



BLOCK 4
CULTURAL POLITICS OF URBAN SPACE



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UNIT 12 CONSUMER, CCULTURE, LEISURE*

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12.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the nature and scope of urban sociology;
- Describe the nuances of cultural politics involved in understanding cities;
- Discuss the urban studies in this field; and
- Discuss the concept of leisure as a form of Consumption.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the last Block of this course, Urban Sociology- In Unit 11, we described the urban neighborhood and Gated Communities and its concerns.

In considering the cultural politics of urban spaces, we must confront what is at the very core of our conception of the urban itself. But in order to make the journey, we need to arrive at a notion of ‘cultural politics’; the reasons for this will become clearer as we proceed. While traditionally the focus of

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political sociology has always been the relations between state and society. The 'cultural turn' in sociology has pitted politics as a potential inherent within every aspect of social life, as politics becomes the site for the contention of relations of power. There are two main arguments that this cultural turn makes: the first is that culture is universally constitutive of social relations, and therefore also of identities; while the second is that culture plays an undeniable role in shaping social relations and identities in contemporary society today. The nuance between the two positions is slight; and it could be said that while the first is epistemological-drawing as it does from an unequivocal stand on a theoretical assumption, the other is historical, as it concerns the empirical changes in social life drawn out over a period of time. It should be kept in mind, however, that these two are not strictly differentiated positions, and tend often to overlap. In this unit we will explain these different aspects to you.

12.2 CULTURAL POLITICS: MAJOR DISCOURSES

One of the first thinkers that we turn to for an understanding of the epistemological position is Anthony Giddens, whose primary concern was always the relation between socially operative structures and individual agency. He argued that social structures were reproduced effectively by social actors in their everyday practices, and that in this reproduction there was a sense of knowledge about those practices that they were continuing. Giddens relied on an ethnomethodological approach to arrive at such a conclusion; for him, while social action can be taken only in the background of resources provided by structures, only through the careful interactions of knowledgeable social actors (Giddens 1984). It is when one starts to consider that knowledge is itself a function of culture that Giddens' theory of structuration be considered a theory of social relations and identities through cultural constitution. His later work dealt explicitly with the idea of radical social change, where he considered that structures too came with an idea of 'self-reflexivity', where social actors effect social change not through working on others but on themselves, which in turn produces, as well as indicates, changes in the structures that constitute these social actors (for instance, the family, the state, etc). For Giddens, therefore social life in the contemporary world became increasingly (self-) reflexive because the development of modernity brought along with it a de-traditionalisation, and a clash of cultures whose primary cause was globalisation. (Giddens 1990)

It is not however only Giddens' work that gives us a sense of the epistemological position within the cultural turn. Discourse theory, particularly inspired by Michel Foucault, as well as an entire wave of post-structuralist thinkers exemplify the idea that culture is constitutive of that is, it is made up of social actors (or subjects). Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau's post-Marxist ideas are also an example of a similar way of thinking; although they do not use the word 'culture', it is a better approximation of the general understanding that culture universally constitutes social actors. They develop Gramsci's theory of hegemony, centring the idea that culture is an

important tool in winning political consent over a majority, extending it to be encompassed in their theory of discourse. They use linguistic tools and post-structuralist concepts to elaborate a more accurate understanding of the idea that the articulation of signs in relation to the unstable boundaries between 'us' and 'them' may also serve to construct a form of hegemony: it is not that they always preexist. In addition to this, they argue that political identities and socio-economic structures do not have a transitive relationship, as is understood in classical Marxism, forging therefore, what for them became Gramsci's residual economism, since he had always maintained that hegemony was, either directly or ultimately, a function of class. For Laclau and Mouffe, the identities that hegemonic discourse ends up creating are always radically contingent and can never be completely specified prior to their existence, only preserving as a trace the relations between presently existing social structures and practices. Moreover, they posit a dialectic between structures and identity which means the former provides some elements of conditionality so that the latter may be possible, while the latter is constructed through the articulation and the re-articulation of the former. Should social relations and cultural politics be understood in such a manner, in the final reading it will not be structures that determine ultimately the fate of culture, but rather it will be seen that structures themselves are culturally constructed. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

In the work of Scott Lash and John Urry, a similar kind of debates are found, but with a slight difference. For them, social relations under capitalism are mediated so thoroughly by signs, that to be able to make sense of capitalism, it would be imperative to understand the position of culture vis-a-vis both production as well as consumption; and increasingly, it appears that the position it occupies is an implicated one. They thus make an argument for the historical case of the 'cultural turn', since they argue specifically about the extravagant degree of resource allocation to the designing and marketing of consumer products. They too, like Giddens, theorise that the economy is highly informationalised that is, dependent on exchange and use of information and aestheticised under the garb of reflexivity. (Lash and Urry 1994) Other postmodern theorists, including Zygmunt Bauman and Stephen Crook, Jan Pakulski, and Malcolm Waters, see the radically unstable nature of social life as being maintained precariously through the contortion of symbols and meanings which fix collective identities (Bauman 1992; Crook et al 1992). Non-Marxist theorists emphasise not the alienation, but rather the fragmentation and individualisation coming from the lack of faith in narratives of progress (like social mobility through hard work, reason, etc) as well as the resultant collapse of overarching culture-specific norms. While for Bauman, the social order is contingent on the seductions offered by consumerism, combined with repression for 'faulty consumers', both for him as well as for Crook, Pakulski and Waters, the outcome of post-modernisation is quite uncertain.

At this juncture, however, it seems instructive to briefly discuss the meanings of the contentious term already introduced which has been understood by different people to convey a wide variety of things. There are three distinct meanings of the term postmodern: firstly, there is the shift to a so-called new

era of "*postmodernity*," then there is the impact of "*postmodernism*" as a cultural form in the contemporary city, and then the pros and cons of *postmodern urban theory and method*. Best and Kellner (1997) distinguish between postmodernity as social and political epoch generally considered to be succeeding the modern era in a historical sense (Kumar 1995; Filion 1999; Clarke 1997); postmodernism as a form of politics, identity and set of cultural products (in all types of popular and high cultural media), which can again be differentiated from its earlier variants in modern politics, identities, and culture (Jameson 1991; Lin 1995; Sorkin 1992; Filion 1999); and, finally, they refer to postmodern social theory as a new kind of theory and a specifically developed mode of theorizing, different indeed from modern social theory, whose point of enquiry was quite different, and therefore, understandably were the results. (Dickens and Fontana 1994). To put it in the words of George Ritzer, "the idea of the postmodern encompasses a new historical epoch, new cultural products, and a new type of theorizing about the world" (1997, p. 6). While different strands of postmodern theory, cultural commentary, and critical inquiry exist, with the purpose of explaining these present conditions, there are four common concepts that unite the postmodern: (1) a refusal of unitary, universal and totalizing schemes in acceptance of a focus on plurality, difference, and complexity; (2) a renunciation of structurally closed systems and fixed, unchangeable meanings with a complimentary world of uncertainty, contingency, ambiguity, and irony; (3) a replacement of the belief that one and only one unbiased truth exists that fits everyone, with the idea of perspectivism, hermeneutics, (a method of research) and cultural and theoretical relativism, changing ever so subtly across boundaries both of space and time; and (4) an emphasis on removing regimented disciplinary spaces, both academic and cultural, from within and between. The immense claim of a new social form, a new historical epoch, and a new mode of social and individual experience guides the assertion of the postmodern contention that we have entered an era of chaos, fragmentation, discontinuity and ephemerality.

