Media and Urban Space

Understanding, Investigating and
Approaching Mediacity

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Content

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The omnipresence of the "urban" and the "media" might be the visual surface of the societies of the 21st century. According to different estimations, the majority of mankind already lives or will soon be living in a city. In many countries of the Western world, especially in Europe, it is already well-established that the majority of citizens are living in urban conurbations. The growth of the urban population has been succeeding without much disturbance and has therefore lost the attraction in many European debates. Particularly for Asian cities the opposite is true. Asian cities are experiencing a rapid urbanization which in speed, scope and intensity is stronger than the boom of the industrial city in 19th century Europe.

Apparently, the vastness of change is even more impressive when the development and distribution of new information and communication technologies is considered. Nobody could have predicted the immense dimension of the innovations that have been appearing in the last decades. Moreover we are still observing the next revolutions in the field of the media development. After the overstretched expectations of the first years, observers are nowadays more careful in their analysis of different new perspectives on the electronic communication industries. Nevertheless, the end of high-flying dreams does not mean that the acceptance of information, knowledge and communication as cornerstones of the economical, societal, and cultural dimensions has been questioned.

While combining these two general observations, it might be clear that any kind of activity is mainly urban and media related. Being urban and communicative are pre-dominant features of contemporary and future societies. Apparently, there is no "outside" from cities and from connectivity anymore. In everyday life, these pre-conditions of our existence have become so natural that a distinctive non-urban and non-mediated life appears to be exotic, unthinkable, or is romantically mourned for. The self-evidence of media and

urbanity enables to operate within the given situation without much reflection on the basics of its functioning. This "hands-on" approach allows further growth of the developments connected to the information society. Concerning research on applicable solutions for particular and partial problems, the assumption of a highly, if not totally mediated and urbanized society needs no further discussion. However, for a reflection on the very basis of the urbanization and communication processes, there is need to shed some light on the very principles of the "Mediacity". Thus, insights might be produced which are not immediately for practical use although they are helping us to distinguish the relationship between the urban and media world as they merge together in a broader and deeper perspective. By doing so, alternative perspectives for analyzing, interpreting, planning and shaping the spaces – virtual and urban – are offered for further consideration and debate.

In this book, approaches to rethink the frames of the recent developments in cities and media will be presented. It presents a selection of contributions to an international and interdisciplinary conference which has taken place at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar in November 2006. The conference is part of a wider research project called "Mediacity" which aims at questions related to the general trends in urban and media studies. With the support of the European Commission, the projects' overall objective is to create a knowledge basis for the professional education of young academics. Related to the tradition of the Bauhaus, the main idea of "Mediacity" is the integration of different approaches to understand, investigate and react on aspects of urban life and media development. In the line of this tradition, the cross-over between art, architecture, social and political science is fostered in this project and reflected in the variety of papers included in this book.

GILDA BERRUTI

Urban Public Spaces in the Augmented City

As a matter of fact, electronic media are taking possession of private and public urban spaces, transforming the contemporary city into a mediacity. However, by merging different social spheres and changing the relationship between spaces and social context, they are not simply eroding places but they are creating – beyond places – a new "sense of place" (Meyrowitz 1985). Hence, electronic media succeeded in modifying urban public spaces, but not in destroying them.

I disagree with the theories about the presumed death of public space in the contemporary city, often related to the influence of electronic media, which are claimed of getting a simplified and not varying experience of urban life, in which public space is replaced by a collection of "variations on a theme-park" (Sorkin 1992).

Public space as a substance of experience and an object of erosion is, in my opinion, composed of space, images and time, and it became an "augmented space" with the influence of electronic media (Mitchell 1996, 1999; Andriello 2002) and of infrastructure networks (Graham/Marvin, 2001).

The contemporary city, in fact, with its exposure to electronic media, can be considered an augmented city, if "augmented space is the physical space overlaid with dynamically changing information" (Manovich 2002 revised 2004), in a definition which aims at re-conceptualizing augmentation as an idea and cultural and aesthetic practice rather than as technology.

