Chapter 1

Introduction

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Public spaces mirror the complexities of urban societies: as historic social bonds between individuals have become weakened or transformed, and cities have increasingly become agglomerations of atomized individuals, public open spaces have also changed from being embedded in the social fabric of the city to being a part of more impersonal and fragmented urban environments. Can making public spaces help overcome this fragmentation, where accessible spaces are created through inclusive processes? Do the existing and new public spaces of the city serve the public at large, or are they contested and exclusive? Whose public spaces are they? This book offers some answers to these questions through case studies of making public space in different countries.

The book investigates the making of public space in contemporary cities, through analysing the process of urban design and development in international case studies, focusing on the changing nature of public space and the tensions that arise between different perspectives and groups. Two broad frameworks of *place* and *process* are used to study and analyse the urban public spaces in transition. Public spaces, it is argued in this book, should be *accessible places,* developed through *inclusive processes*. With these criteria, therefore, it would be possible to analyse and evaluate the spaces that are being developed in cities around the world.

The book's authors share a common concern about the quality and character of urban public spaces, a concern that has led us to investigate a series of major empirical case studies. Crossing the cultural divides, the book brings these investigations together to examine the similarities and differences of public space in different urban contexts, and engage in a critical analysis of the process of design, development, management and use of public space. While each case study investigates the specificities of particular cities, the book as a whole outlines some general themes in global urban processes. It shows how public spaces are a key theme in urban design and development everywhere, how they are appreciated and used by the people of these cities, but are also contested by and under pressure from different stakeholders.

The book builds on the theoretical foundations developed in earlier publications (Madanipour 1996, 1999, 2003a, 2007), and major research projects funded by the European Commission among others (Madanipour *et al.* 2003; Madanipour 2004). The chapters, with the exception of Chapter 6, are written specifically for this book, reporting on major research projects funded by international organizations, national governments and research councils. All of these research projects, with the exception of Chapter 11, have recently been conducted at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University. This book is the first attempt to bring together the results of these various research endeavours in a single volume. The book is written for scholars and practitioners in built environment and social sciences, including urban design and planning, architecture, urban geography and sociology, with an interest in the relationship between space and society, and the dynamics of change in contemporary cities around the world, as particularly manifested in urban public spaces.

The book's key argument is that, although the social and spatial composition of cities differ considerably across the world, there are a number of general trends that can be observed: that public spaces play a significant role in the life of cities everywhere, and that for cities to work, there is an undeniable need for public space; that the nature of this role, and therefore the nature of public space, in modern cities has radically changed; and that the development and use of these spaces mirror the way a society is organized, shaped by unequal distribution of power and resources, which creates tension and conflict as well as collaboration and compromise. Public spaces, it is argued here, should be produced on the basis of equality for all by being accessible places made and managed through inclusive processes.

Why has urban public space become a subject of interest?

Public space has been an integral part of cities throughout history, so much so that without it, human settlements would be unimaginable. How could people step out of their front doors if there were no public space to mediate between private territories?

Like any other part of cities, such as houses, neighbourhoods, political and cultural institutions, it is part of an everpresent vocabulary of urbanism. It has been used in different forms and combinations in many different circumstances, with different degrees of accessibility and control, but they can all be seen as different variations on the same theme. This poses the question: if public spaces, in some form or other, have been a primary part of urban structure everywhere and at all times, why do we see a current wave of interest in public space as a subject of social concern, political action and academic research?

Recent attention to public space is rooted in the structural changes that societies around the world have experienced in the past thirty years whereby the provision of public goods, such as public space, has been under pressure through the ascendancy of the market-based paradigm. The aftermath of the Second World War was characterized by structural intervention by the state in the economy, resulting in large-scale public-sector schemes in urban development, particularly in western countries. Local authorities and their architects and planners were at the leading edge of urban renewal whereby cities were expanded and redeveloped with high-rise public housing schemes, motorways and new towns, implementing the ideas developed earlier by the garden city movement and the modern movement in architecture. As the prosperity of the 1960s was followed by economic decline in the 1970s, the post-war Keynesian accord between the state and the market came under pressure. Industrial decline deprived the public sector of its funds, and urban renewal projects and new town development schemes were abandoned. The solution that was introduced in the 1980s in the United Kingdom and the United States was to dismantle the age of consensus and stimulate economic growth through market revival and competition. Radical de-industrialization, reduction in the size of the state, privatization, individualization, globalization and liberalization of the economy were the new structural directions for the state and society, which spread around the world and lasted for three decades until coming to a halt with a global financial crisis. This paradigm shift had major implications for urban design, planning and development.

