



CLASSICAL THEORIES ON CITY & COMMUNITY

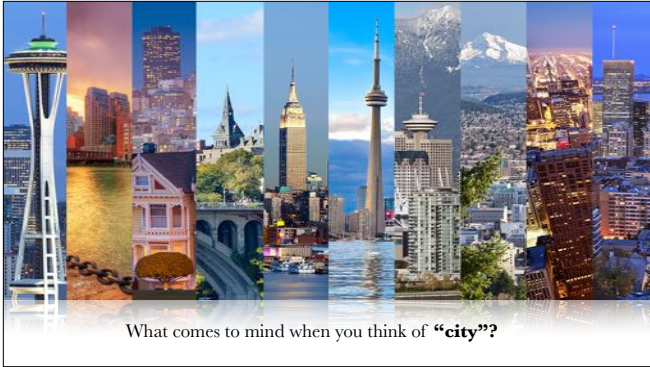
SOC 2202: CITIES AND SOCIETY
FALL 2019

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Course Website
- Revisions to the Syllabus
 - The Course “Expert”

TODAY

- City and Community (Operational Definitions)
- Urban Development in the United States (Parts 1 and 2)
- The Community Question
 - Community Lost Thesis
 - Antecedents to the Chicago School
 - Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”
 - Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum*



What comes to mind when **scholars** think of “city”

- Population (size)
- Density (population/density) (buildings/institutions) (activities going on in an concentrated area)
- Infrastructure (sewage/water) (transportation) (waste) (communication)
- Diversity (ethnic) (socioeconomic) (racial) (sexual)
- Cultural Institutions (schools) (libraries) (churches) (museums)
- Government
- Public Space (parks, monuments)
- Leisure (sporting events)
- Networks (the ways that cities are networked through public exchange)
- Communities

URBANIZATION VS. URBANISM

- **urbanization:** the origins of cities and the processes of city building (dense settlements)
- **urbanism:** the way of life that may be found within the urban community.
 - culture, meanings, symbols, patterns of daily life, processes of adjustment to the environment of the city.



Louis Wirth (1897-1952)
"Urbanism As A Way of Life" (1939)

- **the city:** "a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of relatively heterogeneous individuals (1939: 8)."
- urban life is defined by **size, density,** and **heterogeneity.**
- reliance of secondary relationships over primary relationships.
 - **Size:** the larger the community, the greater the variation.
 - increased division of labor
 - anonymity
 - **Density:** (differentiation and segmentation)
 - **Heterogeneity:** stereotyping

URBANISM HAS ALWAYS EXISTED!

- 10,000 Years of Urbanism
 - Evolution of cities has taken place over thousands of years.
 - **urban revolution:** the building of compact, densely populated areas.
 - V. Gordon Chile (1950): ancient cities produced a number of important innovations that persist to this day.
 - "Renaissance" of Cities in History
 - Fall of the Roman Empire/Merchant Capitalism / Industrial Capitalism

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

- **The Commercial Period (1620 - 1850)**
 - port cities (situated around waterfronts/waterways)
 - cities were small, less heterogenous, and not self-governing in the beginning
 - Post-Independence America: tensions between Industrializing North and Agrarian South.
- The Industrial Period (1850 - 1920)
- The Corporate Period (1920 - present)

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

- The Commercial Period (1620 - 1850)
- **The Industrial Period (1850 - 1920)**
 - The creation of new forms of capital shifted centers of economic activity inland.
 - Flows of Immigration/Flight to the North resulted in population explosions in cities.
 - Emergence of new residential patterns that emphasized greater stratification along race, ethnicity, and SES.
- The Corporate Period (1920 - present)

“City” as multidimensional

- No one city is alike.
- We should think about place in degrees of “city-ness” or “community-ness.”

The American Community

- Hillery (1955) found 94 definitions of community.
- Scholars largely rely on the definition established by Robert Park (1936: 3):
 - “. . . a population territorially organized” (**shared geographic location**)
 - “. . . more or less completely rooted in the soil it organizes” (**common ties**)
 - “. . . its individuals are living in a relationship of mutual interdependence” (**social networks**)

Contemporary Conceptions of Community

- Three Dimensions of Community
 - Ecological
 - Socio-Structural
 - Cultural-Symbolic

ECOLOGICAL

- **Space**
 - geography, resources, and shared physical fate
 - space vs. place
 - "hierarchy of communities"
- **Time**
 - "duration or co-presence of community members"
 - variance in time
 - A form of "capital"
 - Researchers of Communities

SOCIO-STRUCTURAL

- **Interpersonal networks**
 - Who you know? How you interact with people?
 - Homogeneity vs. Heterogeneity
- **Institutional density**
 - Nodes around which social networks cohere
 - Can make "invisible" groups "visible."
 - The absence of institutions.