12.3 URBAN STUDIES AND THE CITY

As regards the blurring of academic boundaries, it is very important to note that the constantly evolving flux of urban issues during the 20th century, continuing well into the present, has resulted in a very sharp increase in interdisciplinary studies of the city, such that the study of urban phenomena is no longer the domain of any one discipline in particular, but is a kind of basket of a wide-range of disciplines, including Economics, Literature, History, Geography—to name barely a few. In the city with a marked hodgepodge tendency of economic climates, pronounced further by reshifting notions of scale between the global and the local, as well as an increasing emphasis on interconnectivity, interdisciplinarity has led to a widening of the limits of urban sociology whilst retaining its own set of concerns, such that other disciplines have not now impinged on what was traditionally considered to be its terrain. This, however, is only one side of the coin, with the other side opening up more localised elements within the field, such as housing, education, policy, sexuality and gender, etc, such that social theory

does not ultimately stay far removed from the localities of its study, and that context-sensitive research continues to be conducted. We see therefore, that two parallel and uncannily paradoxical developments have occurred in urban sociology: first, an expansion into interdisciplinarity, often accompanied by grand theoretical frames, and second, a submission to narrower studies of more micro-elements of urban life, with not a lot of connections being made between them.

12.3.1 Gap between Theoretical and Micro-Empirical Studies

There was and it appears will continue to be—a tension between grand theoretical work and micro-empirical studies, although it should be noted that it's really more at the level of ideas than an explicitly radical shift. With the expansion of the urban field and its consequently international turn, more and more we encounter a division of labour, leading to further gaps between sociological theory and empirical studies. What is interesting to note, however, is that the division has become more and more diffused in actual practice than it is considered to be. With increasing research on gated communities, the rise of fantasy cities, transnational migrations across several international borders, as well as on global cities and the governance of local economies, the bridge between academics and the world of policy and practice is being slowly constructed. Increasingly it is seen that knowledge production is revised over and over again by suggestions from urban sociologists working in different parts of the world, whose opinions shape the discussions surrounding different paradigms of thought, actively effecting changes in the understanding of urban sociology, thus rendering the theory/practice divide effectively void. It should also be kept in mind however, that newer questions about transnational migrations or the 'global local problematic' remain central, in addition to the earlier questions of inequalities and social mobility, segregation and the unmaking and remaking of social and political orders.

12.3.2 Cities and Their Types

There has been a long history in urban sociology of using analytical models that stress the convergence of cities, based either on urban ecology (inspired from the University of Chicago's writers), or in the context of Marxist and neo-Marxist tradition, which privileges the inexorable influence of capitalism on modes of government and social policies. It is important to notice, however, that if the urban is everywhere expanding and growing, then it means either that urbanised societies are universal in nature, or that there are different kinds of models of urban cities, differing from each other in their mix of social, political, cultural and economic structures. This does not in any way suggest that all models are unilinear in their approach, whether the cities in consideration are colonial, or Asian, or Western European; it does, however, reinstate the intricacy and plurality of urban worlds.

From the onset of the process of urbanization, there has developed several competing as well as entwined understandings of cities:

- physical infrastructure: the materiality of the city as seen in its walls, squares, houses, roads, etc. as well as waste.

- the cultural city as it is imagined: representations, aesthetics, ideas, symbols, differences, arts, texts, religion, etc.
- the politics and policies of the city in terms of hierarchies of power, government, welfare, mobilization, education and public policies
- the city of rioters, often carrying economic, ethnic, or gender inequalities, of segregation, and social movements pertaining to everyday life;
- the city as an economic entity, in terms of division of labour, scale, production, consumption and trade

12.3.3 Urban Ecological Studies

And therefore the city, as a unit of analysis, has been suspended between diversity and different mosaics of cultures fluidity and identity and moving borders, between contingent interactions and events, the volume of interactions and their complexity, as well as between strangeness and fragmentation. While multiple identities have been highlighted by anthropologists, and in addition the multiplicity of experiences, and the urban mosaic, other perspective focusing on issues of integration, social order, control, unity, domination, patterns of capitalist development and structures and systems have also been explored (Bassand et al., 2001; Caldeira, 2000; Halle, 2003). For different urban contexts to be done justice, these issues will have to be foregrounded: urban sociology plays a role in determining the forming, unforming and reforming of societies. However, if a significant body of work in urban studies focuses on fragmentation and difference, another way to think about cities is to give prominence to notions and issues of the social order and its politics.

The city having been the location for a host of issues confronting sociology, the former lies at the latter's very heart of its origins in the emergence of industrial capitalism. Although it is to be kept in mind that it was not consistently a site of knowledge production generally, or even in urban sociology specifically. By the end of the 20th Century, the effecting shaping of society had found its own critical loci in the government's workings (the Fordist contract, the Keynesian state project), and with it in mass production—including the mass production of suburbs. It is an interesting observation that a majority of conditions in contemporary cities put to test well-established forms of empirical analysis and theoretical knowledge. A particular set of challenges for urban sociology comes out of the convergence of major macro-level social trends and the spatial patterns which accompany them; some of these trends include globalisation, and the rise of new information technologies—further strengthening transnational and trans-local dynamics, foundational alterations in employment relations, the intensifying presence of particular types of socio-cultural groups, and the specific forms of subjectivity these transformations herald.

12.3.4 City & Its Cultural Spaces

Moreover, cities are sites where these trends come together with others in unique, oddly complex manners, specific to the location of the city. The complex city therefore becomes a heuristic zone: it can actually produce knowledge about, and make intelligible, some of the major transformations shaping society through its internal dynamics. Major cities can thus also be thought of as nodes where a host of distinct processes intersect in pronounced concentrations. With globalisation as the context, many of these processes operate at a global scale: cities, as a consequence, can be thought of as a territorial or scalar moment in a vast world of trans-urban dynamics (e.g. Hamel et al., 2000; Rutherford, 2004). This makes the city not a bounded unit, but a complex structure that can articulate a variety of cross-boundary processes and reconstitute them as a partly urbanised condition (Sassen, 2001). On the other hand, some cities emerge as one of the spaces of the global, enunciated with several institutional arrangements and cross-border dynamics, often surpassing the national level; in fact some cities have had this capacity long before the current era of postmodernity. The problematic therefore emerges as one of conceptualising place as something not necessarily marked by a pervading sense of closure; and secondly, of conceptualising the local without the necessary burden of physical proximity. With this perspective, the space of the city gets reconstituted as a haphazard, somewhat disaggregated space, with the critical boundary functions being at its heart, rather than its physical perimeter or administrative boundary.