With reduction in the size and scope of the state, urban development was transferred to the private sector. The private sector, however, was interested in those aspects of urban development that would ensure a return on its investment. Private companies were answerable to their shareholders, and not to the urban community as a whole. Public goods, such as public space, therefore, were seen as a liability, as they could not be sold and had no direct profit for the private investor. Local authorities and their elected politicians, meanwhile, could not, or would not, invest in those public goods that did not have an immediate political or economic return. They also saw public space as a liability, as something that required higher maintenance costs and was a burden on their dwindling budgets. As a result, both public- and private-sector agencies abandoned public spaces as cities suffered from accelerated decline.

Large-scale schemes, however, could not be developed without some sort of mediating space, some public areas that would link different buildings and spaces. Private developers, therefore, preferred to control these spaces, so that the return on their investment could not be jeopardized by what they saw as potential threats to their operation. New public spaces that were developed after the 1980s, therefore, were controlled and restricted, in contrast to the more accessible and inclusive places of the past. This was a widespread phenomenon, and became known as the privatization of public space. It generated a fear that the city had become private territory in which people could not move easily and the democratic aspirations of liberty and equality would be undermined. This would be a fragmented city, in which some people would be free to go almost anywhere, whereas others would be trapped inside their ghettos or prevented from entering the exclusive spaces of the elite, facilitated through a process of gentrification. The loss of public space symbolized the loss of the idea of the city.

An associated trend was the change in disciplinary and professional division of labour, in which architects and planners both lost interest in public space, leaving it in an indeterminate state. Modernist architecture was interested in refashioning the entire built environment, from the scale of cities down to the level of individual pieces of furniture. Modernism was a relatively coherent, socially concerned movement that sought to solve social problems through physical transformation. With economic decline, which removed the possibility of large-scale urban development schemes, and the collapse of architecture's confidence in its ability to deal with social problems, it withdrew into an aesthetic sphere. The postmodern reaction to modernism was more interested in playfulness of appearance than in grappling with social concerns. It focused on the site, trying to respond to the needs of the client, and paid little attention to what lay outside, the urban context, of which public space was a major part. The architect's clients were private developers, and they were interested in rewards on their investment, which set the parameters for the architect's scope of

action. Meanwhile, as a result of rapid economic decline and the heavily criticized consequences of post-Second World War planning schemes, urban planning became focused on social issues, which included large-scale unemployment and the decline of infrastructure. There was no scope for concentrating on public spaces, which would be considered as icing on the cake, a luxury rather than a necessity.

While public and private organizations and their associated professionals had lost interest in the public space, seeing it as irrelevant or expensive, or were encroaching upon it for private gains, the social need for public space in the city had not disappeared. There were increasing concerns about the rise of individualism and the decline of public goods, of which public space was a key manifestation in the urban environment. Individuals were encouraged to follow their own interests, expecting the market to deliver prosperity. But social goods could not be delivered by the market, which had little interest in non-monetary forms of benefit. Social goods could not be delivered by the public sector either, as its financial ability to develop and maintain public spaces was undermined. There was a crisis about public goods in general, and about public space in particular.

As the neoliberal market paradigm spread around the world, other countries adopted, or were encouraged to adopt, the path of economic regeneration through stimulating the market and reducing the state's size and scope. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the market paradigm grew in new countries, becoming the undisputed form of economic development. In these countries, therefore, the provision of public goods, which was already, or had become, less effective than in the rich western countries, faced similar issues and problems. Of course, the extent of marketization and the crisis of public space has not been the same everywhere, as is best evident in the differences between European and American cities. However, the global neoliberal trend posed a major challenge to public goods everywhere, as partly evident in the threats facing public space, which has resulted from the restless process of globalization.

The changing nature of public space

The nature and character of public spaces are closely related to the nature and character of cities. As cities have changed, so have their public spaces. In smaller towns and cities of agrarian societies, with their relatively cohesive and homogeneous populations, some public spaces were major focal points, where trade, politics, cultural performance and socialization all took place. As modern cities have grown larger, with heterogeneous populations spread across large areas, public spaces have multiplied and expanded, but have also become more impersonal, losing many of their layers of significance. In the city of strangers, the meaning of public space becomes less personal, more transient, and at best merely functional or symbolic.

