

Unit 13

Development of Urban Sociology

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Learning Objectives

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the significance of the Chicago School in the origin and development of urban sociology;
- discuss the early urban studies based on the human ecology approach;
- describe the political economy of urbanism;
- discuss the new sociological approach to the study of urban societies;
- reflect on the inter-relation between urban sociology and underdevelopment;
- analyse the post modern theory of urbanism; and
- discuss some aspects of urban sustainable development.

13.1 Introduction

In the previous Blocks 1, 2 and 3 you have studied the basic concepts and theories of urban sociology which is a branch of the sociology discipline. You have already come across several concepts and theories of urban sociology which will be explained again in the context of the development of urban sociology in India. Like the discipline of sociology, urban sociology too has emerged and developed in the developed Western Societies. The role of the Chicago School in the early growth of this branch is significant. Therefore, to give you the right perspective about this branch of sociology many of the details and discussions are repeated in these two units of Block 4 **Urban Sociology in India**.

Urban Sociology as a distinct branch of the sociology discipline emerged around early 20th century. Even though cities existed even in earlier times too the social changes caused by the Industrial Revolution and consequent massing of people in the cities attracted social scientists to make the city the subject matter of study. The focus of urban sociology study in the beginning was to analyse the impact of urbanisation on the integrity of the pre-existing forms of social organisations (Flangan 1993). Later on there was significant expansion of the scope of the discipline.

This unit will deliberate on the origin of urban sociology at the Chicago School and its development till date. The unit will look into the distinct trends in the study of urban centers during different periods. Let us first know more on Chicago School.

13.2 Chicago School

The origin of Urban Sociology as a distinct branch of the sociology discipline can be associated with the Chicago School. The 1920s were the greatest years of urban sociological studies, which were actively centered at Chicago University. In American sociology, a theoretical base for urban sociology evolved from a series of studies conducted at the University of Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s. The development of Urban Sociology owes much to Robert E Park, Louis Wirth, Ernest W Burgess and R D McKenzie, otherwise known as Chicago School, who were the pioneers of this subject at Chicago University. Although studies on urban centers or cities developed as the subject matter of study in Social Science disciplines through the writings of the Chicago School, the theoretical formulations of social thinkers such as Karl Marx, Max Weber and Durkheim had focussed on cities or urban centers. Albeit the fact that the central concern of all these writers was with social, economic and political implications of the development of capitalism in the West, they did not consider it useful to develop a specifically urban theory. During that period there was a rapid growth of cities in the west and there was obvious and potentially disruptive social change in the societies. It is very obvious that the theories of Durkheim (disintegration of moral cohesion), Weber (the growth of calculative rationality) and Marx (the destructive forces unleashed by the development of capitalism) are centered on urban life. Although their theories centered on city and city life, the development of urban sociology took place at the Chicago School, which did draw from the theories of earlier social thinkers.

The first department of Sociology in the U.S.A. was started at University of Chicago in the year 1892. The department was headed by Albion. W. Small and scholars such as Charles R. Henderson, W.I. Thomas and George E. Vincent were part of the department. Early in the 1920s sociologists at Chicago began the painstaking task of gathering the facts of urban life, guided by theoretical notions concerning the growth and structure of cities and the nature of human beings and its institutions.

The birth of urban sociology has a close association with the expansion of Chicago city. Rapid commercialisation and industrialisation of the city occurred in later 19th century. There was the influx of migrants from places like, Europe, France, Sweden, Germany, Czechoslovakia etc. and the city became more and more complex as it became multi cultural, multilingual and with unequal distribution of wealth (Fredrick Cressey 1971). The population of Chicago doubled from 1898 to 1930. This rapid growth was accompanied by marked changes in the distribution of the city's population. Not simply did the population expand over a large area but certain sections of the city grew more rapidly than others. This rapid growth and expansion of the city witnessed in Chicago and also in other parts of the world became the focus of study of the Chicago Sociologists. The metropolis, the great urban complex which plays a dominant role in the social life of its inhabitants and the cultural, political and economic life of the nations of the world over became the integrating theme of the Chicago School.

By 1920s the Chicago School found that the natural areas could be *significantly studied in two aspects:*

- a) **The spatial pattern:** This includes the topography of the local community and the physical arrangement which not only include land space but also the structures that the people constructed, that sheltered the inhabitants and provided the places of work and play.
- b) **The cultural life:** The modes of living and customs and standards. The spatial aspect gave rise to ecological studies, all that could be mapped; the distribution, physical structures, institutions, groups and individuals over an area.