Returning to one of the first thinkers on the topic—since now we must begin to make the move back to discussing cultural politics that condition the city—Max Weber's *The City (1958)*, was a consolidated effort to specify a city which combined dynamic and conditions that compelled its residents and leaders into creative and innovative responses and/or adaptations. His work was all about understanding the conditions under which cities can be a positive and creative influence in the lives of people. Ultimately, for Weber, cities were a set of social structures that encourage individuality and innovation, thereby becoming instruments of historical change. Therefore, the key takeaway becomes precisely this: both as a site that allows the recording of and commentary on some of the major transformations afoot, and as a site for the emergence of new ways of engaging with and participating in politics, the city becomes a kind of kaleidoscopic lens which looks at a wide world of change.

Box 12.0

Approaches centred on political economy, emerging from the 1970s, developed within a framework of geography and political science, through the work of David Harvey (1983) and Doreen Massey (e.g. 1984). In the work of anthropologists like Frederic Barth (1969), Marilyn Strathern (1981), and Anthony Cohen (1983, 1985), the fluidity of cultural boundaries was recognised as being of reflective importance, and with it came the recognition of the nuance of the insider-outsider distinction. In the much-celebrated phrase of Cohen's (1985), this led to the recognition of the 'symbolic construction of community'. Anthropologists have in addition proved to be

especially adept at exploring the global connections which define contemporary senses of place (Appadurai, 1996). Moreover, it was the geographer David Harvey (1983, 1985) who used Henry Lefebvre's Marxist insights (1990) to understand the constructed nature of urban space and the immense power of capital to structure urban experience. Political scientists have also developed influential accounts of urban regimes and place boosterism (e.g. Mollenkopf, 1983).

12.3.5 Consumption and Cities

Although initially worked up by Louis Althusser's concern with the need to scientifically define one's theoretical object, sociologists have been worried about what precisely the 'urban' actually is (Mellor, 1977; Saunders, 1981; Smith, 1980). In the work of Manuel Castells (1977) this had the unintended consequence of opening up the doors to an entirely new dynamic area of academic study - of consumption. It failed, however, significantly in its attempt to provide a clear singular definition of the urban. In retrospect it is easy to dismiss these efforts as, although valiant, ultimately not very productive - since what other area of inquiry has within it the capacity offer so precise a definition of its subject matter? It marked, perhaps unintentionally, the end of urban sociology as a frontrunner within the broader field of urban studies. It is not incidental that the most influential form of sociology within urban studies in more contemporary research has not been urban sociology, but has arrived instead from a more unlikely source in the sociology of science: through the significance of actor-network theory (Amin and Thrift, 2002), as well as through Foucauldian inspired approaches. And this, of course, leads us back to our earlier discussion, about the different paradigms of cultural studies and how they can be understood.

Having undertaken both a discussion of our theoretical tools, as well as the object of our analysis,, we have delved deeper into the study of urban spaces.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What are the two aspects of culture and politics in city life? Discuss.

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- 2) What is the gap between theoretical and micro-empirical urban studies?

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12.4 THE PLURALITY OF URBANITY

Proponents of the globalisation thesis argue that the transition to a globalised economy has created newer forms of power and influence, outside the realm of the jurisdiction of the federal and regulatory agencies or national labour unions, or other forms of democratic decision-making and citizen action. Central to this argument is the growth of transnational corporations and the enhanced mobility of money, goods, and services, across cities, nations, and continents. Studied with this decisively neo-Marxist methodology, globalisation has undercut the scope and role of the welfare state, has resulted in lower wages and living standards, and an over-reliance on place-bound identities (Cox 1997).

12.4.1 Production Centred Capitalism to Consumer Centred Capitalism

Yet, another way to understand the urban is to pay heed to what diverse scholars have described as a broad shift from production-centered capitalism, rooted in work and coercion, to consumer capitalism, based on leisure, market "seduction," and spectacle (Bauman 1992; Ritzer 1999). Marx and Marxian thinkers foregrounded the "means of production" in their writings; more contemporary thinkers have developed the idea of a "means of consumption" and have made a shift into a more cultural analysis of consumer society (Baudrillard 1970/1988; Ritzer 1999; Slater 1997). One branch of postmodern critique rejects explanations of political economy embedded in capitalism and commodification, maintaining that consumer society is dominated by more general signs, models, and cultural codes, all of which flow freely like signifiers (Baudrillard 1975). Scholars argue that "spaces of consumption" -themed restaurants, theme parks, bars, casino gambling, shopping malls and mega-complex for professional sports - have emerged from widespread cultural and aesthetic changes including the development of sophisticated marketing schemes, the proliferation of visual images and electronic media, and the all important emergence of style as identity. Other analyses focus on how cities are redeveloping their river and canal waterfronts, emphasising the aesthetic or historic value of their architecture, or designating certain areas of the city as artistic quarters, and preserving or reconverting old buildings and archaic technology (Bassett 1993; Boyer 1992; Reichl 1997; 1999; Strom 1999; Kearns and Philo 1993; Short 1999; Gladstone and Fainstein 2001; Boyd 2000).

12.5 CONCEPT OF LEISURE

Concept of leisure emerged as a new idea in post-industrial societies as a by-product of changes in occupation and production processes where the urban dweller engaged in factory work, offices from day till night. Therefore; the idea of giving a break to the worker the notions of entertainment; parks etc came. Many scholars have worked in this area and contributed to the knowledge of leisure.

One important study exemplifying a postmodern vision is Hannigan's (1998) recent study of the rise of "Fantasy City". Here he describes a "postmodern metropolis" of pleasure and consumption, delineating its eccentric and idiosyncratic, but fundamentally formative, characteristics:

- 1) it is theme-o-centric, where" everything from individual entertainment venues to the image of the city itself conforms to a scripted theme, normally drawn from sports, history or popular entertainment" (p. 3);
- 2) it has aggressive branding or name-orientation, where the financiers turn entertainment spaces into potential markets, attempting to make huge profits on "selling licensed merchandise on site" (p. 3);
- 3) it (the fantasy city) operates day and night;
- 4) it shows distinguishing features of the use of modular constructions that seamlessly blend a megaplex cinema, themed restaurants, an IMAX theater, and other megastores;
- 5) it is home to a solipsistic environment where entertainment spaces are "isolated from surrounding neighborhoods physically, economically and culturally" (p. 4); and
- 6) a fantasy city is postmodern "insomuch as it is constructed around technologies of simulation, virtual reality and the thrill of the spectacle"

Box 12.1

Other critical urban scholars venture to explain the development of consumer society historically, with its urban manifestations as an organised extension of production relations, and the "new means of consumption" as being a crucial productive force of capital itself (Gottdiener 2000). Similar in intellectual drift to this political economy version is the work of prominent urban scholars such as Castells (1996), Harvey (1989), Gottdiener (1997), Soja (2000), and Clarke (1997) who emphasise that recent global level changes in capitalism have produced "spaces of consumption" in nations such as the United States that are more important to the national economy than are "spaces of production" which are increasingly located overseas. Influenced by new mechanisms of marketing and advertising, the populations of more affluent countries consume at a high level and are continuously attracted to the consumption experience, like a moth to flame, through the always-changing protean forms of glitz, hype, and theming. In turn, multinational corporations, in these very nations, manufacture goods and fashion by exploiting workers in low-wage nations with outsourced labour. Importantly, David Harvey (1989; 1993) argues that capitalism shifted, in roughly 25 years, from nation ally-based, state-guided model to one that was globalized and had free market policies; and as a result of this it generated a global wave of reordering of firms, high finance, and urban space.