There have been major changes in the nature of cities during their long existence throughout millennia (Southall 1998), despite some common features that they share across this time. According to Louis Wirth, cities are identified by size of population, density of settlement, and heterogeneity of inhabitants, and so are perceived as 'relatively permanent, compact settlements of large numbers of heterogeneous individuals' (1964: 68). As these parameters of size, density and heterogeneity, and the relationship among urban inhabitants and with the outside world, have constantly taken new forms, the nature of cities and urban societies has changed considerably. These changes can be seen in the different analyses made of the city. For Aristotle (1992), the ancient city was an association, in which people participated by playing different roles to construct a political community. Max Weber (1966) wrote about medieval cities as a fusion of garrison and market, indicating the defensive and economic functions of cities, as well as their political and legal autonomy. In modern cities, however, the military function of the city has been lost, its political function weakened, its economic function integrated into a larger national and international system, and even its population spread out into the suburbs. This is why one observer decided to write, 'The age of the city seems to be at an end' (Martindale 1966: 62). And yet we know that the age of the city has just begun, as the turn of the twenty-first century has been marked by a shift in the world's balance of population from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban population.

The nature of public spaces has changed alongside the historic changes in the nature of cities. For most of urban history, the primary public spaces of the city were the core of the urban society, integrating the political, economic, social and cultural activities of a small and relatively coherent urban population. Examples of these primary spaces were the *agora* in Greek cities, the forum in Roman cities, and market squares in medieval cities. The other public open spaces of the city, such as streets, intersections, minor squares, etc., were also essential for everyday sociability and trade. In modern cities, however, the city has grown, with populations so large and heterogeneous that they could not rely on proximity and close encounters to engage in their complex

range of activities. Its physical space has also grown to such an extent that co-presence is no longer possible, or even desirable. The role of public space in the close-knit community was fairly clear: facilitating a multiplicity of encounters that were essential for everyday life and helping consolidate the social order. In the modern city, a large number of anonymous individuals are engaged in nonconverging networks, while the transport, information and communication technologies have changed the location and shape of these networks. These changes are reflected in the nature of public spaces, which have kept some of their historic functions but now primarily play residual roles.

The change in the nature of urban space can be traced in the relationship between 'space' and 'place' in the literature, whereby space is considered to be more abstract and impersonal, while place is interpreted as having meaning and value. One of the key criticisms of the urban development process in modern cities has been the transition from place to space, through a loss of meaning and personal association. The humanist critics of modernism, as well as others, have raised this criticism in response to the urban redevelopment programmes of the mid-twentieth century (Jacobs 1961). The same criticism was raised in the nineteenth century against the modernization of cities with wide boulevards and soulless public spaces (Sitte 1986). While this criticism partly captures the changing condition of cities, it may also tend to misjudge the complexity of places and identities in cities, hence promoting place as a particular enclosed space with fixed identities, which is not what the spaces of modern cities can or should be (Massey 1994). This is part of a larger debate about the nature of modern cities, and of modernity itself.

The transition from an integrative community to the anonymity and alienation of large modern urban societies has been a key concern in the development of sociology (Engels 1993; Tönnies 1957; Simmel 1950). Behaviour in public spaces has been analysed as the reflection of this transition, from engaging with others to avoiding them, as the overload of encounters and emotional stimuli, and the wide gap between social classes, keep people apart and turn public spaces into residual places of avoidance rather than encounter. Two of the major theorists of the public sphere in the twentieth century, Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, mourned the passing of these integrative societies and complained about the rise of what was called a mass society. Arendt analysed the ancient polis (1958) and Habermas investigated the early modern bourgeois public sphere (1989), both as examples of situations in which interpersonal communication led to a rich public life. Both of them saw the rigid routines of the industrial city as alienating, and as tending to degrade the qualities of public life.

The result has been a degree of false romanticization of historic public spaces. The Greek *agora* has been portrayed as the material manifestation of this magnificent ancient civilization. This was a civilization, however, in which women, foreigners and slaves had no place in the public sphere. The medieval square has been portrayed as the picturesque heart of the city, in what are often little more than romantic and aesthetic notions of life in the medieval city, and yet at the time it was a place dominated by trade, and it displayed the hierarchies and harshness of life within the city walls. The eighteenth-century coffee houses in London or the salons in Paris are seen as the prototypes for the emergence of a public sphere, in which people were able to discuss matters of common interest and come to an informed opinion about their society, and yet these places were often accessible only to the elite among the emerging bourgeoisie. The early modern city squares and boulevards are portrayed as examples of the rise of a new age of reason and modernity, and yet they resulted from speculative development, monarchical power and suppression of the poor. What we often see is the architecture of the city, or at least a sanitized image of the history, on which we project our own expectations, aesthetic, political and social.