CULTURAL SYMBOLIC

- Identity
 - Distinction - groups defined in contradistinction to one another
 - Attachment - "hierarchy of communities"
 - Morris Janowitz - "community of limited liability"
- Culture
 - Symbols used to create distinction
 - Recognition that different communities have different values and norms associated with them.

THE COMMUNITY QUESTION

- Framework of community development in Western Societies, summarized by Barry Wellman and Barry Leighton (1979).
- **THRUST:** how large-scale social change, produced by changes in labor, technology, the economy, or state control, reciprocally influences small-scale structures and the interpersonal relations constituting them.
 - Community Lost/Saved/Liberated

COMMUNITY LOST THESIS

- Scholars were largely concerned about the impact of the Industrial Revolution to community forms.
- **THRUST:** The transformation of Western societies to centralized, industrial bureaucratic structures has weakened primary ties and connections based on kinship, making the individual dependent on formal organizations for survival.



Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936)
Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (1887)

- Societal changes in urbanization and industrialization is fundamentally changing the nature of community.
 - **Gemeinschaft** (community): cooperation based on kinship and reinforced by social control of neighbors and of the church.
 - **Gesellschaft** (society): individuals act out of their own self-interest, cooperating only as required by laws, contracts, or public opinion that constrained their actions.



Émile Durkheim (1858 - 1917)
The Division of Labor in Society (1893)

- Consequences of industrialization is an increasing specialization, which impacts not only one's occupation but every aspect of social life.
- shift from **mechanical solidarity** to an **organic solidarity**
 - **mechanical solidarity**: individuals are connected to each other due to shared beliefs, personal ties, and traditions.
 - **organic solidarity**: individuals are connected to each other due to an increased reliance on each other.



Émile Durkheim (1858 - 1917)
Suicide (1897)

- the breakdown of stabilizing beliefs and values in modern society is one of the main forces leading to suicides.
- **anomie**: sense of aimlessness or despair (helplessness) emanating from the absence of predictability in social life.
 - lack of predictability created by contemporary conditions of social life result in feelings of isolation from the rest of society.



Max Weber (1864 - 1920)
The City

- Cities are settlements with a market.
- The market becomes the defining feature of urban life.
- Relations in cities are therefore **market relationships**, based on impersonal, economic terms.

What is the city for Simmel?

How do these “crises” map onto Simmel’s theory about the city?



Georg Simmel (1858 - 1918)
“The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1902 - 3)

- **the city:**
 - an anonymous settlement where relationships often serve vital functions.
 - highly individualistic
 - a marketplace that is governed by rational methods of interaction.
 - a collection of violent stimuli that overwhelms the mental mind.



Georg Simmel (1858 - 1918)
"The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1902 - 3)

- Modernity characterized by the possibility of immense freedom in addition to constraint.
 - Stimuli of urban life and frequent interactions with strangers overstimulated the nervous systems of urban dwellers (**cognitive overload**), causing them to develop a **blasé urban attitude**.
 - Individuals become desensitized to the violent stimuli that surrounds them.
 - Urban interactions become colder, more calculating, based on rationality and objectification of others than affective relationships.

IS THAT A BAD THING?



Georg Simmel (1858 - 1918)
"The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1902 - 3)

- Intellectualism equals greater freedom.

"The [social] reserve with its overtone of concealed aversion appears once more, however, as the form or the wrappings of a much more general psychic trait of the metropolis. It assures the individual of a type and degree of personal freedom to which there is no analogy in other circumstances. It has its roots in one of the great developmental tendencies of social life as a whole; in one of the few for which an approximately exhaustive formula can be discovered" (p. 332).



John D'Emilio
"Capitalism and Gay Identity" (1982)

- The expansion of capital and the proliferation of wage labor weakened the reliance on family as the primary source of capital.
 - Sex became liberated from the "imperative to procreate" (1983: 104).
 - Allowed certain men and certain women to explore their desires with members of the same sex.
 - This enabled the development of homosexual desire coalesce into a personal identity: "an identity based on the ability to remain outside the heterosexual family and to construct a personal life based on attraction to one's sex" (1983: 105).



HARVEY ZORBAUGH (1927)
The Gold Coast and the Slum