A lot more has been said about space with regard to studying the urban. For Henri Lefebvre (1991), the globalizing processes of capitalism are always contending processes of spatial differentiation and control by the modern nation-state; and this, in his opinion, has led to "an explosion of spaces" where relations among groups, nations, and other geographical areas are

rearranged and reordered, producing new identities and new bases of social conflict, as well as organizational order. Edward Soja (2000, p. 152), argues that there has been a " restructuring of territorial identity and rootedness amidst a sea of shifting relations between space, knowledge, and power that has given rise to a *new cultural politics* in the postmetropolis, significantly different from the politics of the economy that dominated modernist urbanism (emphasis in original)."

Further still, different variants of postmodernism argue that the foundational ordering principles of society are now cultural imagery, motifs, and symbols, rather than its prior basis in economics, as in class or capitalism (Smith 1992). Opponents have, however, assailed the radical culturalism of urban postmodernists and reject arguments about the total autonomy of culture and the cultural basis of new forms of consumption. David Harvey (1989; 1993), a proponent of this view, locates the emergence of a sophisticated place of marketing in a new developmental phase of "time-space compression" within capitalism. Fredric Jameson (1984; 1991) too links the commodification of culture to a new stage of multinational capitalism including the ubiquitous prevalence of transnational business, a starkly contemporary international division of labor, staggering growth in international banking and stock market speculation, and current synergies among the media, computerization, and automation. Neil Smith's (1996) work on the revanchist city draws attention to the structural links between the seemingly separate and relatively autonomous institutional actors - major corporates, real estate developers, entertainment companies, public agencies, and rail operators - and gentrification.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Discuss some of the dimensions of leisure and pleasure in cities.

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- 2) What did Henry Lefebvre say about social differentiation and urban spaces?

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12.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you learned about cultural politics of urban spaces. The nature of urban sociology and urban studies which have focused on cities, consumption and leisure in the Capitalist scenario have been reviewed. We also discussed the modernist thinkers as well as post-modernist thinkers view points.

We have seen therefore that postmodern social theories and methods are perhaps an overly ambitious and controversial, if overly vague, set of ideas and assumptions which when combined challenge the very core of modern social theory and method, resulting in an approach that tries to be holistic in terms of culture, history, geography, politics, planning, and so on and so forth. The post-modernist question is very much one about the reliability of objectivity and causal analysis in the social sciences. Applying these ideas to the study of cities as a space of cultural politics, as a space of both consumption and production, We have explained to you the ideas and explanations about cities globally.

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12.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The cultural politics of urban spaces can be understood in two ways. One is that culture is considered universally to be constituted of social relations and therefore also the identities of different people involved in that culture; and second argument is the opposite that is that culture itself plays an important role in shaping social relations and the identities in contemporary societies.
- 2) The gap between the theoretical and the micro-empirical urban studies lies more in terms of ideas than in reality. But the grand theoretical works focus on the global universal levels of theorizing whereas the micro-level of cities/towns/districts/village etc. the issues like slums; substance abuse; rise of crimes and delinquency etc. also needs to be studied and there needs to be a link between them i.e. the theoretical and the micro-empirical studies.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The city has been examined as a site of not only work but beyond as a site of pleasure and leisure. Concept of leisure gains significance in urban contexts where people spent long hours day and often nights; emerged in activities involved in the processes of production; distribution and exchange at a large scale. Thus, nature of cities and their structures have accommodated; stadiums for sports; auditoriums; theaters; cinema halls; malls, restaurants etc. which provides avenues to people in the cities.
- 2) Henry Lefebvre (1991) says that in the urban context the globalizing process of capitalism leads to spatial social differentiation in the sense of providing prime spaces to those who can afford it as per their social status. The state and society conjointly involves itself in this social differentiation process. For example when a prime land is chosen to set up a factory or Mall; the slums are re-located to the outskirts of the cities.

UNIT 13 CASTE, CLASS, ETHNICITY AND GENDER*

Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Urban Cultural Politics: Understanding Caste, Class, Ethnicity, Gender
- 13.3 Power and Politics in Urban Context
 - 13.3.1 Foucault and His Notion of Power
 - 13.3.2 Power and Resistance leading to change
- 13.4 Ethnicity and Chicago School Policy
 - 13.4.1 Chicago School and Power Dynamics
 - 13.4.2 Schools and Symbolic Politics
 - 13.4.3 Spatial Distribution of Schools and Ethnic Identities
- 13.5 Gender and Migration
 - 13.5.1 Citizenship Rights and Cultural Differences
 - 13.5.2 Changing Roles of Women and Migration
- 13.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.7 References
- 13.8 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Explain what is meant by the different categories of social stratification in the context of urban cultural politics;
- Describe the urban context in terms of power and politics;
- Discuss Foucault's analysis of power, domination and resistance;
- Critically assess the role of schooling with an example of Chicago School distribution within the city to explain social stratification; and finally
- Highlight the role played by gender and migration to the cities of people of all castes and communities representing different cultures.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you had learnt about what is meant by urban cultural politics to understand the nature and processes of cultures and consumption in the city. How the city life is segmented and differentiated in terms of power. Here, in this unit, we have focused on the different categories of caste, class, ethnicity and gender found in cities.

Here, the urban power politics is explained to you using Foucault's theoretical understanding of domination and subordination inherent in all social, political, economic and cultural relations.

13.2 URBAN CULTURAL POLITICS: UNDERSTANDING CASTE, CLASS, ETHNICITY AND GENDER

The cultural politics of urban space also includes more traditional markers of identities, like caste, class, specific identities ethnicity and gender, race, and class, amongst others—and especially in the Indian context, caste. These, however, make an appearance in not quite the same way as understood earlier, in a linear sense, but in a more pluralistic manner, in which one identity does not necessarily override all others. The more complex the urban landscape is, the more are the points of entry we find into the individual subjectivities of the people who constitute that landscape. Through the inclusion of separate but overlapping categories such as caste, class, ethnicity and gender, we shall see how these urban landscapes are transformed, and moreover what it means in two contexts in particular—the first is the context of the present, insofar as what it connotes for those for whom a certain socio-cultural order has a definitive impact; while the second is in the context of the future, insofar as what the future might be said to contain, should the present be such and such. Of course, it goes without saying that the past too is implicated in the analysis of the present and the future, since it is fundamentally the past that determines the present. Let us understand the impact that a range of forces have had on the urban landscape in different geographical locations, and what that means for its inhabitants. This however, will have to begin with a basic discussion of power and its dynamic aspects as it functions in the urban landscape.