After the decline of industries and the collapse of the rigid routines of the industrial economy, the nature of public space has once again changed, now being integrated into the service economy. The quality of public space becomes an essential support mechanism for the flexible working practices of the service economy, and the consumption-driven basis on which this economy relies. Rather than treating public spaces as functional residues or breathing spaces of the city, which was the attitude of industrial modernism, service-based postmoderns embrace them for their aesthetic value, as well as their provision of spaces of consumption. Public spaces become an essential part of the regeneration of cities through promoting retail development. The association of public space creation and high-value consumption inevitably leads to gentrification, in which one group of people and activities are replaced by another.

The modern large city, which was once a western phenomenon, has now become a global one. The transition from integrative small communities to fragmented large societies, which was associated with the experiences of modernity in nineteenth-century Europe, has now been extended to most parts of the globe through a restless process of colonization, modernization and

globalization. In this context, as cities grow everywhere and services form a major part of urban economies around the world, the condition of urban public spaces becomes ever more significant.

Accessible places

Public spaces play many different roles in urban societies and can be defined in a number of ways. The key feature of public space, however, is its accessibility. Without being accessible, a place cannot become public. If public open spaces are conceived as enclosed particular places with fixed identities, their flexibility and inclusiveness will be undermined, and so will their accessibility. They lie outside the boundaries of individual or small group control, providing spaces that mediate between, and give access to, private spaces, as well as performing a multiplicity of functional and symbolic roles in the life of an urban society. In the processes of urban change, the conditions of accessibility are subject to change, hence changing the nature of public spaces. In the controversies about privatization of public space, it is the access to public spaces that has been limited, narrowing the range of social groups who can use these spaces, and making these spaces accessible only to a smaller group of people, often judged by their ability to pay.

The word *public* originates from the Latin and refers to people, indicating a relationship to both society and the state. A public space may therefore be interpreted as open to people as a whole, and/or being controlled by the state on their behalf. Public has been defined as the opposite of private, which is the realm of individuals and their intimate relationships; and so public space is often defined in terms of its distinction from the private realm of the household. Public has also been seen as the opposite of the personal, hence equated with impersonal (Silver 1997: 43), the realm of the non-intimate others. What lies beyond personal, however, can also be interpersonal, where the boundaries between personal and impersonal, private and public, can be blurred.

The distinction between the public and the private is a key theme in liberal political theory, promoting the separation of private and public interests and roles in order to prevent private interests encroaching on and undermining public interests (Wacks 1993; Nolan 1995). The tension has been challenged by the critics of private property, who see this distinction as consolidating the power of the elite at the expense of the poor. It has also been challenged by women, who see it as consolidating the role of men in public affairs and associating the private sphere with women, hence keeping them locked in an inferior position in society (Fraser 1989). The subdivision of the social world into public and private spheres, and the establishment and maintenance of the boundaries between them, has therefore been challenged and criticized from a number of different perspectives.

Yet another challenge to the notion of public sphere and public space comes from social diversity. Public policy has often been justified as directed towards public interest. The idea of public interest has been used to explain and defend the actions of public authorities. Their critics, however, argue that the way this public interest has been defined is too narrow, and often privileges the elite. What is usually considered to be an average citizen, for whom the laws are written and who is the basis of public action, is argued to exclude women, the elderly, children, ethnic minorities and the poor. What is introduced as public interest, they argue, is not really public in an inclusive sense. This poses a challenge to the notion of public: either abandon the idea and replace it with a notion of society subdivided into tribes and interest groups, or try to expand the notion of public so as to include all citizens equally.

In spatial terms, public spaces are by definition public, and as such expected to be accessible to all. However, *public* is not a single entity, as it is composed of different social strata, each with a different set of characteristics, interests and powers. Furthermore, within those strata there are a large number of individual differences. There are strong centrifugal and fragmentary forces that create and separate social strata, which will then be reflected in the constitution of the public. The tension between the public and the private can be seen in the European medieval city, as well as in many cities around the world to this day, where the streets and open spaces of the city are gradually being threatened by the expanding houses and private spaces, to the extent that a minimum amount of space is left for passing through and for conducting trade and other essential functions (Saalman 1968). It is a tension that we can clearly see in our own time, in which private interests tend to claim the urban space, undermining the publicness of its public spaces, in what is termed the privatization of public space.

