities can be used as recreation spaces, given that the infrastructure is planned accordingly.\footnote{ibid., 131}

Many waterfronts in cities have formerly been used for shipping and industrial purposes. These waterfronts have a great potential for urban renewal, as is shown by Elizabeth Macdonald. They can be transformed into promenades and recreational spaces. Sometimes, only very narrow parks fit between the city buildings or highways and the waterfronts, but since the water, the greenery and the promenade provide a calm setting, waterfront promenades are strongly frequented by city residents, Macdonald points out. She provides examples of such promenades in New York City, Charleston, Lisbon and San Francisco.\footnote{Elizabeth Macdonald, Urban Waterfront Promenades (Taylor & Francis, 2017), 112}

4.3.3 Safety

Jane Jacobs, in her critique of modernist planning, focuses on the issue of security in urban areas. What makes sidewalks safe, she argues, is not the presence of police, but the presence of other people. Jacobs thinks that the impression that suburban settings and a thin population further security is mistaken. What makes sidewalks safe is described by Jacobs in three characteristics: first, what is public space and what is private space must be demarcated (as is often not the case in suburban areas). Second, there must be eyes on the street (the buildings along it must be oriented towards the sidewalk, they must not turn blank sides to it and “leave it blind”). And third, the sidewalks must be continuously frequented so that there are more eyes on the street and watchers have a reason to watch.\footnote{Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, 35}

Jacobs emphasizes that it is not police who grant security on the streets, but a network of people living there. As many strangers live in big cities, as opposed to towns, and many people come to cities just for a day or two, maintaining security is a challenging problem. Jacobs calls it a wonder that cities have resolved such a complex problem and do excellently in a great number of streets.

How do cities do this? Jacobs contends that persons living in a city and well-meaning strangers passing through do not monitor the city because of their duty to police – on the contrary; they enjoy using the streets. They do not necessarily have to act, but just their being there and observing makes the street safer. In order that they enjoy participating in street life voluntarily, shops, restaurants and bars are there and contribute to security. They give people reasons to use the street and also reasons to pass dull passages of streets – in order to get
somewhere else. In addition, shopkeepers have a high interest in maintaining security around their enterprise so that customers are not discouraged.\textsuperscript{146}

The problem of crime in dull gray areas of cities is made comprehensible by Jacobs’ example of the corridors in high rise apartment buildings. These corridors in the building resemble streets as they are accessible to the public, but are not surveilled as there are no windows facing the corridors and no bars or shops animating people to spend time there. Crime and vandalism are found there frequently. The buildings “have been designed in an imitation of upper-class standards for apartment living without upper-class cash for doormen and elevator men”, Jacobs contends.\textsuperscript{147}

Without doubt, the presence of other persons in the streets is an important factor augmenting neighborhood security. However, the claim that only other people being present are responsible for sidewalk safety, I believe is mistaken. As was mentioned in the section on rule of law, the knowledge that there are police who sort out problems if needed seems to be important, especially if cities are big and there are great numbers of strangers and tourists wandering through the districts every day.

Not only safe sidewalks, but also traffic safety is an element city planners must take into account in order to further justice in cities. A safe city is characterized by Gehl by two sectors: traffic safety and crime prevention. In the second half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century car traffic hugely increased. Especially when infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians is insufficient, fear of accident increases and walking and biking become less attractive. Consequently, spaces reserved for pedestrians and cyclists are needed.

\section*{4.3.4 Traffic and Transport}

The distribution of city space to different kinds of traffic is a matter of justice between residents. Netsch delineates three types of traffic in a city which all require special attention in the planning process: public transport, motorized traffic, and non-motorized traffic (cyclists and pedestrians).\textsuperscript{148} All these types of traffic require different spatial conditions. Of course, motorized traffic occupies the biggest amount of space compared to the other types, including multilane streets and parking lots. One should, therefore, cautiously plan for the different kinds of traffic in a city, and assign priority to one or the other traffic type. If

\textsuperscript{146} ibid., 35–37
\textsuperscript{147} ibid., 42
\textsuperscript{148} Netsch, Handbuch und Entwurfshilfe Stadtplanung, 39
ecological sustainability is to be furthered, non-motorized and public transport should be given priority in city planning.

In an exposition about city planning in 1971 it was stated that cars use 80% of the space while they are only 45% of traffic participants, as the below table shows.¹⁴⁹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic type</th>
<th>Participants in %</th>
<th>Used space in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrians</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobiles</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that pedestrian and cyclist traffic and public transport together occupy much less city space than automobile traffic does. The numbers in the table may differ from city to city and from year to year, but it is clear that non-motorized traffic and public transport occupy less space and, very importantly, are also more sustainable. A just distribution of space to the types of traffic therefore requires greater consideration of non-motorized and public transport. The Capabilities Approach and Rawls’ principle of equal opportunity can be reconciled with this quest for a fair distribution of space to different types of traffic.

Jan Gehl claims that in cities there is exactly as much traffic as space would allow. Thus, more parking space and more roads lead to more traffic and more congestion. The equation works also the other way around, as this example shows: in San Francisco an important freeway to the city center was destroyed by an earthquake. However, it proved necessary to reconstruct it in the same way: traffic had found other ways around. The destroyed street was replaced by a city boulevard with trees and sidewalks. Similar examples of changes of big streets are known in several other cities. This shows that city dwellers adapt their means of transportation to the spatial structures and infrastructure found in cities.

The City of London likewise found a way to reduce car traffic in the city center: it introduced a fee for vehicles driving in to the center – the so called “congestion charge”. The result was a decrease in car traffic of nearly twenty percent; when the fee was increased traffic decreased even further.

¹⁴⁹ Josef Lehmbrock and Wend Fischer, eds., Von Profitopolis zur Stadt der Menschen (München: Die Neue Sammlung, 1979), VIII/5
Copenhagen is a city which especially invites inhabitants to go by bike. There are numerous biking lanes and special traffic lights which turn green six seconds before the cars’ lights to enable safe crossing. Also here the wholehearted invitation to cyclists has changed patterns of use and cyclists have doubled in only ten years. In 2008, already about forty per cent of journeys in Copenhagen were accomplished by bike.\(^{150}\)

These examples show that there is much left to do in order to improve just allocation of space to various types of traffic. Encouraging non-motorized traffic and public transport by building cycle lanes and pedestrian zones, improving the public transport system and reducing costs for public transport has many positive results: it improves health, it is sustainable and ecological, and it saves money in the long run.

4.3.5 Health

For humans to be able to lead a just life in cities, it is important that they are able to preserve their health. Sanitation, access to drinking water, access to nature, and adequate housing are central health requirements. Bodily health is one of the ten central capabilities in Martha Nussbaum’s approach.

Dieter Oeter, in an essay on social medicine and urban development, addresses the question of health in various types of apartment buildings. He explains that British researchers have found that families living in multilevel apartment buildings are more prone to disease than families living in terraced houses with small gardens. The children living in terraced buildings tend to play outdoors more often, and the mothers with small children living in multilevel buildings often feel isolated. It is odd, the author notes, that in buildings where people live in flats close to each other, the need for anonymity seems to increase. Row houses seem to be better in furthering social contact among neighbors.\(^{151}\)

Oeter also points out that it has been found that multilevel buildings pose bigger disease dangers: a case in a German hospital shows how a virus was transmitted from the first level to the highest level of the hospital. As hot air rises through staircases and elevator shafts, the virus was transported all the way through the building. High rise buildings in cities also create air currents on sidewalks which pose health risks. Oeter acknowledges that in city centers, there must be high rise buildings, but they should be used for offices and hotels instead of apartments. The education of children, he insists, is healthier in houses with

\(^{150}\) Gehl, Cities for People, 9–17  
\(^{151}\) Dieter Oeter, “Sozialmedizinische Ansprüche an den Städtebau,” in Lehmbrock; Fischer, Von Profitopolis zur Stadt der Menschen, 209
gardens, as is housing because the immediate accessibility of the street and the garden extends the living space of families – parents can call their children whenever needed and vice versa.\textsuperscript{152}

It might not be possible for every family in a city to live in a house with garden. Nonetheless, Oeter’s input can be acknowledged in planning apartment buildings. Even settlements taking up only little amounts of space can be planned so that they have only four stories and terraces, for example. Moreover, every school, especially for younger children, should have a garden so that nature can be a part of daily life.

Another challenging problem for urban planning and health is the health burden caused by traffic. Noise as well as air pollution are causing various diseases, risk of accidents and psychic stress. Oeter points out that the lack of space in city centers could be mitigated by banning private automobiles from them. The costs which are caused by private automobile traffic when it is forcing public transport underground because there is not enough space on the surface are imposed upon the users of public transport, he contends; the construction of metro tunnels is very costly.\textsuperscript{153}

As mentioned before, parks are a central need of city dwellers. Besides providing vital recreational areas, parks and trees have important functions such as improving air quality and reducing traffic noise. They also have a positive impact on wind and water conditions and cool down the temperature in cities.\textsuperscript{154}

What Jan Gehl finds striking about health and city planning is the growing problem of obesity. The reason lies in food consumption, but also in cars being the most popular means of transport, stairs being replaced by escalators and elevators, and a lack of adequate city space for walking and biking. As physical activity is not necessarily included in people’s daily life any more, many exercise in fitness centers, which have become a new business. Exercise has become an extra point on the daily schedule. Thus, many do not have the time, devotion, money, or energy to exercise regularly, and risk being confronted with obesity or other health problems. In this respect, city planning can have an important impact on people’s health. This potential should be acknowledged and actively used for improving the condition of city dwellers.

\textsuperscript{152} ibid., 209–10
\textsuperscript{153} ibid., 213–14
\textsuperscript{154} Alois Bernatzky, “Ohne Grünflächen und Bäume sterben die Städte,” in Lehmbrock; Fischer, \textit{Von Profitopolis zur Stadt der Menschen}, 217–21
As in the last decades car traffic was prioritized in planning culture, planning healthy cities requires a change in the basic transport concepts of cities. Quarters must be designed so that walking distances are short and functions are compactly arranged. Space dimensions must be smaller than in conventional planning. Gehl takes Venice as an example of a good city for walking; cars have never been introduced there. He suggests that life is most important in planning, then comes space, and last come buildings.\(^{155}\)

Lack of access to nature is a manifestation of urban inequality which was mentioned above. The spatial requirements furthering health in cities aim at mitigating manifestations of inequality such as this. Besides spatial requirements which further health, like adequate housing and sanitation, access to water and access to nature, of course, mental health must be secured by a mixture of the other principles for just cities introduced above.