13.3 POWER AND POLITICS IN URBAN CONTEXT

Having already understood the cultural turn in urban studies, we can now understand cultural politics as potential in every social context in which power is relevant as a contributing factor, including the contestation of regimented identities of caste, class, ethnicity or gender and normative relations in which one individual (or group) is subordinate to another wherever they occur in the social field.

13.3.1 Foucault and His Notion of Power

It will be helpful now to turn to the work of Michael Foucault, who was concerned with precisely how power operates within a social field, and for him the answer was not quite as simple as an institution such as the state. Such arguments were always the mainstay of political sociology, having taken the conventional definition of politics for granted, understanding it as taking place at nation-state, and Foucault broke out of the texture of these arguments. In fact, Dowse and Hughes argued even before Foucault that there was really no analytically compelling reason as to why political sociologists focused their attention on state institutions as the focus of power (Dowse and Hughes 1972:7).

Power is productive for Foucault the sense that it works to produce particular types of subjective identities through the indoctrination of certain practices which continue to remain invisible from the point of view of the older model of power as sovereignty. Power, for him, is plural: it is exercised from innumerable points, from a single political centre, as the possession of an elite or the logic of bureaucratic institutions, and it is not governed by a single over-social field (Foucault 1980). Crucially, therefore, power for Foucault is productive. His analyses are opposed to what he believes to depend on the juridico-discursive model in which power is seen as possessed by the state, especially the law, and is used to impose order on society.

He in his work also argues that, as a matter purely of definition, where there is power there must be resistance. In 'The Subject and Power', Foucault discusses the relationship between domination and resistance in contemporary society. He moves beyond the essentially negative, restrictive and inhibitory perspective on power in the juridico-discursive model, arguing that power necessarily works on what he believes are fundamentally 'free subjects'. He writes that it is only where resistance is a legitimate possibility, where subjects although not fully determined may still realise different opportunities of action from the scope that is available to them, that it is instructive to think in terms of power; otherwise it is simply violence that we are contending with. Slavery, for instance, did not involve a relationship of power where the slave is in chains, but one of violence. Foucault here rebuts his earlier argument that "power is everywhere" and that subjects are discursively constructed. He admits that the 'free subject' indeed exists, as they necessarily must, prior to discourse. He still retains the view, however, that subjects are constructed in practices of power in so far as the subjects are subjected where they are controlled by others, and also in so far as they are tied to their own identity by their own (or another's) conscience or self-knowledge (Foucault 1982).

Foucault's various analyses of power are linked directly with the antagonistic struggles of social movements. He contends that in contemporary society, perhaps the most important aspect of these antagonistic struggles in is the way in which they challenge subjectification i.e creating distinctions amongst people based on caste, class, ethnicity and Gender. For him, social movements are based on the assertion of existing identities to a significant degree, and therefore also on the acceptance of binary categorisations of

normal/not normal produced in discourses as well as practices of power. But they can also involve the refusal of existing identities: the examples he cites are struggles against the power of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, of medicine over the population and of administration over the ways people live. For him these become the core issues through which subjectification can be questioned.

Foucault also refines his analytics of power with the concept of domination in his later work. As one of his critics, Barry Hindess, writes, he increasingly uses domination as a term to analyse what is more commonly thought of as power, replacing the term power with government.

13.3.2 Power and Resistance leading to change

According to Hindess's reading of Foucault, he used more precise terms in order to distinguish between power as a feature of all human interactions and domination as a particular structure of power in which antagonisms are consolidated in hierarchical and stable relations. Power, therefore, does not get denounced as such, but starts to represent the potential fluidity of social relations. Since power fundamentally only acts on those who may resist it, and who may consequently in turn act on others, there remains always the possibility of reversals of power. In domination (or violence), however, those who are dominated are so cramped for assertion as movement that the theoretical reversal of power become impracticable, though it is never strictly speaking impossible (Foucault 1982; Hindess 1996). Foucault becomes relevant for us today because, in his work on power, resistance and domination, he lays out the principles of a model of cultural politics. In so far as politics involves the contestation of fundamental and incidental relations of power, it is always possible to resist: it becomes a constitutive aspect of all social relations which are not based on violence. In so far as power necessarily, by definition, involves resistance, power relations are fluid, always potentially reversible.

13.4 ETHNICITY AND CHICAGO SCHOOL POLICY

How might Foucault's analysis of the reversibility of power relations hold its water when it is applied to something as concrete as the public education system in Chicago? We will find that, indeed, it has a part to play there as well. Pauline Lipman's work closely follows four public schools in Chicago, and tries to decode the insidious racial politics inherent within the discourse of development. Lipman writes in her paper, "Making the Global City, Making Inequality" (2002), that there has been little analysis of Chicago school reform and "its relationship to the political economy or cultural politics of the city, especially the cultural politics of race". What becomes important for our discussion is that, in Lipman's reading, both agency and constraint coexist at all levels of the system (much like in Foucault's reading of power as productive, as well as restrictive). Policy-as-practice, therefore, becomes the outcome of several conflicts and points of contention embedded

in certain contexts, as administrators and teachers “rewrite” policies through their own actions within the restrictions imposed on them.

13.4.1 Chicago School and Power Dynamics

What is the context in which Chicago claimed itself as a Global City, leaving a very definitive mark on its schooling system that ultimately disenfranchised a major chunk of the minority population? The context was one of economic globalisation, and the technological capacity to generate knowledge at increasingly efficient speeds. In addition to this there was a highly integrated and flexible system of production of goods and services resting on the foundation of a global reorganization of the labor process and transnational circuits of labor, with the tapping into of worldwide primacy of finance and speculative capital (Castells, 1989, 1998; Korten, 1995; Sassen, 1994). Under the global rule of capitalist accumulation, these developments pronounced existing inequalities and created new ones. These developments also destabilize huge sections of the populations on a national as well as an international level, ultimately fostering the spatial reorganization of cities, creating greater social segregation of races, ethnic groups, and social classes (Castells, 1987; Sassen, 1994, 1998). Within the United States itself the economy shifted from a base in manufacturing to one in service and information; and this created a highly fragmented and progressively polarised labor force (Castells, 1987, 1995; Sanjek, 1998; Sassen, 1994).