Focusing on the experience of human subjects in urban spaces, augmented city is, therefore, the city in which people can experience spaces and dynamic data at the same time, because information is added as a content to the experience of physical spaces.

Actually, physical spaces and information have always lived together in cities; the latest developments nevertheless produced some changes especially in the interactive power of electronic media, so that the impact of electronic

media is perceived not only in "real" places but also in some "virtual" spaces which are overlaying real ones.

That's why the interactive power of electronic media increases the desire to escape to "other places", which is increasingly becoming a part of the experience of present. New public spaces arise from the fight between concentration and dispersion, which is typical of a "splintering urbanism" (Graham/Marvin, 2001).

In this paper I try to focus the issues about the relationship between media and urban spaces, and to show how the influence of electronic media in three different public spaces, also if it threatens to be unpredictable or destructive, can succeed in increasing their liveliness[1].

From pilgrims to consumers

The need to escape from reality, to an unknown but reassuring "other place" is made even more urgent by the overload of images and information. This search for travel, derived from different impulses, from religion to tourism, is of course not new. For instance, in medieval times people moved for religious or commerce reasons. According to Julian Beinart (2001: 11), "the essential components of pilgrimage were not only travel but also *praesentia* – beeing in the presence of the holy – and touching something venerated as a relic. Together these constituted the transfer of the sacred, for which procedure a relic was indispensable".

As far as relics, the importance of "place" to reach the sacred falls: holy power is in the relic, relics are movable and "place" reduces its sense.

While pilgrims and traders travelled long distances, nevertheless today it is possible to reach an "other place" without moving. To begin with some places visited only by your eyes, the "watched on TV" spaces, that become familiar as they were directly lived. To end with those spaces in which things can travel, goods are sent or carried, and you are a spectator of their arrival, for instance shopping malls, which "provide a filtered version of the experience of cities, a simulation of urbanity" (Boddy 1992: 124), related to the experience of media in social context. To emphasize the repeatable and the expected more than

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1 This paper develops some themes from my PhD thesis "the form of public spaces in the contemporary city", about good places in public space. The thesis was discussed in January 2005, while the action-research in Naples, London and Siena has been carried out from 2002 to 2004.

novelty, in fact, is a typical TV mechanism, according to which "the spectator's pleasure arises partly from knowing what will happen next" (Boyer 1992: 189).

This unmoving travel of the consumer opens the way to a simultaneous "other place" in which there is nevertheless a difference with the past, i.e. the victory of reassurance – which is far from being casual, owing to the request for security coming from urban fear – and the dissipation of adventure. As a matter of fact, the detachment from "place" involves the loss of unpredictable events, chance encounters, diversity.

About the question if e-commerce is competing with these new spaces, I don't think e-commerce will have the better of it. Sometimes "just looking" is not enough, and there's something which is lost buying trough world wide web: direct contact with goods, with the vendor, with people you could meet, with place. It's a matter of "economy of presence" to cite Mitchell (1999): it's not possible to deny the necessity of face to face encounters in some cases.

Image construction of urban spaces

As it was in premodern cities in order to attract pilgrims (Beinart 2001: 8-12), today image construction of urban spaces is even more an issue.

According to Vale and Bass Warner (2001: xv) places no longer simply have images; they are continually being imaged. At the same time, there is a problematic relationship between collecting local images and "imaging" some new ones.

City imaging is "the process of constructing visually based narratives about the potential of places…a process of brokering the best metaphor, in ways that will shift or consolidate public sensibilities and invent the possibility for new kinds of place attachments" (*ibidem*).