4.3.6 Sustainability

As the world’s population is increasing rapidly and more and more people move to cities, the concepts of urban areas urgently need to be revised and pushed in the direction of sustainability. But this term is far from unambiguous. Different people have different visions of the sustainable city. As human desires differ, so do the visions of a “good”, sustainable city. There are various conceptions of the sustainable city, but none of these conceptions is likely to be realized in total and globally in the future. Rather, it will be a composition of different elements of these theories in various areas.

Tim Hall names the differing concepts for sustainable cities as follows: global city, competitive city, electronic city, edge city and creative city.\(^{156}\) These notions are similar to the concepts Höffler et al. present: They speak about the energy self-sufficient, technocratic, growing, compact, connected, and post-growth city.\(^{157}\) Crucial differences which can be perceived when comparing the concepts lie in the role of the economy for the sustainability of a city. While some approaches promote economic growth as vital for the notion of sustainability, other ideas acknowledge that economic growth leads to an increased consumption of resources, which is not what most people connect with the term

\(^{155}\) Gehl, *Cities for People*, 111–15

\(^{156}\) Tim Hall, *Urban Geography* (London: Routledge, 1998), 158–64

\(^{157}\) Matthias Stier and Lars Berger, eds., *Die nachhaltige Stadt*, Initiativen zum Umweltschutz 89 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2016), 17–27
sustainability in general. Harald Kegler proposes a thinking independent of growth altogether in order to avoid ideological traps.\textsuperscript{158}

Social components are acknowledged only in some concepts, whereas others concentrate mainly on the reduction of CO\textsubscript{2} emissions and modern technologies. The concept of the creative city, for example, focuses on a social aspect of sustainability. It promotes small businesses and interaction between age groups. Practices such as urban gardening serve to become more independent from the countryside in food production and also to strengthen the social bonds between city residents.

Sustainability in city development is easily quested for, but difficult to define. Scott Campbell identifies three priorities which planners must take into account and which are in conflict: Sustainable cities are supposed to be green, profitable, and/or fair. But environmental protection, social justice, and economic growth can be in conflict with one another. Planners can show a preference for one of these values in their concepts, or take a middle position. Campbell defines sustainable development as a balance of all three values.\textsuperscript{159}

In this chapter I focus on spatial aspects of justice, and therefore the reduction of pollution and sustainable city planning are central. Jan Gehl proposes an easy way to take a big step towards sustainability: designing cities for people, and not for cars. By introducing bicycle lanes and pedestrian streets several functions are realized at once: people have the opportunity to enjoy city life because security is higher and the air quality is better. A social setting of comfort can be created through the absence of automobiles. Of course, the public transport system must also be improved in order to make it easier for people to travel without private cars. The invitation to pedestrians and cyclists Gehl proposes automatically leads to a more sustainable city, as transport is responsible for massive energy consumption and pollution. Besides causing less pollution and consuming less energy, pedestrian and bicycle transport take up a lot less city space than car traffic. Providing bike lanes and pedestrian streets is a modest investment suited to improve city space all over the world.

Not only sustainable transport, but also social sustainability is an important part of just city life. Gehl points out that social institutions must work in a way which attracts people of all social groups into city space. Withdrawal into gated communities does not further justice in

\textsuperscript{158} Harald Kegler, \textit{Resilienz: Strategien \& Perspektiven für die widerstandsfähige und lernende Stadt}, Bauwelt-Fundamente 151 (Gütersloh, Berlin, Basel: Bauverlag; Birkhäuser, 2014), 154


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the city: in socially sustainable cities everyone interacts by using the same city space, which thereby becomes socially diverse. Consequently, people develop an understanding of each other. The principle of equal political participation introduced in the section on John Rawls can help develop such an understanding for each other. Also, the Capabilities Approach can be seen as furthering social sustainability because it reacts to individual needs.

An important characteristic which a sustainable city must have is resilience. It can be defined as the ability to cope with challenges and problems and to recover from them. It is the ability of a city to recover from spatial and social catastrophes. Therefore, it is vital for a city’s survival. The term resilience could be confused with sustainability itself, but I hold that sustainability must have a certain content which resilience does not need to have – it can be seen as securing sustainable situations.

As this thesis is about justice, concerning resilience, the question is relevant whether social inequalities can diminish a city’s resilience. The social domain of sustainability is especially concerned here. There might be danger in technocratic sustainability concepts as they may individualize city residents. It is vital, I believe, that technological developments are oriented towards social stability and their implications for social life are taken into account before being introduced.

A city which lacks resilience is vulnerable. Blaikie et al. provide a simple definition of vulnerability: “being prone or susceptible to damage or injury”. They also refine this definition in regard to natural hazards: “By vulnerability we mean the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard (an extreme natural event or process).” Consequently, a negative influence on these characteristics would result in vulnerability. At the same time a positive influence on these characteristics results in greater resilience.

In contexts of urban justice, several factors can make a city more resilient, for example a well-functioning political system. A city can also be more vulnerable through factors such as ghettoization. A city can be more sustainable if it reduces factors which further vulnerability. The spatial and social aspect of resilience and sustainability go hand in hand and cannot be wholly separated in an analysis of justice in urban areas.

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160 Gehl, Cities for People, 105–9
161 Blaikie et al., At Risk, 11
5 The Implementation of Change

The previous chapter treated the spatial requirements for a just city. Now I will discuss how these requirements can be realized. Fainstein and DeFilippis think there is a gap between planning theory and practice. If there was no gap, planning education would be irrelevant. But if the gap was too big, planning education would be redundant. They see planning theory located at the intersection between political economy, history, and philosophy.\textsuperscript{162}

Different planners use varying means to achieve their ends. Depending on the approaches, for example revolutionary change, step-by-step implementation, or self-curing cities are promoted. David Harvey promotes the first, Susan Fainstein the second, and Richard Sennett the third strategy. In this section, these conflicting views will be discussed and compared.

As an illustration, utopian planning projects in the twentieth century will be presented and criticized in the next chapter. The analysis will show how principles of justice have been neglected and strategies of city planning have failed in history. Thereby, a conclusion will be drawn regarding principles and ways of implementation for just cities.

5.1 Different approaches

Not only the content of principles of justice, but also the means to reach the aspired ends matter in the quest for a just city life. The approaches promoted by scholars from diverse disciplines are manifold. In the following, three different approaches to the realization of change will be introduced.

5.1.1 Revolutionary Change

David Harvey thinks that distribution cannot be altered durably if the capitalist market mechanisms stay as they are. He maintains that “programmes which seek to alter distribution without altering the capitalist market structure within which income and wealth are generated and distributed, are doomed to failure”\textsuperscript{163}. Changes within the capitalist system, for example measures aimed at mitigating the ghetto problem, such as providing transport facilities enabling ghetto residents to get to suburban employment, are, in Harvey’s view,

\textsuperscript{162} Susan S. Fainstein and James DeFilippis, “Introduction: The Structure and Debates of Planning Theory,” in Fainstein; DeFilippis, Readings in Planning Theory, 3–4

\textsuperscript{163} Harvey, Social Justice and the City, 110
“liberal in that they recognize inequity but seek to cure that inequity within an existing set of social mechanisms”\textsuperscript{164}. Harvey proposes to seek more revolutionary solutions.

By a revolution in science, Harvey means in fact the shift of a paradigm. If the old paradigm has faults, it is ripe for overthrow.\textsuperscript{165} In order to develop a new, revolutionary theory, scientific pride must be left aside. The useful elements of the old theory must be incorporated in the new one,\textsuperscript{166} Harvey contends.\textsuperscript{167}

Harvey points out that social science is dependent on the existing social relationships. Therefore, revolutionary theories can only be accepted if the social relationships are realized in the world. Once they are accepted, social change occurs. However, proponents of the existing system might want to stop revolutionary theories from being accepted. Therefore, there are also counter-revolutionary theories which aim at dealing with “a revolutionary theory in such a manner that the threatened social changes which general acceptance of the revolutionary theory would generate are […] prevented from being realized.”\textsuperscript{168}

On the basis of the problem of ghetto-formation, Harvey shows what a revolutionary theory would look like: it would attack the conditions which give rise to the problem. He argues that there is “good reason to believe” that “it is the competitive market mechanism which is at fault.”\textsuperscript{169} Empirical evidence must be used to develop “powerful patterns of thought”. There must also be new elements in the theory.\textsuperscript{170}

In his discussion Harvey briefly acknowledges that action is also important for revolutions to take place: “Further, the emergence of a true revolution in geographic thought is bound to be tempered by commitment to revolutionary practice. Certainly, the general acceptance of revolutionary theory will depend upon the strengths and accomplishments of revolutionary practice.”\textsuperscript{171} He grants that a revolutionary theory “must ultimately be replaced by a real social movement”.\textsuperscript{172}

Harvey’s view that there must be at first a new theory and then revolutionary practice is controversial. It cannot be the case that change can only be performed after a sophisticated

\textsuperscript{164}ibid., 136
\textsuperscript{165}ibid., 128
\textsuperscript{166}ibid., 145–46
\textsuperscript{167}It can be argued that, however, this is also what step-by-step concepts suggest: to adopt what was preferable in the old situation and change what was deficient.
\textsuperscript{168}ibid., 125
\textsuperscript{169}ibid., 139–43
\textsuperscript{170}ibid., 145–46
\textsuperscript{171}ibid., 146
\textsuperscript{172}ibid., 150
theory has been developed. This approach also suggests that achieving change is a very long process. Harvey writes: “By examining questions such as these, we can at least begin to evaluate existing theory and in the process (who knows?) perhaps begin to derive the lineaments of new theory.”\textsuperscript{173} Step-by-step solutions are open to quicker reactions to acute problems of contemporary society.