The trends that marked the new labor force within the new economy were:

- 1) A decrease in basic manufacturing, accompanied by a shift in its labor structure. Jobs held by operatives rapidly decreased, while there was a sharp increase in professional and technical jobs.
- 2) A significant increase in service jobs, which were highly segmented by wages and education, salaries, and benefits. There was rapid growth both in high-skilled technical, managerial and professional jobs at the upper end (primarily held by White males) and in low-skilled, low-wage jobs at the other, lower end (held mostly by people of color and women).
- 3) The condensed proliferation of contingent labor: temporary, part-timework, as well as multitasking, done mainly by people of color, women, and immigrants working two or more jobs, sometimes even four.
- 4) A steadily growing informal economy that employed primarily women and immigrant workers, who produced specialized consumer goods and services for the significantly wealthy (e.g., in-home child care and custom-made clothing) as well as low-cost goods and services for low-income families (e.g., unlicensed family day care and garage-produced furniture).
- 5) Negligible work opportunities in the formal economy for a significant section of potential workers, primarily African-American and Latino youth.

In short, this was the result of the simultaneous processes of upgrading, downgrading, and exclusion of labor in a work force that was highly stratified by class, race, national origin, and gender (Castells, 1989). This was the new economic context in which economic growth contributed to greater inequality (Sassen, 1994; Wolf, 1995). At the time, Chicago fit several criteria of a global city, such as a plethora of sophisticated producer services, and corporate head-quarters to provide for vast international markets (Abu-Lughod, 1999), and political leaders and financial elites used global city boosterism to justify development policy (as some suggest; look at Sanjek, 1998), of which the Chicago school policy was a part.

Gentrifying areas were booming in Chicago; as seen here at the expense of working-class residents. The inflation in property taxes and rents made the neighborhoods where they raised families, established relationships and dreamt of an ideal future too expensive for them. Low-income neighborhoods becoming dilapidated due to neglect, while the city was simultaneously diverting taxes from libraries, schools, and other public services to infrastructure for development in select upper-class areas (Podmolik, 1998). Low-income Latinos and African Americans were in particular being forced out of rapidly gentrifying areas and being increasingly segregated in parts of the city and suburbs with the most depressed economic conditions (Betancur & Gills, 2000a).

13.4.2 Schools and Symbolic Politics

While these were the structural conditions, there was a kind of symbolic politics in the local schools through the operation of accountability policies suggested by the Chicago public school reform. They shape the public understanding of education, explain educational failure, and organise consciousness around common perceptions of what constitutes legitimate classroom knowledge, educational practice, and acceptable social identities (Gusfield, 1986). Although Spanish was the first language of virtually all of the students or their families in some schools, they were devalued in favour of new requirements for testing bilingual students in English; the new bilingual education standards also symbolically privileged English language acquisition over bilingualism and biculturalism. Moreover, CPS policies were the kind of high-stakes policies which also relocate responsibility for the failure of public education from the state to individuals (cf. Katz, 2001). Additionally, the emphasis on standards as a path to equity was a deliberate move on the part of the state as a shift away from the responsibility to provide additional resources to make up for past discrimination. Moreover, much like high-skates policies, the standards further regimented an order which continued, as a whole, to systematically produce inequality that they claimed to address.

Thus, we see that as

Lipman's analysis focused on the reality that although there were new educational opportunities claimed as being open for everyone, the vast majority were primarily students of colour who were likely to attend schools arranged mostly around basic literacies that would prepare them only for low-

wage jobs. The idea was that in a system of unabashed inequities, the agenda of standards, tests or accountability was framed in the language of equality and justice (Vallas, 2000).

13.4.3 Spatial Distribution of Schools and Ethnic Identities

It was not only in curriculum that this sharp disparity between different ethnicities was noticed. Spatially as well, the data seemed to indicate the same inferences: although high-profile programs and schools alleged to be academically challenging were scattered throughout the city, almost all whole-school college-preparatory programs were found clustered in predominantly middle-class, gentrifying, or White areas. A majority of the considerably academically challenging programs in low-income communities involved only a portion of the students. Military, Vocational, and DI schools—most involving all students in a school—were clumped together in low-income African-American or Latino areas.

Moreover, these inequalities take on new dimensions in the context of Chicago's economy. It would not be unfounded to state in the present tense some of Lipman's analyses. Putting aside a simple correspondence between schooling and the occupational structure, there is a striking relationship between evolving educational differentiation in the Chicago Public school reforms and the segmented labor force in the restructured economy. In the new economy of simultaneously downgraded and higher-skilled labour, many of the jobs available to graduates of vocational and military schools do not offer the security, benefits, or somewhat stable incomes of the unionised industrial jobs of the past. In addition, educational differentiation takes on new meaning in a society in which knowledge is far more decisive than in the past. No longer can it be conclusively said that a high school diploma is sufficient to gain entry to a respectable, well-paid and stable job which offers a secure sense of future. In the informational economy, education is a key determinant, if not perhaps the only factor, of whether one will be apart of the downgraded labor sector or the high-paid knowledge worker.

Equally important, differentiated schools and programs provide students with different resources from which to construct their identities. Students assimilate identities by apprenticing to a particular discourses which constitute social practices that apprentice them to certain identities with profound implications in a layered society of a "relatively well-paid core of knowledge leaders and workers and a bevy of people servicing them for the least possible price" (Gee et al., 1996, p. 47). This social re-production of identities may not necessarily be purposeful; and as Foucault argues, there is enough agency within individuals to want to continue to remain in a position, although a subjugated one. It is inevitable, however, that the material and ideological effect of a segregated learning produce differentiated subjects, for whom the social field is constructed in such a way as to foreclose possibilities of certain identities, within a space of cultural politics.

Check Your Progress 1

1) How do you understand caste, class, ethnicity and gender in urban spaces? Discuss.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2) Fill in the blanks:-

- a) In the urban cultural context ----- is the contributing factor to determine the social standing of different categories of people.
- b) ----- believed that power is productive in the sense that it works to produce particular types of subjective identities.
- c) In his analysis of power and domination Foucault lays emphasis on the----- of cultural politics.
- d) Chicago is considered to be a-----city.
- e) Example of Chicago City School system is significant as it reveals not only class bias but also of ----- difference in access to good education.

13.5 GENDER AND MIGRATION

The most obvious sense of cultural politics is the politics of civil society, and particularly, as Foucault himself argues, of social movements. Different social theorists have agreed with the idea that the construction of a collective identity in meaningful interactions is an important aspect of activity relating to social movements. Social movements are therefore engaged in cultural politics, contesting dominant understandings of events, institutions and their positioning in relation to others in order to construct an oppositional collective identity (Melucci 1988; Diani 2000). These forays into cultural politics are not regarded as a kind of precursor to ‘genuine’ politics at the level of the state; in fact, it is generally understood that without the initial contestation coming at the level of the civil society, it is highly unlikely that the state itself will take notice. For this, what is required is the stark refusal of subordinated identities and the maturation of ways of living and of communities in which egalitarian social relations are heralded. The women's movement is a prime example of the importance of cultural politics in this respect (Tarrow 1998:171-4).