Media-enriched image building is not only "the new selling point" (Boyer 1992: 193) in the competitive marketing of cities which reduces the city to a map of tourist attractions, but it sometimes reflects or interprets in a different way local identities and cultures. It can be promotion-oriented, it can invent or simulate the past. It can even be together an escape from reality and a simulation, as it is in the contradictory relationship between cyber spaces and real ones. What is important in media-enriched imageability is that "outsider image", at which the city aims, is the result of an "insider image" (Dematteis 1995: 92; Beinart 2001: 4), which represents local identity. Only if there is an

intersubjective agreement between experiential meaning and promotional meaning, in fact, is the meaning of a city truly shared.

Moreover, there is a mutual relation between the form of the city and its narrative content: the form of a city can shape the stories that unfold there; at the same time, stories can be used to shape urban form.

Places in public space

Looking at public space in order to understand its composition is to consider at the same time urban spaces and the way in which they are experienced by people (thus becoming "places").

The meaning of place and space often merges in our knowledge of urban life, but people are acquainted with places. This issue requires to introduce the concept of place as a space with some adjectives adhering to: space becomes place when people organize it and attach a meaning to it (Tuan 1977).

Places are spaces marked by the life of people, which adhere to them in time.

When people experience a place they perceive social and material space, images and time together.

Public space is therefore a hybrid of places[2], not only material and perceptible, from which the influence of images and the sense of time can not be kept apart. Three types can be identified:

- "proper place", material and social space which is publicly lived;
- "place over place", immaterial space of images which overlay public spaces, leaving traces on them;
- "temporary place", a particular length of public time which is lived in space.

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2 The division of public space in three places is clearly the outcome of an analytical reflection, useful to understand similarities and differences among urban spaces and to investigate their constituent features. Beyond doubt, there are not fixed edges between different places and the question "what *place* is this space" (paraphrasing Kevin Lynch 1972) has not an only answer, as well as in each place there are some traces of the others. However, I think that this analytical construction is a helpful instrument to study the complexity of urban space, aiming to understand what is the role played by each place compared with the others in contemporary cities.

Via Toledo in Naples, the shopping mall Bluewater near London and Siena's Palio are the selected examples to investigate the influence of (electronic) media on urban places, the resulting space-time relations and the role of distinctive characters of places.

The redesign of via Toledo as a wasted imaging effort

Via Toledo's always been the Neapolitan main road, always swarming with a mass of people walking, driving, or doing shopping. The separate world of "Quartieri Spagnoli" marks the boundary on the west side, as perceptible edges: atmosphere changes, just turning the corner of via Toledo.

Since 1998, after some negotiations between the shopkeepers and the Town Council, via Toledo is a pedestrian street.

Fig. 1: Toledo

The recent redesign of the street, with 12 metres sidewalks and the central lane closed to cars, is an attempt to restore decorum and rules, totally ignoring content and information peculiar to via Toledo.

What impresses most is the sharp contrast between the idea of the redesign and the image perceived walking along via Toledo.

As a matter of fact, if we pay attention to the accounts of travelers' experiences we can understand the meaning of this street, a really swarm and noisy place.

In 1787, J. W. Goethe, visiting Naples during the *grand tour*, is surprised by the "unbelievable sights" of street life in which each day there was something new and peculiar. German traveler C. A. Mayer, in 1840, describes via Toledo as: "the tip point of swarm in the streets. Foreigners are stunned by an incredible noise, the vendors' scream, the call of the mass, the beggars' claims". Unfortunately, recent process of construction of narratives about the potential of via Toledo has forgotten the character of that place and the vibrant street life, strictly aiming at restoring order.

The result of the lack of fit between promotional meaning and the experience of place is that the life of the street wiped out the new image imposed and nowadays via Toledo is the Neapolitan version of a present-day suk, with its noise and its swarm, together with some contemporary characters.

In fact, via Toledo has resumed its "inner" image. Actually, it is an unplanned melting pot market. There's a great care of display of goods, especially on sidewalks which become temporary "horizontal windows", not of minor importance than shop windows: cardboard boxes and umbrellas often placed on a trolley, or sheets laid on the ground are the trails of this open-air market. As you can find everywhere but, at the same time, as it is peculiar to Naples, thus confirming the value of "ethnoscapes" (Appadurai 1996).