Harvey adds that the division of knowledge in disciplines serves to perpetuate the present state of society and leads to a reproduction of the status quo. The division of scientific disciplines hinders the development of revolutionary theories. Existing scientific theories reinforce the status quo or are even counter-revolutionary. They justify existing situations or divert from really important issues. Interdisciplinary research is more likely to become revolutionary, but it would still be better to think in non-disciplinary terms.\textsuperscript{174}

Harvey differentiates between three kinds of theory: Firstly, status-quo theory, which aims at reinforcing present situations. It ascribes a universal truth status to its propositions and leads to a perpetuation of the status quo. Secondly, counter-revolutionary theory, which usually seems attractive but obscures our understanding of reality. And thirdly, revolutionary theory, which he thinks offers real choices for the future and makes it possible to create truth rather than to find it.\textsuperscript{175}

In given situations a theory can shift from one class to another. For example: a revolutionary theory perverted to a counter-revolutionary state, or stagnation of a revolutionary theory due to failure of adaptation to new circumstances – thereby becoming a status quo theory. The tasks of revolutionary theory, according to Harvey, are to expose counter-revolutionary theory and give status quo or counter-revolutionary theories real content and use them to confront actual choices.\textsuperscript{176}

Harvey’s concept of revolutionary change is questionable. It seems implausible that a new theory must be developed and discussed before we “perhaps” have a chance to change the present situation. I agree that the theory underlying a mechanism takes time to change and a great number of individuals contribute to this process, but I hold that action can change circumstances and thereby lay the foundation for a new, revolutionary theory.

\textsuperscript{173} ibid., 146
\textsuperscript{174} ibid., 147–49
\textsuperscript{175} ibid., 150–51
\textsuperscript{176} ibid., 151–52
The step-by-step approach, which will be introduced in the following section, deals very differently with solving problems because it does not require whole new theories in order to make changes. It is not confronted with the problems Harvey’s theory is confronted with because it is more practicable.

5.1.2 Step-by-Step Solutions

Concerning the debate about revolutionary versus incremental change, Nancy Fraser distinguishes between the two notions of affirmative and transformative change. While the former refers to changes which are produced at the level of outcomes within a system, the latter refers to changes which are effected at the level of the system itself.

This distinction clearly is connected to the differentiation between incremental and revolutionary change. However, Fraser underlines that the two notions concern the level at which change is performed: “This distinction is not equivalent to reform versus revolution, nor to gradual versus apocalyptic change. Rather, the nub of the contrast is the level at which injustice is addressed: whereas affirmation targets end-state outcomes, transformation addresses root causes.”

Fraser contends that transformative change would be preferable in theory, but that it is not practicable. Therefore, she argues for the via media of “nonreformist reform”. With this notion she means changes which appear affirmative but in the long run effect transformative change. They are thought to alter the terrain to make greater change possible in the future and to combine the advantages of both affirmative and transformative solutions.

Susan Fainstein is in agreement with Nancy Fraser that it is possible to change a system if one addresses injustices within it. Also to me, it seems plausible that a structure can change more easily over time if its content has already changed. Of course, the leeway for changes to be effected must be great enough, so that innovation is possible and the status quo is not reproduced.

The above argument challenges the concept of revolutionary change. Karl Popper, in his critique of historicism, also argues for step-by-step solutions. He uses his own notions to distinguish between the sort of change which he finds plausible and the sort of change he rejects; he calls them piecemeal engineering and utopian engineering. He describes the task

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178 ibid., 72–80
of a piecemeal engineer as follows: “he does not believe in the method of re-designing [society] as a whole. Whatever his ends, he tries to achieve them by small adjustments and re-adjustments which can be continually improved upon.”

A central aspect to piecemeal engineering is that mistakes can be corrected while we learn from our experience. “The piecemeal engineer knows, like Socrates, how little he knows. He knows that we can learn only from our mistakes. Accordingly, he will make his way, step by step, carefully comparing the results expected with the results achieved, and always on the look-out for the unavoidable unwanted consequences of any reform”, Popper explains.

What Popper calls holistic or utopian social engineering does not acknowledge the limited knowledge and experience of humans in the same way. It aims at remodeling society as a whole according to a predefined plan. Popper contends that piecemeal methods can lead to a change of the class structure of society and that the main difference between piecemeal and utopian engineering is the point of view about changing society. Popper argues that utopian engineering always ends up as a clumsy form of piecemeal engineering because of unforeseeable changes in the circumstances. Thus, he declares piecemeal engineering to be better because it can react more systematically to changed circumstances.

James C. Scott is in agreement with Popper that it is impossible for us to make reforms without making mistakes. He underlines that we must acknowledge the fact that we cannot know what will happen in the future, and therefore, it is best to undertake change by taking small steps. His conclusion is based on examples of the high modernist era which he classifies as tragedies. He draws certain rules from this experience: “One might, on the basis of experience, derive a few rules of thumb that, if observed, could make development planning less prone to disaster.”

One of these rules of thumb proposed by Scott is to take small steps. This is suggested because we cannot know the consequences of our actions in advance. It is wise, in Scott’s view, to “prefer wherever possible to take a small step, stand back, observe, and then plan the next small move.” The other rules Scott suggests are to favor reversible interventions, to plan on surprises and thereby leave room for the unforeseen, and to anticipate the human

180 ibid., 67
181 ibid., 64-69
183 ibid.
inventiveness of those who work on the project later.\textsuperscript{184} Scott also underlines that in many high modernist plans, unfortunately, the knowledge of the local population is not incorporated in the concepts for renewal and creation of environments.\textsuperscript{185}

5.1.3 Self-Curing City

A third and even less authoritarian approach in cities is to leave them to themselves and let them cure their problems, or not. The scope of official authority practiced in cities according to different approaches varies, but they have in common that cities are not controlled by a state.

Benjamin Barber models such a solution to problems of inequality. He insists that the city is not a hopeless case, as some argue pessimistically. He supports the view that the city has the seeds for its own regeneration in it – that inequality can be mitigated by urban characteristics such as mobility, creativity, and innovation. He does not give a lot of credit to “universal measures addressed to global market forces”, but instead focuses on “the self-correcting features of urban life”\textsuperscript{186}. He argues that cities are too dependent on higher powers – they are subordinated to the central government of the nation. Therefore, cities do not have the sovereignty to cure problems, they only have the possibility to mitigate. Mayors do what they can do, and Barber argues that sometimes they act more actively than national governments. In Copenhagen, Mexico City and Rio, he underlines, mayors did what nations had failed to do: they signed carbon reduction protocols.

Barber builds his quest to give cities and their mayors global influence on two pillars: that fairness can be achieved through urban traits such as creativity, and that democracy itself can be used as a key to address defects in democracy. He suggests for cities to cure themselves.\textsuperscript{187} Barber claims that the inequality debate treats issues of capitalism and socialism too ideologically. This approach does not yield the practical solutions he is seeking. Especially in cities, he states, pragmatism is in demand and a short time of counseling necessary. He thinks we can best learn from best practices and a “glocal” approach to issues of inequality can and must be found. With the word “glocal”, a fusion of the global and the local is meant, as it is found in cities where government is local, about neighborhood democracy, but also global, about universal urban issues.

\textsuperscript{184} ibid.
\textsuperscript{185} ibid., 352
\textsuperscript{186} Barber, \textit{If Mayors Ruled the World}, 216
\textsuperscript{187} ibid., 216-24
Barber compares the city today to what historically America has been to Europe. But how can injustice be overcome? Barber’s suggestion is that flaws in democracy can only be cured democratically. He mentions the example of the Occupy Wall Street movement as a case where democracy was reviewed and points of view were changed – the movement resulted in a new understanding of democracy as more than just voting.

Examples of this kind relate to the exercise of the right to the city. Éva Tessza Udvarhelyi has also described several cases which contributed to a new understanding of democracy, for example, the Critical Mass bike rides which take place once a month in cities all over the globe. On this occasion, cyclists move around a city in a big crowd to enjoy their urban liberty, but also to raise awareness about police brutality. The cycling crowd has often been subject to police brutality, which was closely documented by the bike riders.

Informal economy has the potential to overcome radical inequality and foster mobility, Barber states. Bringing practices outside the law within the circle of legality is what prevents the poor from expiring. Barber’s vision is that best practices are found and shared between cities in a cooperative digital cloud.

Richard Sennett also proposes that cities can cure themselves, and that they do not need regulation from the state. He counts himself as a proponent of the anarchist tradition. What he promotes in city life are the uses of disorder: he sees a surplus in structures which force city residents to solve problems by themselves – thus, they do not need police to take action. Sennett gives weight to a feeling of community that people need in cities. He argues that in many new housing units this is what is missing, and that some people feel more at ease in ghetto environments than in anonymous, new buildings. What he thinks needs to occur in cities is “a change in the peculiar institutions of affluent city life, in order to create new forms of complexity and new forms of diverse experience.” The institutional change Sennett seeks includes three elements: First, the persons who plan and lead the city will become more diverse; they will not regard the city as a whole but actually know

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188 ibid., 217
189 ibid., 225
190 Udvarhelyi, “Reflections on a Politics of Research for the Right to the City,” 383–85
191 Barber, If Mayors Ruled the World, 228
192 ibid., 233–37
194 ibid., 144
195 ibid., 11–13
196 ibid., 82
something about the quarter they live in. Second, political reputation will become less important. And Third, family intensity will be weakened; as the strong social milieu of the family is supposed to hinder diversity.\footnote{ibid., 166–69}

5.2 Evaluation

As the example of high modernist planning will show, revolutionary change is unlikely to be achieved in the way it was planned for. As Popper points out, it may be that revolutionary change is only a concept which exists in thought, and cannot be realized. This suggests that persons promoting revolutionary change and piecemeal engineers act in the same way. This view lets us assume that everyone is working on the same problem and wants to achieve the same solution; greater good for humans (and animals and plants in some cases – greater good for the world).

The example of Brasília in the next section will show that, in fact, revolutionary change is possible. Otherwise the debate between the different approaches would not have any content but would be based on a misunderstanding. But, as will become visible in the discussion of the example, revolutionary change solutions are prone to mistakes. This is because humans cannot look into the future with certainty – especially not the far future. I come to the conclusion that, due to these weaknesses of revolutionary approaches, step-by-step solutions are preferable in striving for justice in cities.

As stated above, Harvey advocates that problems of inequality cannot be cured in the same social system in which they arose. Mitigating the problem of ghetto formation through measures and initiatives such as law suits, modified land use controls, ameliorated transport services for ghetto residents, or trying to attract employment back into the city center is not a promising solution for Harvey. He insists that looking for a solution in this existing set of social mechanisms is not favorable and that more revolutionary solutions must be found.

In this matter, Harvey’s thesis is in conflict with Barber’s view. Barber seems to be convinced that mitigating social deficiencies is a goal to be aimed for as it will gradually improve the situation. He states that the city has in itself the seeds for its cure. Also Susan Fainstein approves of measures within the system to improve the situation. Unlike Harvey,
she believes in a step-by-step solution. She developed a list of criteria in furtherance of equity, diversity and democracy to be followed in planning processes and policy decisions.