13.5.1 Citizenship Right and Cultural Differences

Yet another area very much in the foreground that has attracted the attention of political sociologists, which demands them to seriously consider the implications of cultural politics, is citizenship rights and their contestation. One of the emergent themes in the cultural politics of citizenship is the idea

of 'difference' in equality: an idea that has found its inspiration very squarely in contemporary social movements. Given that multicultural rights are now increasingly being seen to be fundamental, the rights to 'difference' in equality such as, of gender, caste, class or ethnicity are just as much a matter of cultural politics. In the case, let's say, of LGBTQ+ rights, the entire concept of citizenship itself is questioned; this is evidence enough that social movements challenge the idea of a single universal citizenship, conceived of in the same image as that of the homogenous entity of a heterosexual male, who is the head of a household in which women do not work and are only caretakers, in which there is strict and regimented control of sexuality, etc—the possibility of a different conception of a citizen too is opened up with this contestation.

In the case of migrants, the struggle remains very much the same on some level: they too are considered to be different; or rather, as Zolberg & Long (1999) write, "Immigrants are almost always seen to be the bearers of an alien culture". In a wide-ranging, understandably unequal field, civil servants and politicians draw on, reflect, or manipulate popular notions of cultural and ethnic difference national versus alien culture to develop policies and manage state institutions, and it is these notions which consequently, reinforce regimented and popular notions of national, as opposed to alien, culture. We can therefore say that these issues surrounding migration and reproduce cultural politics, in addition to framing them in particular sorts of ways which shape the various levels of discourse. What is at stake in a discussion about migration is not literally the physical act of moving from one country to another, but the interplay of the variegated dynamics of cultural politics concerning nation, nation-state, and migration, where, variously yet singularly understood within one umbrella, a nation is an imagined people and their purported culture within a border, the nation-state is the institutions of governance associated with a nation, and migration is the movement of individuals across borders.

On shifting local, national, and global scales, constantly evolving ideas of culture have been prompted through emergent modes of transnationalism (Vertovec 2009) and the dismantling of fixed identities after the realisation of new global mobilities (Urry 2007). These differing and unstable identities, always changing, have also been supplemented steadily by contrasting forms of social organisation, changing varieties of capitalism, as well as increasingly tenuous financial investments, based on risks associated with the "darker sides of globalisation" (Appadurai 2006, p. 3). The end of the Cold War and the post-9/11 scenario has been linked by Mamdani (2004) to the rise of "Culture Talk," which "assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that essence" (p. 17). Changing social and political circumstances are not just the shapers, but also the drivers of culturalism and cultural politics.

Several of these concerns were brought to attention by Stolcke, who wrote: "The 'problem' of immigration is construed, however, as a political threat to national identity and integrity on account of immigrants' cultural diversity, because the nation-state is conceived as founded on a bounded and distinct community which mobilises a shared sense of belonging and loyalty

dependent on a common language, cultural traditions, and beliefs” (Stolcke 1995, p. 8). This is not the entirety of the discussion about the problem of immigration: another resoundingly prevalent factor is the idea that such culturalism proves to be effective not only because of the static nature of its assumptions, but also because of the fact that it works within what can be considered to be a popular, everyday notion of structural-functionalism, which proposes that all values, social institutions, and cultural practices are parts of integrated, cohesive whole based on a structural interdependence to be rendered functional, contingent also on the equilibrium of its parts. In such an understanding, should one part of the systemic whole be under perceived threat, or even vulnerable, the integrity of the entire system is put at risk; the more, therefore, the cultural cohesion is deemed to be, the higher is the degree of anxiety one has to confront when a constitutive part is threatened.

Considering the politics of this one constitutive part of a whole, which when threatened puts the entire system at risk, is crucial to understand the politics of immigration. These parts operate often as symbols, or rather as synecdoches (parts which stand for the whole), and assume a central importance in the discussion about immigration and thereby role of cultural ethnic, gender, differences brought from ‘alein’ regions/states, nations etc . This helps us understand, for instance, the extraordinary symbolic weight of head scarves in France, where “bits of cloth came to stand for certain fears and threats at several specific moments” (Bowen 2007, p. 4). Hence, in Bourdieu's view, “the explicit question—Should wearing the ‘Islamic’ voile [headscarf] be accepted at school? - hides the implicit question—Should immigrants of North African origin be accepted in France?” (quoted in Bowen 2007b, p. 246).

Conceptual as well as symbolic structuring can clearly be seen therefore, in policies and institutions for accommodating and managing cultural diversity. Thus, as Varenne (1998) puts it, multiculturalism or cultural diversity arise “less as a result of cultural difference and much more *as acultural process* that produces particular forms of difference within a historical and institutional context . . . ‘Diversity’ is never the simple end product of substances living together in some geographical space” (pp. 27-28, original emphasis).

To consider the situation in India, especially in the context of gender, most of the issues that concern it are absent in much of the early literature, since it was considered to be a chiefly male movement, with women being thought of as residual in the process or as dependent followers. Figures from 2000 depict a different reality, however, with women accounting for 46 per cent of all international migration from third world countries, with the largest number found in Asia (Thapan 2005).

13.5.2 Changing Roles of Women and Migration

Furthermore, migration plays a veritable role in creating new opportunities for women, whether it be to improve their lives economically or to transform oppressive gender relations; usually it is seen that one comes with the other. It is a crucial source of income for women who migrate, and as a result of

earning, they thereby have higher chances of increased self-confidence and with it, greater autonomy, initiating upward social mobility. Currently, female migration has been linked to labour demand particular to gender-specific patterns, specifically in South East Asia and Latin America (Krishnaraj 2005). A bevy of young Asian women have been motivated to join migration streams, to capitalise on the increased demand for female labour in the context of new, more liberalised, economic policies in India, either with their families or in other groups. This may not apparently foretell great heights in women's development, but it certainly does enable them to become providers for their families' survival. In addition, it also allows the men of the household to find the required time to get a job, or to learn crucial skills required to get one.

It is interesting to note that the number of women farmers in Rajasthan alone has risen by 86 per cent between 1981 and 1991. Much of this, unfortunately, is due to problems in the agricultural sector, forcing hordes of migrant women to work on construction sites, in quarrying, and in mining. Nevertheless, migration is thought to have an empowering impact on women in terms of increased economic independence due to their participation in the labour force, and consequently improved self-esteem. It is not however as rosy a picture, though, since female rural-urban migrants are the most vulnerable to gender-based discrimination, since it is unfortunately a labour market that reserves, often in the informal economy, the most monotonous and least skilled jobs for them. Moreover, women migrants are also commonly trapped in the unbreakable chain of long hours of work for pithy incomes, hazardous working conditions, and physical and sexual aggression (Krishnaraj 2005). Evidently it seems that women suffer the worst fate, whether they migrate as 'residual followers' or face the gruesome reality of their own conditions if they choose to migrate alone. The National Sample Survey 55th Round 1999-2000 showed that marriage was by far the most common reason for female migration in Orissa (75 per cent), followed by the migration of the household breadwinner (17 per cent); while other reasons, such as employment, housing problems, or health, together constituting merely 8 per cent of the motives for migration.