There are "found places" everywhere. People watching is the main activity; there are several places from which to see and to be seen.

Sidewalks are places where chance encounters occur, and where "phoneurs" (Luke 2005) wander. On the other hand, still Dumas in the *Corricolo* (1841-43) indicated the role of via Toledo as forerunner: "via Toledo is a neutral ground where you can observe the remains of the old world which is fading and the irruption of the new world which is coming".

Bluewater as a simultaneous elsewhere

Bluewater, the well-known shopping mall near London, located in northwest Kent, is a triangular mall, featuring three big department stores, one at each corner. It brings people in contact with "other places" through images, food, brands, cineplex and video games.

The desire to get away and escape is as common in society now as then with things always so hectic. In shopping-malls as well as in Bluewater it is the knowledge that people are always ready to escape for short periods of time that

is used in deciding what attractions to include. The concept is to put under one roof all the places where people like to go to. So that they could go everywhere in one day.

Interior and external spaces are really different, not only for spatial form with its "tricks -limited entrances, escalators placed only at the end of corridors, fountains and benches carefully positioned to entice shoppers into stores" (Crawford 1992: 13) – but also for rules and behaviours.

In interior spaces there's a mix of retail and entertainment, along a "domesticated street" (Jackson 1998) where it is possible practise "window shopping" (Friedberg 2003) thoughtlessly, without feeling worried about bad encounters or unpleasant events.

Although inside Bluewater the map of the mall is everywhere, it's really easy to get lost and to change early programmes. Each destination buyer, after a short time, becomes an impulse buyer; all consumers will be afflicted with "Gruen transfer"[3]. Only outside the mall it is possible to find some relief from interior artificial environment (music climate lights and homologation). And also some rest from interior rules which fix who can enter and who is excluded.

Fig. 2: Bluewater

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3 The Gruen transfer, named after mall architect Victor Gruen, is "immediately visible in the shift of consumers from a determined stride to an erratic and meandering gait" (Crawford 1992: 14).

Even so, not everything is artificial at Bluewater. Shopping malls are consumer-oriented spaces, but lots of people going there, also if under the influence of media, can meet other people, socialize and have fun. Although the immersion in a typical "non-place" (Augé 1992, 1997 and 2003) where human beings *should* disidentify, there are no monadic consumers as well as social relations are not excluded. Interaction can vary from a mediate and maybe passive form (as if between you and the world there is a veil through which you can see but not touch) to an active and involved form. Unpredictable is not left out of shopping malls, although the excess of regulation.

That's why, in my opinion, e-commerce cannot completely replace window shopping: what really counts in order to decide how to buy is the consumer's choice according to circumstances.

After some time in Bluewater it may happen to feel disoriented, anxious and apathetic. These are all symptoms of "mal de mall" (William Kowinski in Crawford 1992: 14; Underhill 2004: 201), a perceptual paradox brought on by simultaneous stimulation and sedation, whose effect is shoppers' paralysis.

The remedy for "mal de mall" is planned inside Bluewater: the "quiet room", where you can forget the artificial world of the mall. You must do some ritual gestures to come in this small room; unlike the other interiors the threshold is stressed, and there is no music inside. In the quiet place you will find a wash room for ritual washing, a listening space, a chaplaincy, and silence. But also a disturbing atmosphere.

Actually, the quiet room, instead of a quiet place, is an overcontrolled space in which rules are everywhere, and make difficult to remain there. The only thing to do is to go out of isolation, falling again into the "pleasure dome".

It's not easy escaping from the escape. This place doesn't succeed in producing the refuge it is designed for.

The only escape from Bluewater is outside its alienation effect, in the way back home.