A step-by-step solution seems to be more promising because to make revolutionary change happen it is necessary that many people agree on the same concept for really forwarding the quest for change. With changes of the system in smaller portions it may be easier to convince people of the appropriateness of the changes. Additionally, making small changes allows for course corrections if the consequences of the changes yield unexpected results. It might be easier for a city to undergo a transformation process which does not shatter the existing system at once. The Bus Rider Case of Los Angeles (mentioned in the chapter on manifestations of inequality) is an outstanding example which proves the effectiveness of measures such as law suits and better transport services to mitigate inequality in a city.

In the era of high modernism, cities were planned from scratch, this sort of planning can be classified as revolutionary change. The realization of many of these plans was unsuccessful. These examples which will be discussed below show that the concept of revolutionary change is not suitable in many cases. The high modernist conceptions of cities were not intended to do harm – on the contrary: they were meant to benefit all the people living in the newly constructed cities. The Process of their creation resembled the way Harvey describes revolutionary change: An existing system of cities and their management seemed to be overcome, flawed, and impractical. Therefore, theorists developed plans for a new, better city. On the basis of reflection, they classified existing frameworks as undesirable and developed a new model of the ideal city. They even incorporated elements of the old system into the new one, as is the case when a paradigm changes. High modernism evolved out of a desperate situation in quest for a better world. The plans for the new cities were thought to incorporate all elements individuals need. But the high modernist theorists were wrong in many respects because they misapprehended human nature. In advance, perhaps they could not have known how the realization of their plans was reacted to in reality. And this, in my view, is a problem with Harvey’s concept of revolutionary change. If we develop concepts that are perfectly coherent in thought, even if we have the best intentions, we cannot be sure that they will lead to the anticipated result once they are actually applied. Therefore, it is more prudent to take small steps which can be reassessed continuously and make changes in direction possible, as scholars like Scott and Fainstein propose.

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198 The same problem was addressed in Scott’s analogy of scientific forestry and state control: it was not known in advance that monocultures would not offer the necessary living conditions for trees.
Popper’s piecemeal engineering also proposes small steps, but this does not mean that he is opposed to piecemeal engineers being guided by a utopian vision, as is highlighted by Harald Stelzer. An ideal vision can without problems guide the way to changes; this is why I do not wish to downgrade the importance of ideal theory.

The approaches to change may or may not support the principles for just cities listed above. However, some approaches tend to support certain principles more than others: for example, a libertarian approach to change will support maximum liberty. Revolutionary solutions may be democratic, but utopian approaches are not very probable to be so. The way for change which seems to support the most principles is the step-by-step approach, if we grant that the steps can be of some importance due to principles agreed on and a well-functioning democratic system.

It appears that only the step-by-step approach to change leaves room for all the principles for just cities to be included in an action plan. Libertarian approaches do not leave enough room for principles other than liberty, and revolutionary solutions can be highly specific so that they leave out important principles, such as democracy and liberty. Anarchistic approaches do not incorporate the principle of rule of law. Only the step-by-step approach can be designed so as to include all the principles in a sufficient way.

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199 Harald Stelzer, “Principles and Policies: What Can We Learn from Popper's "Piecemeal Social Engineering" for Ideal and Nonideal Theory?,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 2016, 11
6 Example: Utopian Planning in the Twentieth Century

City planning has a long history. The idea that cities can be planned in an orderly manner was first introduced by Hippodamus in ancient Greece. Ever since, planning occurred in a more or less organized way. Only since the beginning of the twentieth century, however, has planning been performed by professionals. Today it is a vital task because it helps save resources and increase benefits.

Peter Marcuse divides modern city planning into three currents: a technical one, a social reform one, and a social justice one. He states that no form usually comes purely; the three are often mixed. However, Marcuse insists, they differ in their basic goals and methods. The technical planning approach, Marcuse states, maintains the power structures of the status quo and values efficiency. It can be divided into scientific, designer, contractual, and process planning. It reacts to concerns with the inefficiencies in the organization of the new industrial economy.

Social reform planning is also primarily concerned with the externalities of industrialization, but on a social level: it confronts health, unsanitary housing, pollution, and crime. The way to address these problems was reform which was often successful in remedying social concerns within the existing structures of power. This movement concentrated on the disadvantaged groups rather than seeing society as a whole and addressed the roots causing social problems.

Social justice planning, by contrast, goes further and addresses the social system as a whole to establish social justice. It regards physical change as ancillary to social change. It is critical of existing institutions and focuses on the human cost of urbanization such as slums and poverty. It can be divided into: ethical principles planning, community-based planning, radical or critical planning, and utopian planning.

For my purpose, utopian planning is relevant. Peter Marcuse classifies three types of utopian planning: “The first, design utopias, address directly ideals of a perfect society but are little concerned with its physical form. The second, symbolic utopias, use the forms of the built environment simply to illustrate broad social concepts of such a society. The third, physical

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200 Kaplan, Holloway and Wheeler, *Urban Geography*, 334
utopias, see defining forms of the built environment as in fact decisively incorporating the desired ideal.\(^{202}\)

Design Utopias, Marcuse states, are found early in history. For example Plato developed utopian thoughts which have little to do with implementation. Symbolic utopias use physical propositions for social outcomes. They are what Harvey calls utopias of social process.\(^{203}\) Physical utopias can be seen as derived from early utopias, but they often concentrate on physical aspects and only implicitly promote social change. Harvey calls them utopias of product.\(^{204}\)

Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City which (will be introduced in this chapter) is an example of the third type of utopias. They see physical change as the way to societal improvement; physical circumstances are not merely the result of social change.\(^{205}\) Le Corbusier’s and Wright’s plans meant to change social circumstances directly, so they can be classified as symbolic utopias.

### 6.1 Howard, Wright, and Le Corbusier

Three major traditions in utopian planning theory can be demarcated in the twentieth century: the concepts of Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier. All three developed complete visions meant to solve the urban as well as the social problems of their time. They were not intended to improve existing structures but to create completely new urban environments.\(^{206}\) In this regard, all three concepts were utopias, not because they were vague or impossible, but because they were broad concepts of cities which were sought to exist.\(^{207}\)

The three planners not only envisioned architectural structures for new cities; they also intended to change the social structures of urban populations. All three “consistently rejected the idea that a planner’s imagination must work within the system”,\(^{208}\) as Robert Fishman

\(^{202}\) ibid., 126–27
\(^{203}\) David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 173
\(^{204}\) Peter Marcuse, “The Three Historic Currents of City Planning,” in Fainstein; DeFilippis, *Readings in Planning Theory*, 127
\(^{205}\) ibid.
\(^{207}\) Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier* (London: MIT Press, 1982), x
\(^{208}\) Robert Fishman, “Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier,” in Fainstein; DeFilippis, *Readings in Planning Theory*, 25
puts it. They all aimed to define a new age yet to come. They thus performed what Harvey would call revolutionary change – their plans were manifestos for urban revolutions.

Despite the three theories having in common their revolutionary character in political, economic, and architectural regards, their contents differ profoundly. The theorists Le Corbusier, Howard and Wright each take a different position on the spectrum between the promotion of a great metropolis, moderate or complete decentralization, including various political and social implications. Robert Fishman contends that these “three ideal cities represent a vocabulary of basic forms that can be used to define the whole range of choices available to the planner.”

Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier differed in their personalities as well as their visions. The first one to create his utopia was Howard, a subtle, modest man who started his career as a stenograph. The value he promoted in his ideal city, the Garden City, was community. The small settlements on the countryside were to lure people away from big cities such as London.

Frank Lloyd Wright, by contrast, was an American planner who sought to make the United States a nation of individuals. Instead of Howard’s communities, he promoted single family homes. In his ideal city, Broadacre City, the common notion of cities does not exist anymore. Private ownership of land makes it possible for each individual to choose their own lifestyle. In this vision, all private living spaces are connected through a network of highways. In between the homes small factories, offices, and shops are situated.

The third of the three planners to develop his ideal city was Le Corbusier. Instead of decentralization his hope for a good city life consisted in organization. High rise buildings standing in parks, connected through super highways, were thought to create desirable infrastructure for city dwellers. In Le Corbusier’s Radiant City everything was to be organized and controlled. The city space was distributed according to its function. Functional zoning in residential, recreational and working areas was central to the plan. The Radiant City was created to solve the problems of its time. Le Corbusier thought that it was an adequate reaction to the Great Depression. His ideal city combined high population

\[^{209}\text{ibid., 26}\]
\[^{210}\text{ibid., 26–27}\]
\[^{211}\text{Fishman, Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century, 235}\]
density with spaciousness. This concept will be discussed more thoroughly in the next section.

Howard’s Garden Cities were planned like a circular pie with six slices called wards; they were family neighborhoods. Each ward was to comprise about 5,000 persons; the total population of a Garden City amounted to 30,000 people. Each ward was to have its own school, which was at the same time the community center, and shopping opportunities. In the center of the pie a grand park was foreseen for recreational purposes. Also a glassed-in arcade called the “Crystal Palace” was to be found there. It contains several shops and consumption opportunities. In the center of the park Howard also planned for public buildings such as the library and town hall. Howard’s Garden City is 1,000 acres large and is surrounded by an agricultural belt of 5,000 acres. 2,000 farmers are to live there and supply the city with food. Fishman states that Howard added a new element to human rights: the right to space.

Wright thought that big city centers were no longer modern. He believed in a right of every person to own an automobile, and to burn as much gasoline as they desired. In his ideal city, Broadacre City, urban centers were no longer existent nor needed. His concept is one of extreme decentralization – in comparison, the Garden City seems traditional. In Broadacre City, a distinction between town and country is impossible. Individual homes are dispersed between fields, churches, shopping opportunities, and factories. Office buildings are also dispersed so that no center of power can evolve. Every person is supposed to be at least a part-time farmer in Broadacre City.

While Howard promoted a “marriage between town and country”, the two remained sharply separated. Wright, by contrast, wanted to eliminate the differentiation between town and country all together. The center in Broadacre City was to be the family home. For further notes on the relation between town and countryside in utopian concepts, see below.

6.1.1 How Change is Pursued in the Different Concepts

Change is pursued in different manners in the three concepts, but all three concepts promote a form of revolutionary change. Le Corbusier held that society needed authority and planning in order to overcome the state of chaos it experienced at his time. He planned apartment

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214 Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, 91–96
215 ibid., 128–29
buildings which include recreational facilities such as pools and tennis courts. They also include shopping facilities, a primary school and a child care institution. Even cooking and laundry was to be done communally. Parents were to leave for work in the morning, drop the children in the level for child care, pick them up in the evening and come to their apartment where the laundry and food is already prepared.