Clearly it can be understood that migration is far from being a free and unregulated process. Rather, it is largely governed by a combination of social structures as also the state, which channel them into a limited range of work options. Thus while women seek to negotiate with the state, they do so from the very limited perspective of identities that were given form ultimately by a very traditional and conservative social order (Thapan 2005). There is indeed a compelling need to understand female migration in all of the nuances that it throws up for analysis: it is not merely a strategy to reduce poverty but becomes often a vehicle for upward mobility and economic diversification, becoming essentially a gateway to personal discovery and well-being.

Labour migration today fuels the Indian economy more than ever before, with migratory flows contributing to India's macro-economic stability in myriad ways: the dependence of the construction industry on migrant labour, migrants from eastern borders in service-sector occupations, remittances sent home by employees who have settled abroad, and also formal industries

relying on migrant workers to fill in 'casual labour' slots (Ghosh 2005). It can be said without a scope of doubt that the culture of migration is now a part of the Indian social fabric. It has become so deeply rooted in the cultural landscape of some states that it has become a conscious (and not a coerced) choice, acquiring an essentially normative character. Out-migration therefore becomes a process of cultural politics, in the sense that the yearning to migrate gets passed on from one generation to the next and through and across various social networks.

The slight glimmer of hope that might sometimes be found in the migration of labour from one city to another, the reality of unbalanced urbanisation is not an easy one to confront. This, alongside extreme urban decay, brings the migrants' problems to a fever pitch, not easily resolvable. Acute urban congestion and decay are found in the massive rural metropolitan flux of distressed people who have out-migrated from other states and regions, like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan (Mukherji 2001). Besides, the illiterate and the unskilled migrants are occupied mostly in very poorly paid informal sector jobs, given the reality that so few jobs are being generated by capital-intensive industrialisation. Such migrants have no other choice but to rely on odd jobs in the informal sector, moving tragically from rural poverty to urban poverty.

Given that there is a rising 'feminisation of migration', the fate of the remaining family members and communities is yet another concern. With female migrants now outnumbering male migrants in several parts of the country (Nguyen et al. 2006), and with traditional caregivers steadily on the move, several Asian families now face a 'care crisis'. This should alert us to new ways of conceptualising and addressing issues regarding not only migration as a phenomenon, but also the family as a unit, thinking about those who are 'left behind' in the space of the urban, which is both as exciting as it is threatening and dangerous.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) In urban cultural politics why do we need to examine the issue of 'citizenship rights' critically.

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- 2) As a migrant in a city what are the role changes that women face?

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3) What is seen as the negative side of migration of labour from poor rural countryside to the cities?

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13.6 LET US SUM UP

We have seen therefore, a host of issues pertaining to different cultural locations within the urban space, having understood it through various lenses of caste, class, ethnicity, and gender, being constituted through a fundamental understanding of power relations. We have given you an example of Chicago School Policy to explain and illustrate the dynamics of urban policies in cities which establish the status and of a society considered largely to be based on 'equality'. But having said this we find that cities have class and ethnics, cultural and spatial differences in terms of packaging of education and the placement of schools within the city.

In India we have tried to understand the very complex issues of cultural diversity and migration, as well as, gender issues.

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13.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Caste, class, ethnicity and gender are categories of social stratification. Caste is specific to Indian society. However, these are traditional markers which in urban spaces get overlapped with each other. Societies which are more complex with population of all regions, cultures etc. share different subjective identities. Here there is mixing of different castes, classes, ethnicities and gender differences which create an urban cultural, social landscape.
- 2)
 - a) Power
 - b) Michael Foucault
 - c) Principles
 - d) Global
 - e) Ethnic

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Political sociologists need to study the issues linked with 'citizenship rights' and their contestations, because often it is based on 'differences'. People of different regions and cultures who migrate to a city often seek citizenship rights and wait of for it 'sometimes' several years. It is a politics where state and different migrant communities are involved.

- 2) Migration to a city/town plays a very positive role on women in a sense that it opens up new opportunities for them. It opens up their chances of greater freedom from traditional oppressive customs and practice. It allows them to contribute income to the family, and therefore, has an empowering effect on women.
- 3) The negative aspect of labour migration in large numbers from poverty stricken villages to the cities is that it leads to transition of rural poverty to urban poverty.



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GLOSSARY

- Politics** : An instrument of governance for achieving the goals of the society.
- Economy** : A system of institutions for the production and distribution and exchange of commodities in a society.
- Urban Machine Growth** : It is the commodification of place such as socially and economically valued land.
- Urban Regime** : Formal and informal arrangements to ensure governance by public-private coalition.
- Market System** : A system in which an individual person owns and controls the means of production with no legal intervention.
- Command System** : A system in which state has a complete control over the means of production.
- Occupational performance** : Act of doing which involves the actions guided by the existing occupational forms.
- Work** : Social activity which involves human performance at a workplace.
- Occupational structures** : Division of workers according to different occupations.
- Urban spaces** : Areas with high density of population.
- Organized sector** : Sectors registered with government.
- Bourgeoisie and Proletariat** : The capitalist class is known as the bourgeoisie. This consists of industrial, financial and mercantile capitalist. They own and control industrial, trading and financial enterprises. They exploit the working class for maximizations of their profit and expansion of their enterprises. They constitute the dominant class in the capitalist society. But working class known as proletariat is the exploited and powerless class. This class does not own the means of production. The workers work for wages in the capitalist enterprises to earn their livelihood.

Guild System (*Sreni*) : The guild system known, as *sreni* in the contemporary literature was a very important feature of the ancient urban economy in India. Urban craftsmen and traders had organized themselves into different guilds. Members of a particular guild practiced similar occupation. These guilds played a very significant role in organizing production and in shaping public opinion.

Mixed Economy : India has adopted the path of ‘mixed economy’ for economic development of the country after independence. The concept of ‘mixed economy’ refers to the co-existence of both the public sector and the private sector in the national economy. The public sector is owned and controlled by the government but the private sector is owned and operated by individuals, families or private bodies.

Mode of Production This is a phrase, which one comes across frequently in the writings of Karl Marx. It refers to both, forces of production and relations of production. Forces of production include things like the tools, machines, capital, land etc. Relations of production include the relationships between the owners of production and the workers.

Organised and Unorganised Sectors : Indian economy has been viewed as dual in character comprising organized or formal sector and unorganized sector possess the characteristics such as large-scale operation in terms of capital and labour, wage labour, modern technology, public and private ownership, regulated and protected markets for labour and output, skilled labour etc. Small-scale ownership, private or family ownership, labour intensive, backward technology, unregulated market and unprotected labour are on the other hand the important features of the unorganized sector enterprises.

Urbanism : It is the urban way of life where people are engaged in different occupations and professions which are non-agricultural in towns/cities

- Urbanization** : The process of people living in the rural areas migrating to the cities and towns.
- Migration** : Movement of people either temporarily or permanently from one part of the country to another.
- Urban Density** : It refers to number of people in an urban area (i.e. cities, towns, etc.) per square kilo-meter.
- Demography** : Related to age, sex, density and overall structure of population.



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