The nature and character of a public space depend on how it is distinguished from the private sphere. In other words, the way in which its boundaries are constructed determines the type of public space and its quality. If the boundary is rigidly guarded by walls, gates and guards, it is no longer considered a public space. In contrast, the more accessible and permeable a place becomes, the more public it will be. Its degree of publicness will also depend on the types of activities taking place, which can create symbolic boundaries around these activities, or be inviting to as many people

as wish to join in. A degree of distinction between intimate and shared spaces, between private and public spaces, is essential for living in society. The controversy is usually about how these two areas are defined, distinguished from one another, and separated by what sort of boundary. Much of urban design has been interested in how this boundary is articulated, how a dividing line can be set up that is protective of the private sphere from the intrusion of others, while protecting the collective sphere from individual interest; in other words, how this boundary can enhance, rather than degrade, the quality of life in cities.

To determine the extent to which a place or activity is public or private, Benn and Gaus (1983) suggested three criteria as dimensions of social organization: access, interest and agency, with access divided further into access to spaces, activities, information and resources. A place is public, therefore, if it is controlled by public authorities, concerns people as a whole, is open or available to them, and is used or shared by all the members of a society. This provides a useful framework for assessing the publicness of a place. The criteria of interest, agency and access, however, approach space instrumentally, seeing it as an asset in exchange, using it as a resource, treating it as a commodity. This interpretation appears to draw on an analysis of social relations as exchange among strangers, rather than a set of emotional and meaningful ties (Madanipour 2003a). There must be additional dimensions at work, which should also be taken into account.

The symbolic dimensions of public spaces are as significant as their functional ones. In the small towns and cities of agrarian societies, public spaces were developed and used as integrative nodes for a variety of instrumental and expressive needs. Performing social rituals in public was as important as engaging in trade or deliberating on how to manage the town. Even before then, as can be observed in the remaining hunter-gatherer societies of today, the common spaces of a group, in which they sing and dance, tell stories and perform rituals, are a significant part of living together as a group. In modern urban societies, however, while humans have remained social beings, it is true that the nature and methods of expressiveness, and therefore the character of urban public spaces, have changed. Much of cultural reading of cities places a performative emphasis on public spaces, seeing them as places for performance and assertion of identity. On the other hand, the functionalist reading of the city appeared to ignore this symbolic dimension and focus entirely on the way cities functioned, hence seeing public spaces as essential for the health of the city, as its lungs. A key argument is that both these camps have failed to see the multidimensionality of public space. Access, therefore, has both instrumental and expressive dimensions. A public space is one that allows a range of necessary activities to take place, but also a place in which 'unnecessary' social activities are performed. An example is the ritual of *passeggiata* in Italian cities, the evening walk in which the inhabitants of the city put on their best clothes and go out of their homes for a slow stroll in public spaces to see and be seen. This is a symbolic and expressive, as well as functional, exercise, a complex urban ritual that cannot be reduced to a single interpretation.

There are major tensions, however, inherent in the symbolic dimension of accessibility. On the one hand, the more accessible a place, the more impersonal it tends to become, particularly in large cities. If a place is reserved for a known group of individuals or a class of society on the basis of their economic or political resources, accessibility decreases and familiarity rises. While individuals may suffer from the anonymity of the large city (Simmel 1950) and prefer to establish a comfort realm of familiarity, they will have to come into contact with a large number of strangers in their everyday life in the city. However, if the city becomes subdivided into zones of comfort for social groups, it has been fragmented and tribalized. Much of the literature in urban design encourages designers and decision makers to subdivide the city into neighbourhoods and identifiable, defendable zones, hence knowingly or unknowingly limiting the accessibility of urban spaces. There is, therefore, a parallel between accessibility and anonymity: spaces that would deter strangers would not be accessible. They may have served local people well, but their accessibility would be controlled and limited.

Provision and free access to public spaces, therefore, are essential for any society. But we should not naively believe in physical determinism, thinking that spatial solutions are sufficient to address societal problems. As public space is a part of the public sphere, we can apply the logic of the public sphere in democratic societies to analysing public space. In these societies, the establishment of a political public sphere did not remove the social divide between rich and poor, but it did provide opportunities for expressing opinion and avenues for trying to influence action. In other words, the public sphere was an integral part of a democratic society. In the same sense, public space is a necessary part of an open society, a space that everyone is able to enter and participate in some collective experience. This may not amount to solving social and economic problems, but it does provide a forum for socialization and a counterweight to exclusionary and centrifugal

forces that tend to tear apart the social fabric of polarized societies.

Inclusive processes

Different stages in design, planning, development and management of public spaces have a direct impact on their accessibility and identity. If public spaces are produced and managed by narrow interests, they are bound to become exclusive places. As the range of actors and interests in urban development varies widely, and places have different dimensions and functions, creating public spaces becomes a complex and multidimensional process. To understand places, and to promote the development of accessible public places, therefore, it is essential to study this process and to encourage its broadening, to make it inclusive.