Le Corbusier saw his apartment buildings as fit for the society of the future – the society of the machine age. He knew that his plans would only work if people had revolutionized in the way necessary for living in the conditions just described. Therefore, he was not concerned with such things as vandalism in elevators or muggings in parks. In the city he envisioned, there was no reason for such events to occur.\(^{216}\) In short, Le Corbusier held that social change must be achieved first so that his plans would work.

Howard, instead, held that building the Garden City was the first step to start a revolution. He thought that the first Garden City built with the money of philanthropist investors would set an example which would then lead to the change of society and cities in general. His movement was to be started by building an exemplar city which would lead to reform in a peaceful manner.\(^{217}\) So he meant to implement his plans and thereby change society.

Where Howard built on the value of cooperation, Wright was more radical in achieving his aims. He foresaw the expropriation of all landholdings larger than one family needed – the plans for his city included legislation which would make this possible. He sought to thereby strengthen individual property rights; the right to property every family would hold was to be absolute and would reinforce their freedom.\(^{218}\) Thus, Wright was a proponent of change through radical plans.

### 6.2 High Modernism

By the example of high modernist city planning which was strongly influenced by architect and planner Le Corbusier, I will analyze the central faults of utopian planning in the twentieth century. The most characteristic modernist town ever built, Brasilia, will be introduced and evaluated in terms of justice and usability.

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\(^{216}\) Robert Fishman, “Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier,” in Fainstein; DeFilippis, Readings in Planning Theory, 46–47

\(^{217}\) ibid., 39

\(^{218}\) Fishman, Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century, 126–27
James C. Scott classifies three conditions as characteristic for high modernist development in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries: First, the wish to order nature and society administratively, which is central to high modernist thought. Second, the power of the modern state as a means to reach these aspirations, and third, a civil society which is not able to resist these plans. He sees the following attributes central to high modernism: “a supreme self-confidence about continued linear progress, the development of scientific and technical knowledge, the expansion of production, the rational design of social order, the growing satisfaction of human needs, and, not least, an increasing control over nature (including human nature) commensurate with scientific understanding of natural laws.”

High modernism in city planning was expressed primarily in the manifestos of the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM). The aim of city planning in this thinking is social transformation. The city is meant to be functional: its four main functions are housing, work, recreation, and traffic. They are arranged to be organized in exclusive sectors in the city.

The modernist city was thought of as a city of salvation. The problems which arose due to industrial capitalism were meant to be solved. The socialist thinking of equal housing and living and functional zoning was proposed as a reaction to the problems of the time. Understood as a critique of capitalism, high modernist thinking politicized architecture. However, many different political parties identified with the concept.

High modernism was strongly visible in city design. The architect who could be seen as “the embodiment of high-modernist urban design” is Le Corbusier. His plans for cities were very strict, rectangular, centered on traffic, and promoted orderly cities. His plans did not incorporate any historical or geographical specialties of the city they were made for.

Le Corbusier had a horror of chaos and loved straight lines. With his plans he expressed not only an aesthetical idea, but also a social ideal. His plans express the high modernist vision of controlling society and mastering technology. In a broad work on Le Corbusier’s oeuvre William Curtis writes that “In his buildings Le Corbusier attempted to give shape to his most profound convictions about life. Beyond individual solutions he tried to define the

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219 Scott, Seeing Like a State, 88–90
221 Scott, Seeing Like a State, 103
222 ibid., 104
223 Stanislaus von Moos, Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2009), 222
elements and relations of an architectural language. He was in search of principles as well as forms.”

Curtis acknowledges that Le Corbusier was never able to fully realize his utopia. After World War II, he states, it was impossible to think that mechanization as such would bring a better future. Yet, it was in the 1950s and 1960s that most of his concepts were realized. However, they were not built with all their facets, but only in part. Curtis calls most realizations of Le Corbusier’s projects caricatures of his actual work.

Even though Curtis thinks Le Corbusier’s critics are wrong and their remarks not justified because not everything which was realized in reference to Le Corbusier was completely his doing, I contend that the architect can be held accountable for his foundational ideas and renewals to city planning. Even though apparently he did not intend any harm and certainly was a genius and very skilled architect, his attitude towards society can be criticized. Jane Jacobs criticizes the style of planning Le Corbusier practiced because it fails to understand complex and unique orders inherent in city structures and tries to standardize and suburbanize cities instead.

Curtis also contends that Le Corbusier was aware of the fact that architecture influences not only the mind, but also the senses. He states that beneath the obvious lines, forms and facades, there is always a certain energy of space: “Beyond the evident features of geometry and crude concrete surfaces, there is an immaterial presence, an aura which relies upon intangibles such as proportion, the energy of space and the shifting effects of light and shadow.”

It might be due to this energy of space that things did not go exactly according to plan in the following example: Brasília. This city was not planned by Le Corbusier, but his ideas strongly inspired the planners.

6.2.1 Brasília

One high modernist city that was built from scratch (almost) according to plan is Brasília, the new capital city for Brazil. It was meant to lead Brazil to a new, better future. In the years before the city was built, residents in Brazilian cities had begun to suffer from transportation

225 ibid., 466
226 Jacobs does not refer to Le Corbusier explicitly, but the “kind of mind” she addresses clearly refers to his planning style. Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, 447
227 Curtis, Le Corbusier, 380
problems, housing difficulties and population pressure. The newly planned city was anticipated to relieve these problems of urban life.\(^{228}\)

In the 1950s, Brazil’s populist president Kubitschek promised the country fifty years of progress in five. Therefore, the new city was constructed. For the plan of Brazil’s new capital city, Brasilia, a design competition was organized by Oscar Niemeyer, the chief architect for public buildings and housing prototypes. Lúcio Costa won this competition with fifteen sketch-like drawings and a short but concise text. His plan for the city consisted of two main axes and a triangle and was very simplistic.

Brasília was built on a plain in central Brazil. This was a novelty, as Brazilian towns had afore clung to the shoreline.\(^{229}\) The city was conceived as a salvation by different political parties and was conceptualized as a place which should fulfill all human needs and grant economic flourishing. Its construction began in 1956 and the inauguration ceremony took place already in 1960.

The city which was actually built did not completely accord to the plan. Although Le Corbusier did not plan the city, his ideas were strongly represented in the plan for Brasilia. Both Costa and Niemeyer worked within CIAM doctrines.\(^{230}\) Brasilia is the most complete example of CIAM architecture that has been built.\(^{231}\) Housing, recreation, work, and traffic were spatially segregated.\(^{232}\)

In this theoretically functioning urban area, apparently, persons did not feel at ease. Scott points out that the difference between scientific forestry and city planning is that trees do not complain if they do not agree with the way they are organized, whereas persons indeed do have strong preferences and are able to complain and protest.\(^{233}\) Many things were planned in a fashion which did not suit the Brazilian population. For example, the way traffic was organized in Brasilia did not correspond to urban life in traditional Brazilian cities.

Holston points out that the society which built Brasilia was very different from the one the planners foresaw as living in the city. But it is stated by Holston that this was not the only contradiction in the project. He claims that on the one hand, the imperfect realization of the


\(^{229}\) Holston, The Modernist City, 15–16

\(^{230}\) Scott, Seeing Like a State, 118

\(^{231}\) Holston, The Modernist City, 31

\(^{232}\) Scott, Seeing Like a State, 118

\(^{233}\) The third condition Scott proposed for the implementation of high modernist plans, the weak civil society, is in this case not so completely given (and maybe is never so completely given) that there would be no protest at all by dissatisfied persons who inhabit the area or who are to inhabit the area.
plans led to problems, but on the other hand he questions the planners’ intention to create an egalitarian, socialist society. These intentions perhaps cannot be realized by the means chosen by the planners.\textsuperscript{234}

James Holston calls the phenomenon which took place in Brasilia the “death of the street” because pedestrians were strongly discouraged from walking, and everyone who could chose a car as the means of transportation. Instead of usual street corners with traffic lights there were traffic circles in Brasilia. They made it very dangerous for pedestrians to cross streets. Consequently, people preferred to drive cars.\textsuperscript{235}

Residents of Brasilia were questioned about their impressions of the city life. In the city there were no crowds like in traditional Brazilian cities. Therefore the city was perceived to lack human warmth.\textsuperscript{236} Also, because there were no public places, no sidewalk society and no street corners, it was difficult to interact and socialize with people in public. Friends had to come to each other’s homes to see each other. This produced a feeling of social isolation.\textsuperscript{237}

The “superquadra” housing blocks did not correspond to traditional Brazilian city life. The apartment buildings all looked alike, and also the apartments looked completely the same. The idea was one of socialist egalitarianism – but the elite did not accept living in exactly the same flats as everyone else. Consequently, individual settlements were built in various styles.\textsuperscript{238}

The monotonous facades of the apartment blocks were rejected by their inhabitants because they created anonymity rather than equality and they suggested that private interests were not influential in spheres of social life.\textsuperscript{239} In sum, the city was left by some and by those who stayed it was perceived as uncomfortable. What resulted was a city different to traditional Brazil, but also different from the utopia aspired to by its planners.\textsuperscript{240} So that the problem of blank facades could be mitigated, shops were built on the streets where they initially were not supposed to be. The various effects of the spatial organization of Brasilia were experienced as a trauma – inhabitants of the city called it “brasilite”, which refers to a kind

\textsuperscript{234} Holston, The Modernist City, 98
\textsuperscript{235} ibid., 101
\textsuperscript{236} ibid., 105
\textsuperscript{237} ibid., 107
\textsuperscript{238} ibid., 309
\textsuperscript{239} ibid., 308
\textsuperscript{240} ibid., 310
of illness – Brasil(ia)-itis. But it is worth noting that the city also had positive feedback; the living standard and economic possibilities were better than in traditional Brazilian cities.\textsuperscript{241}

The construction workers of Brasilia were not supposed to stay in the city after finishing their task. However, they did stay. In order to prevent the development of favelas outside the city borders, several satellite cities were built to accommodate the workers. The satellite cities are situated just outside the city of Costa’s pilot plan. Satellite cities are usually situated in proximity to a big city, but provide work for the residents and provide important social functions such as schools and health care, so that they are relatively independent from the big city nearby. They are to be distinguished from Trabant cities which are largely dependent on the city nearby – many of their residents only sleep there and work in the big city.\textsuperscript{242}

The apartments in the pilot plan were only accessible to higher social strata. In 1965, the government sold most of the apartments in the pilot plan. The open housing market did not resolve the problem of spatial stratification. Most of Brasilia’s population was concentrated in the satellite cities in the periphery of the pilot plan.\textsuperscript{243} Clearly, the egalitarian intentions of the modernist planners were not realized. Also spontaneous settlements or “squatments” resembling favelas were not prevented from arising.\textsuperscript{244}

6.3 Critique of the Urban Utopias

Utopian city planning was meant to improve the human condition, but many do not agree with the means and ends promoted in urban utopias. It can be criticized that utopian planners did not meet human interests adequately. Jane Jacobs criticizes modernist cities in many points, for example security. Scott compares modernist planning to scientific forestry, and Sennett promotes the uses of disorder instead of functional zoning.