The Palio as a roundtrip journey

The famous horse race[4] among the "contradas" taking place in *Piazza del Campo* in Siena twice a year in summer is not simply a temporary occasion but

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4 The race lasts three circuits of the square which starts at the fall of a rope: 90 seconds of suspended

transforms into a distinctive place in Siena's public life. It is not a permanent space: it transitorily colonizes public urban space, overlapping and somehow replacing it.

This "temporary place" is an escape from reality, which, at the same time, reflects and interprets local identities and cultures in a process of constant city imaging. The Palio can be considered as a sort of journey which has its preparatory period, a departure date, a return to ordinary life and a subsequent period of nostalgia.

In the seventeen contradas[5] of Siena the preparations for the Palio take a whole year. Preparations for this "Palio journey" include special costumes, partisan songs, rituals, predictable scuffles between opposing contradas, popular beliefs and superstitions. The involvement of the city and the community is total. In the *Campo*, the yellow volcanic surface, the fence which marks the inner edge of the racecourse, the temporary stands placed on its edges, the mattresses placed on the dangerous corner of *S. Martino*, all transform the everyday urban space. The rhythm of the piazza's daily life also transforms. The continual crowding and emptying of the space, the shouts and the silence, the tolling of the *Sunto* (the *Mangia* Tower's bell) provide temporal reference points.

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time. At the end of the race a cannon is fired and the Palio, which is, in fact, a banner with the image of the Virgin, is presented as the prize to the winning horse.

5 Each contrada is a territorial and popular unity with its own rules and flags. Only ten of them participate in each of the two races which take place in *Piazza del Campo* at dusk on 2nd July and 16th August.

Fig. 3: Palio

But the Palio is also an inward journey. The new space is a deeply acute psychological space for the people of Siena.

Measures of elsewhere are not only in material and immaterial space but also in the mixture of times which the Palio merges. There is the common time of the inhabitants of Siena and the time of the members of each contrada. There is the "inner time" which is increasingly in tune with the "public time" (Lynch 1972: 125). Then, there is a sort of hybridised historical time, where a mixture of Siena's past epochs are re-enacted over the course of the event.

Although this journey through the time, the horse race takes place nowadays and the new media take part in the event. Siena disguises herself for the Palio, but also for television shooting. As far as representation of the Palio and its relationship with tourists, the event is reported by mass media but not created for them. Even if the tourist gratifies local pride, she or he is nevertheless considered an intruder on the territory of Siena. To adopt Schuster's term (2001: 376), the Palio is an example of "signature ephemera"[6] in which a local

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6 Mark Schuster (2001) points out that signature ephemera are different from "media events". They are temporary urban events that are indicative of and native to a particular place. They are shaped by citizens and passed along by local practices, customs and word of mouth. In those events tourist is a tolerated by-product of the celebration. Through "signature events" it is possible "to recognize authenticity in the midst of imaging", and to live a truly authentic experience, such as being together in a large public space with other people.

self-made image is repeatedly constructed and performed. This local image is an expression of the city's community life and local people's identification with urban space.

Actually, the relationship between Siena and the image of the Palio reproduced by media has changed over time.

In 1947 a group of journalists and writers from Siena promoted the *Comitato Amici del Palio* in order to encourage the protection of the tradition and its improvement. From the very beginning the *Comitato* established close relations with the local press and attempted to draw the attention of television and tourists to the event, not only for economic reasons but also as a matter of local pride. The first broadcast of the Palio dates back to 1954.

In recent years Siena has been "on the defensive" against the media, which is seen to misrepresent the event (by over-focusing on the violence and the possible death of horses), and because it draws in too many tourists (Savelli/ Vigni, 2004).

For these reasons in 1980 the seventeen contradas of Siena constituted the *Consorzio per la Tutela del Palio di Siena*, a cooperative whose aim is to contain the exposure to media of the event. Since then, the use of coats, flags, costumes, colours, and their reproduction on objects or publications must be authorized by the *Consorzio*. There are various levels of control regarding the management of the image of the Palio. These range from attempts to preserve the "true" image of the event (thus rejecting media's search for sensational news) to the control of all commercial rights concerning the public ceremony.