Cities have historically grown and been developed by a large number of people over time. As new technologies have emerged, the size of companies has grown and the areas of expertise have multiplied through a process of specialization, constructing the built environment has become far more complex than hitherto. The process has also become faster than before, in line with the growth in the productive capacity of developers. An army of specialists and a mountain of resources can be employed to create new parts of cities in relatively short periods of time. While this complexity has multiplied the number of agencies involved in the process, it has allocated a specific task to each agency, as cogs in a large machine geared towards a particular mode of operation. As the number of agencies has grown, the organizational hierarchies and the division of labour have focused the process, ruled by technical and instrumental rationality. As technological know-how and the selfconfidence of modern city builders have grown, city building has been consolidated in fewer hands, managing and coordinating complex hierarchies and networks of agencies and individuals.

The medieval city, and for that matter the nineteenth-century industrial city, were seen as the result of accidents rather than careful planning. The father of modern rationalist philosophy, René Descartes (1968), preferred cities to be designed by a single designer, who could devise and implement a single well-ordered system. The medieval city, as well as the laws and beliefs of the past, were the result of custom and example, rather than rational thinking. What he advocated was thinking everything anew, according to a rational order. This way of thinking was the basis of the modernist approach to design, aiming to create and impose a new order on the cities of the past, even at the cost of eradicating large parts of these cities. Rather than being conditioned by the past, modernist rationalists wanted a break with the past.

The considerable productive capacities of modern city builders have made this possible. Designers and planners are trained to think strategically and plan for strategic and large-scale transformation of cities. The changing nature of developers has a direct impact on what they build. A century ago, locally based developers could be engaged in single small developments, creating more diverse cities. Now, in contrast, large national or international developers are able to engage in large-scale projects. Developers can mobilize large amounts of capital and large teams of construction professionals, and can use new construction technologies and machinery, enabling them to develop cities at larger scales and faster speeds. A large part of a city, therefore, can be designed by a single organization within a relatively short period of time. As Descartes dreamed, a city can be designed by a single designer and developed by a single organization. The task is complex and will involve a large number of different teams. These are all, nevertheless, under the management of the main developer and the associated design team. However, while this increases efficiency and productivity in city building, it narrows the range of strategic actors and their considerations.

The logic of production, however, is only one among the logics with which cities are built and run (Madanipour 2007). In deciding the best course of action, the ability to make is certainly an important consideration, but not the only one. In deciding how to live our lives or how to manage our cities, we evaluate our options according to a wide range of issues and considerations. To narrow down the range of options to technical and instrumental ones, therefore, would lead to distorted decisions.

A key question in analysing the development process is: who is involved? An associated question is: who do the process and its outcome serve? An inclusive process would involve a larger number of people and agencies and would spread the benefits of the process to larger parts of society, while an exclusive process would limit the number and range of agencies and would reward a smaller number of people. The process of building cities involves complex regulatory frameworks and large financial resources, both of which are often closely entwined with political and financial elites. This tends to give these elites a powerful influence over the process and its outcome.

In market economies, financial resources are generated by the private sector, and it is taken for granted that private investors expect to maximize rewards on their investment. In democracies, the elected representatives are expected to act on behalf of their constituencies. However, the disadvantaged groups, who do not

have access to financial resources and are frequently disconnected from the political process, end up having no control or stake in the city building process. The places that are created are not designed to serve them, as these groups are not often part of the decisionmaking formula. This tends to make city building dominated by powerful agencies and individuals, rather than involving a broad range of citizens. In the development process, development agencies work with resources, rules and ideas in response to the needs of society and demands of the market. However, if the needs and demands of the disadvantaged parts of society are not strongly represented, politically or financially, as is often the case, the process and its outcome may not serve them at all.

Another key question in the development process is the temporal dimension of change. Design as a goal-oriented problem-solving process tends to envisage the built environment as a finished product, working out its structure and details and leaving nothing to chance. Cities, however, are constantly changing, inhabited as they are by intelligent and dynamic people. At no point can there be a final shape for a city. The design and development of cities, therefore, will need to accommodate this change, embracing a dynamic conception of cities rather than a fixed and rigid one.

What is needed, therefore, in investigating, as well as making, the urban space is a multidimensional and multi-agency process involving as many individuals and agencies as possible, and a dynamic process that can accommodate time and change. The result will be a *dynamic multiplicity,* in which city building is envisaged and organized as an inclusive and responsive process. The public spaces that are created by this process will be more inclusive and accessible than the ones that serve narrow interests; will be driven by technical and instrumental concerns; or will be envisaged as fixed, exclusive and rigid places.