City planners, especially when they have the power to construct a whole city from scratch, have a lot of influence on the future residents of the city and their social life. What is the justification for such an amount of power? Le Corbusier writes in The Athens Charter that a CIAM architect is qualified for his task because he “possesses a perfect knowledge of man.”\textsuperscript{245} As was shown by the example of Brasilia, modernist plans, with their bare

\textsuperscript{241} ibid., 24–25
\textsuperscript{243} Holston, \textit{The Modernist City}, 290–91
\textsuperscript{244} Epstein, \textit{Brasilia, Plan and Reality}, 106
\textsuperscript{245} Holston, \textit{The Modernist City}, 77
functionalism, did not meet all human interests. The needs for a communal street life, a feeling of community, and individuality were not acknowledged.

How could this happen without someone remarking these difficulties beforehand? Maybe because critics were not heard, but maybe also because it is impossible for humans to look into the future. As was stated above, it is therefore better to adopt small changes which can be supervised and corrected in case of unintended consequences. Architects such as Le Corbusier, irrespective of their design competences, overvalued their position in abstractly determining what human needs are.

Not only miscalculations regarding human nature and needs for social city life created problems in Brasília. The utopian plan for equality and absence of social stratification in Brasília was also disappointed. The attempt to create an egalitarian city was unsuccessful because it rested on false anticipations. One of them was that the construction workers would leave the city after having finished their work. They were not supposed to be part of the final Brasília. Other poor persons were not accepted inside the pilot plan either. Therefore, social stratification definitely took place and the aspiration to create an egalitarian society faltered.

6.3.1 Persons and Forests

In his book *Seeing Like a State* James C. Scott criticizes the great high modernist episodes as tragedies. By the example of scientific forestry, Scott aims to illustrate the simplifying approach which was taken towards society in order to obtain greater control and maximize profit. In describing schematized and manipulated parts of nature he wants to even the path for an understanding of how the modern state operated urban planning: “Once we have seen how simplification, legibility, and manipulation operate in forest management, we can then explore how the modern state applies a similar lens to urban planning, rural settlement, land administration, and agriculture.”

In the late eighteenth century scientific forestry was invented. At this time, the only relevance of trees was the profit gained from them. Other values such as surplus for the population were ignored. Of course, monocultures gave rise to many problems due to a lack of biodiversity. The forests were particularly exposed to illness and weathers.

246 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 11

247 ibid., 11–22
The visual design of the well-managed forest was not only functional, but also an aesthetic preference in the late eighteenth century, when scientific forestry was invented. The neat and orderly arrangement\(^{248}\) of the trees resembled to the appearance of military troops.\(^{249}\)

The redesigned, neat forest promised many advantages: it was easily supervised, controllable, and easily manipulated. The ideal of the organized forest was never fully realized in practice, but definitely changed the appearance of forests. In the short run, scientific forestry was a success. However, after the second generation of trees had grown, environmental problems manifested themselves. Due to the simplicity of the organized forest, tree nutrition was insufficient. In Germany the dying of the scientific forests ("Waldsterben") was met by a reintroduction of certain animals to the monocultures which were actually striving for diversity.\(^{250}\)

Scott proposes that modernist city planners aimed to organize humans similar to trees in scientific forestry. A comparison of persons to trees seems odd. The comparison works smoothly if one looks at the system of forest management as a whole and how the managers approached it. Indeed, the forest was subject to manipulation and over-simplification, as was the city in several plans of the high modernist era. But when it comes to persons, the comparison does no longer work, as is also acknowledged by Scott.

The reason for this may resonate in the following quotes: “The new legible forest was also easier to manipulate experimentally.”\(^{251}\) This line, if related to the management of a social group, has a connotation which is not entirely inappropriate in the light of some high modernist cities and plans, but suggests an incorrect way of treating people. The problem is also captured by the line: “more complex old-growth forest had been replaced by a forest in which many variables were held constant”.\(^{252}\) Therefore, it was easier to control.

The next quote is frightening in its tone if it is applied to humans: “This … required that underbrush be removed and that fallen trees and branches be gathered and hauled off. Unauthorized disturbances – whether by fire or by local populations – were seen as implicit threats to management routines. The more uniform the forest, the greater the possibilities for

\(^{248}\) The preference for neatly ordered structures certainly had to do with the circumstances present at this time in the eighteenth century. It might have been a reaction to a situation of chaos. Today, this aesthetic preference seems less appealing. Design can surely be seen as a response to social circumstances; evaluating for example baroque and gothic style in regard to the social reality they existed in would certainly fill many pages.

\(^{249}\) ibid., 18

\(^{250}\) ibid., 19–22

\(^{251}\) ibid., 18

\(^{252}\) ibid.
centralized management”. This implies that human “underbrush” has to be eliminated, which was certainly not the aim of many high modernists, even if they regarded people as very similar to each other with regard to their needs. The quote also reminds us, however, of Nazi eugenics before the Second World War. Hitler aimed to get rid of Jews; to make the territory “judenfrei”, and as emigration did not provide the aspired results, the “Endlösung” was designed and millions of Jews were killed.

The comparison of scientific forestry with the state’s interest in controlling the population living in a certain area may be illuminating in many respects. It crumbles, however, as Scott acknowledges, in the respect that trees are not political actors, whereas persons are. Persons resisted unwelcome interventions by fleeing, revolting, or other forms of resistance. Scott’s point that people and trees are not alike may have been overlooked by certain utopian planners and seems like a plausible reason why many plans did not work as was anticipated.

What is definitely determinant about the comparison between scientific forestry and the approaches of the modern state towards city residents is that measurements and maps were unified by states in order to obtain control over a territory. Also, in order to be able to control cities, they were mapped very thoroughly. Medieval cities were a very complicated, unstructured oeuvre. Thus, they were difficult to control. States and planners consequently tried to render the city more geographically legible and structured. This is what Jacobs and Sennett criticize – they both support a certain degree of disorder in cities.

The point elaborated in the discussion of Scott’s position, that persons cannot be treated like trees in a forest; that they are not to be manipulated and neither are they defenseless, is the starting point for Jane Jacob’s critique of modernist planning. Also, the theories of justice presented in the beginning of this thesis include how persons should be treated. The conclusion that people should not be handled like trees in scientific forestry goes along with Rawls’ principle of equal liberty, and also with the capabilities approach which grants people their individuality.

6.3.2 Cities Suited for Humans

The influential critique of modernist planning by Jane Jacobs makes visible what she sees as human needs in urban environments. She criticizes modern city planning for not

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253 ibid.
255 Scott, Seeing Like a State, 24
256 ibid., 25
257 ibid., 53–55
respecting them. It all started, she claims, with the influence of Ebenezer Howard, who planned little Garden Cities outside of London so that London would stop growing and the urban poor could live there close to nature in 1898. Industry was also settled there so that they could earn their living.

Jacobs asserts that the small, self-sufficient towns were “nice”, but she sensed a missing room for aspirations there. In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* she writes: “His [Ebenezer Howard’s] aim was the creation of self-sufficient small towns, really very nice towns if you were docile and had no plans of your own and did not mind spending your life among others with no plans of their own. As in all Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge.”

What Jacobs finds striking about Howard’s utopia is that he practiced planning as a paternalistic process. His ideas were adopted by many planners and architects. He did not try to understand cities and their problems, but simply built his own cities in which no problems were supposed to arise. They were all rather small and functionally segregated. She calls this sort of planning “anti-city planning” and points out that architect Le Corbusier carried it to its peak.

Jacobs seems right in criticizing Howard’s Garden City in these respects. What is peculiar is the type of person a Garden City is planned for. Many people certainly enjoy living in a City where they can lead a healthy and peaceful life. But it seems that Howard ignores the interest of others who aspire to more than small town life. Some have a longing to live extremely extravagant styles, and in big cities they can find persons to share their preferences with. Others dream of performing at the most famous opera house in the world. When there are only Garden Cities, where would this opera house be and how would the city accommodate the guests who come from abroad to watch the performance?

Garden Cities are certainly not a furtherance to tourism. Even if tourism is not wholly sustainable, I nonetheless take it as a legitimate interest to travel (if not necessarily by air). These limits do not mean, of course, that Garden Cities are inherently bad, but that they can never completely replace big cities. They can exist additionally and offer a surplus for persons who share Howard’s values.

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258 Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 17
259 ibid., 17–22
Jacobs stresses similar concerns about Le Corbusier’s modernist concepts. She underlines that Le Corbusier did not only plan the organization of cities, but also a social utopia. What he called maximum individual liberty, in Jacobs’s eyes, is “liberty from ordinary responsibility”. She means that, same as in the garden cities, nobody has room left for his or her own projects. The Garden Cities differ from Le Corbusier’s cities in that they comprise only low buildings and their proponents strongly rejected Le Corbusier’s ideas. Nevertheless, Jacobs points out, the two kinds of cities are based on the same concept, only Le Corbusier’s plans were suited for big cities with a high population density.260

What Jacobs finds deficient in these utopian planning traditions is that they do not study the city, but paternalistically impose ways of life. She herself does not make the same mistake and presents a detailed study of the actual life in cities. She carefully analyses, for example, streets and sidewalks. Streets and sidewalks are, according to Jacobs, a vital place for spontaneous interaction in cities, and the setting for this is lacking in many utopian city concepts. She notes that contact in cities, except with your friends, is about acquaintance. It is not bound to any consequences, and Jacobs states that there is a certain degree of knowing each other without interfering in each other’s lives. The anonymous sidewalk contact is important for people who would not want to engage in more intimate activities with each other.261 Jacobs adds that it is easier to avoid discrimination if people have the occasion to interact on an informal basis in public.262 Also security in a city is strongly furthered if there are many “eyes” on the streets and sidewalks, which was discussed in the chapter on safety. Jacobs further criticizes the wish of modernist planners to create playgrounds and parks as a playing area for children. She observed that children are more secure if they play on streets, where they are automatically supervised by adults.263 Jacobs points out that the most cases of youth criminality take place in parks or on playgrounds.264 Jacobs stresses that parks are strongly affected by the neighborhoods which surround them, and that the illusion that more open space as such does make a city a better place is mistaken. She emphasizes that many parks are dangerous because, if poorly used, they have the same problems as streets without

260 ibid., 22
261 ibid., 59
262 ibid., 72
263 However, traffic safety must be granted for this statement to be true; it may apply rather to suburban areas than crowded city centers.
264 ibid., 76–77
eyes. This implies that the green, open spaces in Le Corbusier’s plan for the Radiant City do not necessarily further interaction and well-being because they are rather deserted.