The Palio is not simply a mythologized representation of the past, but a tradition that responds to internal psychological needs. Media can succeed in reinforcing the sense of place, if they stake on the character of this "temporary place".

Conclusion: public spaces augmented by media

Media may augment vibrant public spaces, especially if place-awareness is respected while adopting media. There are no recipes promising simple steps to get good public spaces in which media play a leading role. Impact of (electronic) media on public spaces, indeed, vary according to the differences among places. However, we can identify some themes that suggest important lessons for urban public spaces in the augmented city.

First, in a "proper place" – as we can see in via Toledo – city transformations by media must take into account the sense of place; if they ignore it, this place might take its revenge, modifying recent setting and transforming into a messy place.

Second, in a "place over place", the great satisfaction in escaping to elsewhere has a tipping point in an overcontrolled environment. It is clear that if we feel overcontrolled we look for less artificial places. Sometimes, if the remedy for artificiality is already planned inside a "place over place", as it is for the "quiet room" at Bluewater, to seek safety in flight is all that we can do.

Third, exposure to media is effective for augmentation also in case of "signature ephemera" which can produce "temporary places". As well as a "temporary place" is constructed when a media event succeeds in "making place". The experience of Siena's Palio, as a matter of fact, shows that media play a role in the representation of the event and, therefore, in the consecration of a space into place.

Hence, as far as urban public spaces, the value of place is unreplaceable (even) in the augmented city.

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GUNTHER LAUX

Transformation – City Morphing

"... there is also the equal and opposite temptation to look at the world as though it were an extension of the imaginary, this, too, has sometimes happened to A., but he is loathe to accept it as a valid solution, like everyone else, he craves a meaning, like everyone else, his life is so frag-mented that each time he sees a connection between two fragments he is tempted to look for a meaning in that connection, the connection exists, but to give it a meaning, to look beyond the bare fact of its existence, would be to build an imaginary world inside the real world, and he knows it would not stand, at his bravest moments, he embraces meaninglessness as the first principle, and then he understands that his obligation is to see what is in front of him (even though it is also inside him) and to say what he sees. ..." (Paul Auster. The Invention of Solitude. 1988)

Fig. 1: Michael Heizer. Munich Depression. 1969

Intro

The city of today is not finished. The city is not a hermetic, closed structure, urbanism is not a hermetic discipline, it is an overlay of different aspects and positions. The cities change: they shrink and grow, continuously, always and since ever. Therefore, the transformation of the city is not a new phenomenon,

it is an ongoing process. It is one of the fundamental conditions that qualifies an urban context as a city.

This process does not only represent the transition itself, it is the result of the correlation between man and space, an interdependency between society and city, articulated by different needs, requirements, claims and forms of living.

How does the society influence the city?

Fig. 2: Society and the city: Roy Lichtenstein. This must be the Place. 1965 / M-Maybe. 1965

Changes

During the last decades in Europe an absence of the earlier belief in the possibility of rational (city-)planning is recognisable. Is the Charta d'Athènes a failure, which proposed to implant order into the chaos of irregular development of the industrial city?

No wonder, the lack of orientation is reflected in the realised architecture of the cities: The side-by-side proximity of unlike functional buildings of modernism, colourful renovated streets of the middle age and the glamorous headquarters of banks, hotels and insurance-companies. Considering the present structure and reflecting on some statements of contemporary urbanistic positions, a wide range of irregular city images are actually coming up: a return to the traditional Baukunst, Koolhaas' Generic City interpretation, as well as the discussion about global and local identity, "The World is Flat" (Thomas Friedmann 2005) versus "The World is Spiky" (Richard Florida 2005).

As single principles of solution seem to be questionable and problematic, but is understandable as a reaction to the multifarious society, the change from a producing society to an informal informative information society.