An interdependent world

Some readers may wonder why this book has brought together what appear to be disparate experiences from such a wide range of countries. What can African, European, Asian and Latin American cities have in common? Each city and each country has its own history and culture, with different social and economic conditions and prospects. What can we gain from bringing these cases together? On the surface, the differences between our case studies are large and wide, to the extent that the existence of any links or comparisons between their public spaces may seem improbable. Some of these cities are rapidly growing while others are shrinking. They belong to different cultures and economic conditions, each embedded in a completely different reality. What might we find, these readers may ask, in any attempt at placing them alongside one another?

A key answer is the universality of the existence of, and the need for, public space in cities. Everywhere and in any period of history, human settlements consist of a collection of different individuals and households, residing in their own private territories and connected to one another through semi-private, semi-public and public spaces. From the earliest traces of human settlements in Mesopotamia to the metropolises of our own time, this division of space into public and private has been a key feature of urban societies. While the character and use of these public spaces may differ, the universal existence of some form of public space and its social and economic significance for the city cannot be denied.

Another, related, similarity between the cities is in the converging methods of city building, in which the markets and new technologies are prominent. In our time, the spread of capitalism and the extent of global interdependency characterize cities everywhere. Before the arrival of the dramatic economic crisis of 2008, a global consensus seemed to have emerged in which markets were given free rein to come up with solutions to all the economic problems. All of the cities we have studied are part of the global market, albeit occupying different positions in the marketplace, from more central to more marginal. In all cities, the process of city building is subject to the logic of the market, in which land as a finite resource is the subject of competition. What connects these cities and their spaces, therefore, is the mechanism of the market. Even if it operates completely differently in each city, it is subject to the same general principle of risk and reward, and distinction between private and public interests. It also tends to generate, or accelerate, social stratification and division, creating tensions between the rich and poor, and social inequalities that become manifest in the making and use of public spaces.

Also, all cities are subject to the impact of technological change. Transport technologies have allowed them to spread, creating new social and spatial distinctions between the centre and periphery. Construction technologies have been embraced as the solution to city building problems, often applied by architects and planners with little consultation with the city's inhabitants. Cities' position with regard to manufacturing industries also creates overlaps and commonalities: while some are abandoning their industrial past, others are entering a period of industrialization, each with its own distinctive, but ultimately related, impact on the

character of public space. Judging by their diverse character and trajectory, we cannot envisage these cities to be on a linear temporal path in which some are further along the line than the others, and the fate of some is going to be a model for the fate of the others. We can, however, see how their linkages, existing and potential, are forged through their current conditions and past histories. More than anything else, they are part of the same global urban process, different components of the same phenomenon and sharing many features of modern urban societies.

Judging by the universal presence and social significance of public space, and the converging economic and technological methods of city building, we can see how the experiences of making public space in different continents of the world can show different aspects of the same phenomenon. While we can emphasize the differences between cities – and there are many – we can also choose to focus on their similarities, which are evident in the making and use of public space, as a manifestation of social organization, and the tensions that arise out of different perspectives engaged in a common concern.

The book is divided into two parts and twelve chapters. After this Introduction, Part I concentrates on the public spaces in city centres, where public spaces have the highest levels of significance and complexity. It investigates the changing nature of city centres and their public spaces, which are the results of structural changes in the urban society, often through fundamental political, economic and cultural transformation. Part II focuses on case studies from peripheral residential areas, particularly low-income neighbourhoods, where public spaces have a significant role in the everyday life of the neighbourhood. The difficulties of conflict and mistrust between different groups, however, have made these places subject to dispute and contest, while the gaps between design and use are evident in the spaces of the city. A combination of central and peripheral areas in a variety of cities around the world reveals the significance of public space in different capacities, and how different forces are at work to shape and control these places in their own image. By using the criteria of accessible places and inclusive processes, and within the spatial framework of centres and peripheries, we analyse the character and quality of public spaces in our case studies. A concluding chapter brings together the results of these investigations and presents some ideas about the way forward.

Part I

The changing nature of public space in city centres

Ali Madanipour

Part I of the book focuses on public spaces in city centres, where demand for and tensions over public spaces' production and control are highest. In post-industrial cities, the changing social and economic bases of the city have eradicated the legacies of the past, sometimes through a struggle for space leading to gentrification. In post-colonial and industrializing cities, the centre has started to lose its hold on the growth of the larger city region. In such cities, other centres of economic and political power have emerged, a change that is reflected in their public spaces.