Neighborhoods in cities are divided by Jacobs into three groups: the city as a whole, street neighborhoods, and larger districts. Neighborhood planning should in her opinion aim at the following purposes: First, to foster lively streets, second, to make these streets build a network which goes on throughout the city, third, to use parks and squares as part of the street fabric, and fourth, to emphasize functional identities of large areas.

6.3.3 The Argument for Disorder

Jane Jacobs’ critique is accepted by both rather right and rather left theorists. One researcher on the left side is sociologist Richard Sennett, who ascribes himself to the anarchist tradition. Sennett agrees with Jacobs that an empty, planned cityscape is not fit for human needs. He promotes the uses of disorder and density in city space. Sennett holds that “the jungle of the city, its vastness and loneliness, has a positive human value”. He regards coping with urban disorder as necessary for society so that it can move on from adolescence to adulthood and find freedom in the acceptance of disorder. In his theory, disorder is the answer to the longing for a sense of community.

Sennett sees the urban crisis which was prevalent in the second half of the twentieth century not as rooted in the growth of cities, but rather as a result of something dying within cities. He sees the vanishing of city life as a deterioration in comparison to the past, but the past is not to be romanticized either. It should not be the aim of future cities to restore the past. This stance is what differentiates Sennett’s from Jacobs’ position, he underlines: Jane Jacobs praises village-like conditions which have been prevalent in cities in the years before high modernism. A revival of ancient times, Sennett argues, can never occur. Therefore, he seeks a new condition of urban life fit to confront the present circumstances of technology and affluence.

Modernist planning can be criticized for having a misled understanding of society. Richard Sennett contends that some city builders in the machine age of the twentieth century seem to have confused society itself with a machine – a view he shares with Lewis Mumford.

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265 ibid., 95
266 ibid., 129
267 Sennett, The Uses of Disorder, xvii
268 ibid., 51
269 ibid., 86
Also Scott’s comparison of modern city planning with scientific forestry suggests an inadequate attitude of planners towards city residents.

Sennett acknowledges the profit driven aspects of city planning and refers to the human dimension of planning like Gehl: “Until the peculiar calculus of efficiency guiding much of city planning is united with a new conception of the humane uses of cities, I am convinced planners will create urban conditions that intensify purity drives and so promote voluntary withdrawal from social participation and the willingness to use violence as a final solution.”

While some argue that the diverse cityscapes Sennett promotes arise by themselves as soon as the prevailing system is destroyed, Sennett is of the opinion that they have to be “created and urged into being”. He argues that people have the tendency to reinstall the injustices of the past, and therefore positive directions towards change are needed. These directions according to Sennett include the following: First, increasing the visible density in cities, which means that urban areas are not separated according to functions. All functions in a city are spatially mixed. Therefore, people come into “unknown, unplanned contact”. Second, people with different racial backgrounds must not be spatially separated so that no tensions arise due to a feeling of “otherness” among different groups. The third direction Sennett proposes is the decentralization of power, so that everybody needs to face others living close to them directly in case of conflict. The reason why people want to ‘grow up’ in Sennett’s understanding is a “modern kind of boredom”. Instead of clinging to the superfluous circumstances they live in, they welcome change and seek diversity.

6.4 Town and Countryside in Utopian Concepts

As becomes clear when studying the concepts, utopian plans vary in their fundamental understanding of the relation between city and countryside. Some theorists see them as separated, others want to eliminate the differentiation altogether. Some separate the two sharply, others see them as melting together. But, what is the relationship between the two? Are both necessary? Are both natural forms of life?

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270 ibid.
271 ibid., 157
272 ibid., 158–63
273 ibid., 163–66
274 ibid., 184
Jane Jacobs counts the city as part of nature, for human beings are part of nature and she regards cities as their natural surroundings. Jacobs finds that the utopian twentieth-century-approach to city planning is built on a misconception of cities. She holds that the tendency to build suburban garden city areas destroys more parts of nature which could be sustained while people live in bigger cities.\textsuperscript{275}

Jacobs’ intuition that living in cities is natural for humans seems plausible, since this is the form of life generation after generation chose and which arose quite early in human history. It is also illuminating that rural areas should not be destroyed by additional cemented city space which would not be necessary.\textsuperscript{276} But what is important about cities if they are viewed as humans’ natural environment is the sustainability of city life. With more than 70 percent of the world’s population estimated to live in cities by 2050,\textsuperscript{277} cities had better become natural for humans to live in. I believe that, however, much remains to be done in order to structure city life so that it is more harmonious with the rest of nature.

This depends on what the people who live in cities consume, which kind of packaging is promoted, how garbage is handled, how emissions are dealt with, and so on. Of course, just and sustainable city life is important. But it must not be achieved while ignoring the rest of the country and the planet. Cities must recognize that they depend on their surroundings, and countries must recognize that we only have one planet. For these considerations it is relevant how cities are politically organized and how much independence and self-control they should be granted.

The political organization of cities is of great importance, but also the political organization of the countryside and small towns should not be overlooked, it is currently subsumed in countries. Of constantly growing importance are, however, supranational organizations without primarily political interests. They must secure basic rights of all individuals and also the right to the planet. National boundaries do not change the fact that we all depend on the same planet. Therefore, life in cities must be organized justly and sustainably all over the world.

Jane Jacobs maintains that countryside and big cities go together very well. Big cities need the countryside nearby, while persons living in the countryside need the opportunities of big cities. Life in big cities brings problems with it. But being human always includes problems,
as Jacobs contends. She points out, though, that cities are not victims to their circumstances, but that they have a great potential to improve their situation. She gives the example of illness: Cities have always been affected by illness, more than the countryside, but it is also in cities that hospitals and research centers were created. Jacobs attributes this ability to improve itself to the lively, diverse, intense city whereas dull cities, she contends, are inclined to self-destruction.278

Henri Lefebvre notes that, in the context of Greek and Roman antique cities, the separation between town and country was linked to a first division of labor. He differentiates between biological division (distribution of tasks according to age and sex) and technical division (distribution according to skills). Also a social division of labor is described; material labor was supposed to happen in the countryside, while intellectual labor was thought to happen in cities.279

“The countryside, both practical reality and representation, will carry images of nature, of being, of the innate. The city will carry images of effort, of will, of subjectivity, of contemplation”, Lefebvre states.280 Nowadays, as more and more people move to live in towns, this dichotomy seems out of place. Circumstances of overpopulation in present times require a new approach to the concept of the city. Projects such as Living Green City281 show that also the part of the population living in cities craves nature in their daily surroundings. Food production will have to take on new forms to support all the people living in cities.

Given that intellectual labor was inherent to cities, according to Lefebvre, philosophy was born there. Even though philosophers named urban phenomena and urbanity en soi, Lefebvre thinks that the city as emergence only comes to theoretical light by means of philosophers and philosophy.282 Not only historic but also contemporary thinkers have pondered on the city. Lefebvre states that the history of philosophy must reclaim itself from its relation with the city and that philosophical concepts envisage the urban as a totality.283

What I think Lefebvre means is that urban areas need interdisciplinary approaches. He specifies that historians, botanists, sociologists, demographers and economists contribute to

280 ibid.
281 *Living Green City* is a participatory project in the city of Graz which aims at designing a new, green city area which offers infrastructure for a high quality of life. For a description of the project see Hans Schnitzer, “Living Green City,” http://www.stadtlaborgraz.at/index.php/en/191-projektstart-living-green-city
282 Lefebvre, Kofman and Lebas, *Writings on Cities*, 89
283 ibid., 93
a science of the city. The practice which unites all these interdisciplinary approaches is city planning. It is important, though, to critically examine planning activities, Lefebvre underlines.284

Planning requires real knowledge, and not just partial knowledge which is adopted from the partial to the whole, from the relative to the absolute, Lefebvre cautions. The task of city planning, according to Lefebvre, is to distinguish between “diseased” space and “healthy” space. It should be able to grant preexisting social realities to space. This quest supposedly can be made, for example, in the name of public health.285

For Lefebvre, the city has always been related to society, but the city’s changes are not mere reactions to changes in society. He insists that cities also depend on immediacy, the direct relations between individuals. The city is, Lefebvre contends, situated at an interface between the near order and the far order. With near order, the relations of individuals in groups of variable size are meant. With far order, powerful institutions in society such as the state are meant. The far order is expressed through the near order; thereby, its power is confirmed.286

Thus, Lefebvre goes on, the city is an oeuvre which is closer to a work of art than to a material product. He proposes to differentiate between the city and the urban, the city standing for an immediate reality, a material and architectural fact, and the urban standing for a social reality. Using this terminology, however, one must be cautious not to separate the two notions too strictly; the urban needs a material ground, it cannot exist without the city.287 It seems that the two notions are closely connected, maybe like two sides of one coin.

In the chapter on principles for just cities, it was mentioned that it is hard to separate town and countryside on a rural-urban continuum. I argued that it is not necessary to draw a sharp line between the two, but that it is important to recognize the two extremes on the scale. The analysis of Lefebvre’s position suggests that this concept of the rural and the urban as floating concepts is new to present times and has evolved only in the course of history, partly due to communication technologies and modern means of transportation.

284 ibid., 94–96
285 ibid., 98–99
286 ibid., 100–101
287 ibid., 102–3
7 Conclusion

I have begun this thesis by discussing different theories of justice. The way to approach problems of inequality and injustice is open to debate. I have come to the conclusion that ideals are important to guide action and lead to a certain direction, which has been thoroughly reflected. Nevertheless, non-ideal theory is at least as important as ideal theory and needs to be focused especially on urban fields of application.