To understand the current development as a complex process of transformation of the image of the city it seems to be necessary to draw up some simply summarised historical highlights, exemplary stations, to contextualise the development with the determining and changing main factors.
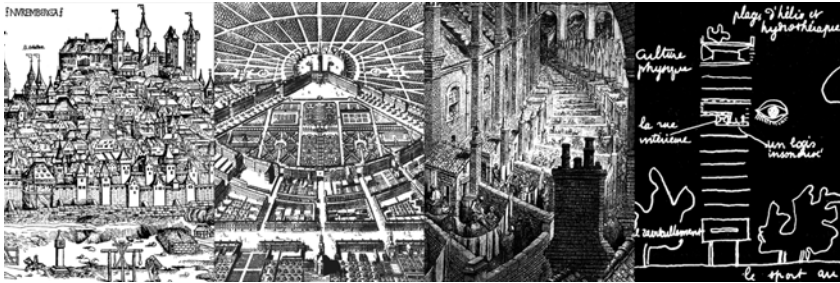

Fig. 3: City images: Nürnberg. 16th cent. / Karlsruhe. 17th cent. / London. Gustave Doré. 1872 / La Ville Radieuse. Le Corbusier

STATION 1. The Middle Age. The beginning of urban contexts is the city of the middle age. While the classical city of antiquity presented the principle of organisation of public life, during the middle age the ownership of land became the base of the government and the principle of organisation of a feudal society. This new organisation and the innovations of new agricultural technologies effected an enormous revolution of the agrarian economy and a successive population explosion. Therefore, cities arose from this surplus, the nutritive substance of processing division of labour, economic production and trade, wealth produced autonomy, personal individuality, equality and legality. This civil liberty and authoritarian power defined the city. This discrepancy evoked the unity of the city. Homogeneity. Identity culminated in the development of humanism, renaissance, reformation, nature philosophy, science and the early capitalistic monopolies of trade became the transfer from the middle age to the modern times.

STATION 2. The Residence City. The transformation of the working conditions, proto-industrialisation, hardly reacted to the formation of the city. Craft-production changed into manufacturing. The city became a condensation of

political power of the government of princes and earls. The consolidation of their territorial power led to an expansion of the cities and modern defensive constructions were arranged. Along the territorial boundaries, the residences and the Palaces moved from the edge into the centre of the city and were arranged through the organisation of axis, diagonals and perspectives. The chaotic structure of the decentralised quarters of the middle age were radically and rationally re-ordered, an obtrusion of timeless aestheticism: The scenery of the renaissance, the excessiveness of the baroque.

The city reflected the changed, new expression of values, the modern order of working conditions, as well as the centres of organisation of production, distribution and the capitalist bourgeoisie. These preconditions as well as new possibilities of production promoted the rise of a new society: The working class, released from the feudal system, united in organisations.

Primarily, England achieved these frame-conditions. The nobility invested in the agricultural food-production, mining and infrastructure to open up the marketing potential in America and elsewhere. Therefore, in the eighteenth century, there started the immense dynamic process of the industrial revolution. The characteristic of the process of industrialisation is the secular process of concentration of capital, parallel to the industrial innovations ran the process of expansion of modern transport and communication systems. The society became mobile and classified, an expression of a modern polity.

STATION 3. The Industrial City. The negative conditions of the urban agglomerations are known. Settlements of the working class were formed, by the process of industrialisation: Glasgow, Paris, Berlin and the new industrial settlements of the Ruhrgebiet. This beginning of the modern city was not only stamped by misery, increasing, industrialisation, new political and social systems, but also at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by the end of the 'Great Styles', the end of limitation and regulation of the city, degraded to a speculative space by the new organisation of labour. The figural encirclement, the density, the continuity, the coherence and the power of identification of the city was lost or became a new functional interpretation, a space of complex artificial systems. The result was the process of displacement and an enormous expansion and dispersion of the city. The increasing 'slumming' of certain areas to expel the proletariat from the centre into the suburbs to render possible the creation of processing sites for the economy and infrastructure, possi-

ble because of the increasing electrification, canalisation and mobilisation of the city.