Parallel to the recent rise in interest in public spaces, the proliferation of alluring, distinctive and exclusive public spaces in many post-industrial cities raises the question of how far these environments are truly 'public'. Chapter 2 discusses the question of the 'publicness' of contemporary public spaces in Britain, where they have been placed at the top of the political agenda since the 1990s. Focusing on the development and use processes of the Haymarket Bus Station in the city centre of Newcastle upon Tyne, renovated in the late 1990s, and regarding the dimensions of 'access', 'actor' and 'interest', it studies its changing 'publicness'. The chapter seeks to show that, contrary to the wide recognition of diminishing 'publicness' of contemporary public spaces in urban design and planning literature, the recent renovation works have in fact had both positive and negative impacts on the 'publicness' of the case study. The chapter concludes that contemporary public spaces may show different shades of 'publicness', in which degrees of 'access', 'actor' and 'interest' can vary widely. It underlines the emerging trends and threats of the blurring distinction between public and private spaces, and image-led regeneration strategies dominating everyday society's needs and civic functions of desirable 'public' spaces, and ultimately violating the 'publicness' of public realms in post-industrial cities.

Chapter 3 investigates another regeneration project in Newcastle upon Tyne. Old Eldon Square sits at the heart of the city centre and can be interpreted in many ways. It is a memorial space, a public park, a locus of local transportation links and a commercial space. As the only green public space in the city centre, and sitting at the heart of the retail development area, in local government strategic plans the use, and potential domination, of the area by groups of young people raised a series of tensions within the redevelopment of the square. This case study, which covers a six-year period (2000–2006), assesses how these tensions rolled out through the regeneration of the area in local planning practices and unpacks the relationship between the concepts underpinning the management and regeneration of the area, the use of the area by a range of groups (particularly the young people), and both perceived and actual tensions between other key stakeholders, including local community interest groups, small- and large- scale business, public and private security agencies, and the city council.

Chapter 4 focuses on change in an Asian city centre. It uses the cases of Ji-Guang Pedestrian Street, Electronics Pedestrian Street and the Green River area in Taichung city centre in Taiwan to discuss the relationship between environmental improvement and city centre regeneration, and also investigate the management and uses of public space after environmental improvement. This chapter explores the efficiency and the impacts of environmental improvement on the city centre by comparing the area before and after the implementation of environmental improvement, and discussing the mutual relationship between relevant factors in city centre regeneration. Could public space improvement be the best way to revive the city centre? The chapter argues that environmental improvement is an essential precondition for the locality and acts as a catalyst for city centre regeneration, even though that regeneration might not be successful. The environmental improvement also influenced the social development and economic regeneration, and many follow-up initiatives that were mostly based on the improved environment. Therefore, the chapter concludes, without an overall consideration of environmental improvement, economic regeneration and social development, the revival of the city centre is hard to achieve.

Cities and societies as historical creations change dynamically in time, with change reflected in their public space. Chapter 5 examines change in the public space of traditional cities in Nigeria, with Zaria as a case study. The chapter examines change in the past two centuries, from a material, social and symbolic perspective, the role that cultural transformation played in shaping change, and the different issues and tensions that characterize social and public life. The chapter concludes that though public space has witnessed changes in its material and social aspects, it is from a symbolic perspective that the greatest change has been witnessed. During the nineteenth century, public space evolved from being the limited communal space of an agrarian society to becoming the central space of a state and a stage for the display of political, economic and symbolic power, and a focus of attraction for migration, contact, trade and exchange of ideas. Following colonialism in the twentieth century, the importance of Zaria's public space declined as it became a small district in a broader and more fractious metropolitan area, and was gradually divested of its political and economic role in favour of new centres outside. Public space evolved once more to be an exclusionary space for the communal life of residents.

Together, these case studies from three continents show how urban development and regeneration represent both a challenge and an opportunity. They can change the character of an area, threatening the historic and cultural value of some spaces and activities, so that they are reduced to merely an aesthetic and symbolic presence under the new conditions. They put pressure on some existing users and beneficiaries of city centres to make way for new functions and groups, in this way privileging some at the expense of others. When combined with the necessary social measures to avoid injustice, urban development can also act as a catalyst for improving the living and working conditions of urban populations. These challenges and opportunities are particularly evident in city centres, where the symbolic value, the political and economic significance of the place, and the number and complexity of the stakeholders are high; but the same challenges and opportunities can also be found outside the centre, in residential areas of the city.