The principles which should be incorporated in a theory of justice for cities are Liberty, Fairness, Democracy, Impartiality, Rule of Law, and Fitting Human Needs. All of these incorporate several aspects and show how manifold the vital values for city life are. Respecting these principles of justice goes hand in hand with the spatial requirements for just cities. In order to be able to satisfy the listed principles, cities must be designed in a way which corresponds to them. Cities should be organized justly in terms of housing, leisure areas, and traffic. Also the general appearance of city space should be fit to accommodate humans and thereby inescapably becomes more sustainable.

Several ways of effecting change have been discussed. An ideal theory of justice can be the basis for justice-enhancing actions, but I have argued that a non-ideal step-by-step approach is most suitable for reaching just goals because it allows for adjustments along the way towards justice. I have underlined that, however, the leeway for steps to be taken must remain big enough so that there is room for innovation, creativity, and progress.

The example of utopian planning in the twentieth century has shown that many principles of urban justice have been neglected in the designed cities, and also that the chosen way of realizing the new cityscapes was erroneous. The city of Brasília is an example which illustrates that modernist plans were in many regards not suited for actual city life. The example shows many faults, but also helps us understand how just planning may work better.

There are several levels in the critique of utopian planning discussed in the previous chapter. First, it is noted that persons cannot and should not be treated and manipulated like trees in a forest. They are to be met with respect, and the purpose of planning should be to fulfill their needs. This takes us to the next level of critique, stressed by Jacobs, and also shared by Jan Gehl: the structure of cityscapes must be fit for humans to live in. Even when Jacobs’ critique seems a little outdated and promoting a kind of village life in cities, the fact that urban construction has a big impact on social life becomes clear. And on a third level,
Richard Sennett extends Jacobs’ claims and promotes cities which are completely ruled by their inhabitants.

As in the discussion in the chapter about ways to bring about change, I here plead for a middle ground. It appears that Sennett’s version of a just city is too extreme. We are not likely to reach just city life if inhabitants are left to themselves. Therefore, we need the guidance of certain ideal principles. The best way to effect change following these principles is step-by-step solutions which are adequate for the non-ideal world and are able to react to unforeseen circumstances.

It appears that Jacobs praises in city life the qualities of living in a village, like knowing and being able to trust all the shopkeepers in your neighborhood, only combined with the advantages of city life. What has changed since Jacobs’ analysis was written in the 1950s and 60s is that many small shops have been replaced by big commercial chains and that cities have grown bigger in total. Some aspects of her analysis therefore are no longer sufficient, but her arguments against modernist city planning are still powerful.

Jacobs’ critique of modern city planning can be connected with Lefebvre’s notion of the Right to the City. It implies that persons living in towns need something more than the functional areas of city life planned for by Le Corbusier and other high modernist planners. It suggests that people have a need for and a right to individuality and the ability to shape their lives and life styles.

The functional zoning of modernist cities seems to ignore the preference of people who would like to spend their free time after work shopping and going to the park. It would be annoying to have to cross half the city to reach one or the other. If I had to, I probably would choose one of the two, but I would definitely prefer being able to have both in the same area, preferably near my working space. Ideally there would also be a few cafes and bars in the neighborhood where one can have drinks and meet friends. Isn’t this an advantage of cities, one reason why we live there?

When I think of differences between rural and urban settlements, what comes to my mind is that a city is buzzing with life and there are many opportunities to shop and meet people whereas the primary characteristics of the rural are that there is nature nearby and that it is rather quiet. Modernist cities, or better: the plans for modernist cities, however, do not provide these special characteristics of urban areas.
One needs to acknowledge that such characteristics of the urban cannot be planned for in a
detailed manner because a great number of people participate in their creation. It seems also
important to accept that not everything in a city is perfect and goes completely according to
plan. There are always problems, fights, and failures, but they make city life what it is.

Of course, there are urban necessities which absolutely need to be planned for. For example
sustainability and the fulfillment of basic needs throughout the city. For instance, access to
drinking water must be planned in a city, but also access to work, child care facilities, and
so on. What is to be left largely unplanned, however, is the way humans interact in cities.
Interaction and social behavior should not and cannot be planned by architects or planners.

The example of Brasília has shown that plans made by persons who think they know what
others need or should do are prone to be failures. Therefore, democratic decision making is
a crucial necessity for a just life in cities. As Susan Fainstein shows in her concept of justice
to guide urban planning, equity and diversity are also central values which must be
considered in decision making. The original position in Rawls’s theory of justice proposes a
setting in which such principles of justice can be reflected and discussed. Also values such
as privacy, innovation and security are not to be forgotten for a just city life. These values
can be fitted into the list of values I proposed above.

As the city is a focal point for politics and social interaction there are many problems in
cities. Of course, at the same time, the city offers a great number of opportunities.
Nevertheless, not all that goes wrong in cities must be accepted – we are able to perform
change. In order to do so, a consensus must be reached. Democratic decision making is
fundamental, but also other principles, as mentioned above, should be considered.

City life comprises several values which are usually in conflict. Take, for example, the trade-
off between privacy and security. Also considerations such as which amount of money is
to be devoted to which aims of social city life are critical. Is the renovation of a building or
the provision of a public park more important?

Fainstein suggests in her conception of justice that every situation is individual and that
conflicting aims must be weighed against each other. Nevertheless, she does not refrain from
suggesting a list of concrete instructions for planners so that they create just cities. Of course,
not only the planners influence the final outcome of a new construction or change of a city.

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(Masterarbeit, Institut für Philosophie, Graz, 2016), http://unipub.uni-graz.at/download/pdf/1487408
Political and economic factors also influence the outcome. All sectors of public life should, however, orient their actions to the aim of justice.

In the short run, just solutions may be more costly. They may generate less profit than efficiency-based approaches. The same is true for sustainable solutions, which are also connected to justice in a wider sense. In the long run, however, just and sustainable solutions are the only way we can lead a good future life on our planet. Especially in cities it is crucial that people do not get entangled in big fights against each other because of the unjust way city life adopts.

At the same time, the sustainability of cities is crucial for the rest of the planet. As mentioned in the introduction, the UN estimate over 70 percent of people living in cities by 2050. In some way, general consensus of those in power, but also of all other people living on earth, must be reached that goals of justice must effectively be pressed for. We must recognize that by focusing on our own country, city, or house alone, we cannot reach global aims of justice and sustainability. With globalization happening, it is essential to notice that all humans share the planet (and so far there are no concrete hopes for humanity as a whole to leave Earth and settle elsewhere, nor do I find this aspiration uncontroversial289). It is, of course, difficult as there are many of us. But with the attitude “my country first”, or, “myself first”, justice is not likely to be realized any further than it is nowadays, and I dare to say that there are severe needs to improve the conditions in all countries of the world. Justice is the only sustainable way of life which does not lead to a catastrophe.

The three utopias discussed in this thesis can be seen as a reaction to the problems of big cities in the 19th century. The metropolises could not manage the population they were holding and housing standards were beyond what appears acceptable. Even though all three utopias can be criticized for not being practicable, they were an adequate response to a chaotic situation. Examples have shown that in reality modernist plans are not easily implemented and create problems of their own. But they certainly were important steps in planning theory and represented the progress of society in the 20th century.

Today, the problems in big cities are still very pressing. Especially in developing countries cities are strongly overpopulated and cannot manage traffic or supply basic resources. Depending on specific circumstances, urban renewal and extensive reconstruction may be necessary. But, as follows from the above analysis, there are certain values which must at all

times be taken into account when planning urban areas: What Jan Gehl calls the human dimension must be central to city planning.

One must always remember that cities should serve the persons who live there. Thus, human nature and human preferences must be prioritized in city planning. Part of this consideration is the quest for sustainability in cities. We have seen that this concept can be defined in many ways, but what is central to it is that people must have the possibility to live healthy lives. Therefore, in city planning, traffic and industrial zones must be organized so that harm to health is minimized. Public transport, walking and bicycling opportunities are a starting point which can be realized in cities all over the world.

What all the planning currents of the 20th century incorporated in their visions and what does no longer work today is the importance of the automobile. In the years when cars became popular as a means of transportation, people were not aware of the damage they would cause in later years. With regard to sustainability, therefore, none of the ideal cities discussed can be given much credit. As all of the models discussed implicate a large amount of private transit in motorized vehicles, they are in general not suited for realizations in present times – because if traffic must be changed, whole concepts of cities falter. What can nevertheless help us in city planning today are other elements of each theorist’s plans. They are all well-meant for humanity; they are all utopian. The ideas they offer serve both as suppliants of positive input, and also as examples of how change cannot be implemented if it is meant to suit humans and be sustainable.

We can grant Le Corbusier that his plans were meant to improve the human condition. That life in high rise buildings with apartments each alike, which stand in vast parks does not work for most people was not known yet by the time Le Corbusier developed his plans. It is something that had to be tested. The results of his manner of planning have proven that he considered humans in his plans, but a type of human which does not correspond to reality.

“The results of the search of modern architecture for new options of design and organization were partly accepted and partly rejected by today’s society”, 290 Leonardo Benevolo writes in his comprehensive work about the history of the city. We have doubtlessly learned a lot from the recent past, and some of the modernist insights still enjoy popularity. Others have

proven to be impractical. Nevertheless, they have contributed to a reflected understanding of contemporary spatial planning.

City planning today faces changed circumstances, accordingly there are new currents which react to present challenges. Research is done to get closer to the ideal of the smart city which reacts adequately to the requirements of our time. E-mobility is a means to reach a reduction in emissions, and life is sought to be better organized to grant a healthy and livable environment in urban areas.

I have proposed a list of principles for just cities in this paper. However, I have not specified thresholds which must be met for each of them for a city to be just. I referred to different cultural settings as relevant for these levels to be fixed, given that human rights are never violated. Defining a list which orders the principles of justice according to their priority requires further research to be done. For example, cities in the Western, wealthy part of the world may have other priorities on the path to justice than cities in other parts of the world. Certainly, cities have different problems. Think, for example, of the housing situation and public transport in Mumbai compared to New York. Both cities need to improve their situation, but under different circumstances.

Another question in this regard is if cities must be compared globally in order to determine if they are just. Can cities in diverse regions of the earth be called just if they comprise degrees of wealth strongly differing from each other? Do we assess every city individually or do we compare them globally? In this paper I have focused on general values of justice which must be considered for making a just life in cities possible. I also discussed ways of change which can be used to achieve greater justice. The global dimension of the problem of cities remains to be discussed.
8 Bibliography


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