The drift of big factories into the suburbs and outskirts, the constant migration movement, the development of the garden city idea, the working class estates, the privileged villa settlements in the countryside and the increasing number of modem low-cost-housing estates created an explosion of the cities, the expansion of surrounding belts, the beginning of the existence of non-structured periphery and sprawl. Without a doubt it is in response owing to the Charta d'Athènes 1928, to try to find an architectonic solution to the social question of the nineteenth century.

It changed the earlier formal revolutionary image: the central criterion of planning is not any more the uniform system of the city, the accentuation of public architecture, but the institutionalisation of housing conditions, a necessary transformation of the image of the city.

Another important fact of transformation and change was the exponential multiplication of the upcoming information sector, increasing from less than 10% at the beginning of this century to actually above 50% in the USA. In this fact were the modern theories of the post-industrial society based: Technology of information and the city.

STATION 4. The City of Today: Society of Media. During the last decades a further epoch of development of the city is recognisable, which will intervene in a completely different way in the structure than the earlier techniques of communication did: Space as a material base. Space could get lost. The crises of the city, the lack of local identity also means the lack of the significance of local space. Modern techniques do not need the psychic-physical dialogue any more, there is no necessity and dependence on physical transport of communication. The communicative system city loses significance and importance and could become superfluous.

Therefore, the formation of the contemporary city is an expression of social, economic, political and especially technical reality. The development of informative technique will increasingly influence the city to occupy marketing centres and investment societies of the information industry. The new function of mediation of telecommunication will invade the city and working space, a re-organisation and installation of a new city-structure.

The centre of the city will become the control-headquarters to supervise the returns of goods and services, the international transfer of finances, the

production of information and the labour market. The city will not be connected or related to the centre any more. the city will be an autonomous place, elsewhere.

The environments, the belts around the city will be a wide heterogeneous area, stamped by peripheral character, an agglomerative area, a territory of speculation, devastation and desolation including social and economic differentials.

The periphery is organised by individuality instead of identity. The railroad is replaced by motorways because of the non-profitability of passenger transfer, the enormous need of leisure-time activity and individual democratic transport systems. The city has already integrated and invaded the communities of the periphery, in a determined process of sub-urbanisation or urbanisation of the countryside, the sprawl.

The ideology of the modernity transformed the aesthetic model of the city. Until today, this ideal seems to be relevant, city planning is still defined by function and reduction.

Is our society still the same like 50 years ago? – Obviously not. But why did not the understanding of city transform like the society did?

Where is the impact of modern media?

Fig. 4: Society and individual: Category Confusion. Bruce Mau. 2000 / UN Studio. Hybridisation. 1999

The Way Things Go

The sociological aspect to associate with modem technologies of information and communication is always influenced by the question of the interdependencies between space, behaviour and the connection between environment and the coherence of life. Therefore, the actual issue is the design and the development of those dependencies, the kind of mediation between the different sectors of life of the individual or the social community.

The present formation of our society is an inter-connected network of individuals and communities, the different segments of life overlay each other and define in their totality the context of life. The different connections of the individual's life always change. During the last decades the speed of perception multiplied itself by the separation of different parts of life, housing, working, education, recreation, ..., and defines their conscious anchorage and reflection. The result is the reduction of the sociological and psychological dimension of *space*. *Space* and its infrastructural equipment changes to a restricting and selecting function influencing the formation of the environment and directs the behaviour of the users, as an empirical and reduced practice of social organisation of space.

The psychological perception, use and definition of *space* create the phenomenon of behaviour setting, the structural uniformity of milieu and behaviour.

The following question will be, if and how the influence of the modem technologies of information and communication effect the formation of space.
What is the present result?
What could happen in the future?
Why and how is the society transforming these days?

Fig. 5: Transformation of the city: Andreas Gursky. Paris. 2001 / Jeff Wall