The University of Chicago studies emerged from a concern about the social problems of the city. One of the obvious by-products of mapping the social problems of urban neighbourhoods was the capability of resource management, of being able to direct and concentrate services where the problems are most intense. Social pathologies, like, crime and suicide, are invariably concentrated in certain ecological areas. Thus, ecological theories provide a base for the development of more specialised theories of deviance and control. Now let us revise some of the ecological theories of urban space learnt in Unit 5, 6 and 7.

13.3 Studies in Urban /Human Ecology

The theory of Human Ecology of urban areas can be called the first systematic theory of the city. It was the first comprehensive urban social theory. Ecology is the science that studies the interrelationship between organisms and their environment. Human ecology was concerned with the specific theoretical problem of how human population (social structures and processes) adapted to their urban environment. To Robert E. Park, the proponent of this theory, human ecology is a perspective, a method and body of knowledge essential for the scientific study of social life (Wirth 1945). The ecological approach assumed a significant place in urban studies in 1930s in different parts of the world. The advocates of human ecology at the Chicago School were Robert E. Park, R.D. McKenzie and Ernest W. Burgess. They attempted to relate ethnographic characteristics of urban life to the spatial distribution of urban population in the well known concentric zone model of urban development (Wilson and David 1978). While Park and McKenzie considered the city as representing an externally organised unit in space produced by laws of its own, Burgess treated the growth of the city in terms of its physical expansion and differentiation in space (Rao, M.S.A. et al 1991).

Urban ecology is based upon identifying and mapping geographical sectors of a large land area, and then analysing the social phenomena which are peculiar to the various smaller areas. In most of the ecological models urban areas are compared showing some kind of central tendency for each locale. Ecological studies produce composite overview of group tendencies and then specific subgroups. Thus, they provide information for aggregates not for individuals. There are various ecological models that attempt to analyse the urban social structure. Ralph Thomlinson (1969) categorises ecological models into spatial, natural, social and economic. All models usually employ area typologies, which may be shown on maps. Each method also employs a different theoretical orientation, resulting not only in different explanations of the social process of different locales, but also in a set of area boundaries which vary substantially, depending on the method employed (Robert Wilson).

Human Ecology Theory of Robert E. Park: It was Robert E. Park who appropriated the principles of natural science (ecology) for the analysis of urban spaces (urban ecology) (Flanagan, W. 1993). Ecology can be defined

as "that place of biology that considers plants and animals as they exist in the nature and studies their interdependence and the relation of each kind and individual to its environment" (encyclopaedia). Park observed a correspondence between plant communities in the natural environment and emergence of natural area within the cities where similar societal constituents of the urban environment congregated. A unity of function can be identified in each natural area or community. Their functional unity as well as the emerged moral unity make each area somewhat unique in terms of the values and norms of behaviour that prevailed there. In other words urban environment can be broken down into a mosaic of social worlds where each section is structurally and culturally distinct from each other. All of them are at the same time interdependent on each other.

Park's theory of human ecology has drawn from Durkheim's theory of division of labour and Darwinian theory of evolution. Durkheim's argument that the aggregation of large number of people in concentrated settlements required a complex division of labour and his observation that the society required the reintegration of specialised urbanities into a complementary organic whole provided the principles of a theory of the ecological interdependence of human population. Darwinian understanding of how competition produced patterns of dominance and subordination among the elements of society also contributed to the development of the theory of human ecology.

Like Durkheim's theory of division of labour, Park argues that an increase in population size within the given area together with an extension of transport and communication networks results in greater specialisation of functions. The functional differentiation distributes different economic groups to different niches in the urban environment. This facilitates competition as well. The competition between individuals, Park argues, gives rise to relations of competitive co-operation and communal equilibrium till the equilibrium is disturbed either by the advent of some intrusive factor from within or in the normal course of life history. Thus it leads to the development of communities in a cyclic fashion (Saunders 1981).

Urbanism as a Way of Life - Louis Wirth

Sociologists working in the first half of the 20th century on theories of city life emphasised the alienating aspects of the urban environment or to put it otherwise the opposition between community and the city life. Louis Wirth was one of the first to lay stress on the social aspects of urbanism. He tried to discover the forms of social action and organisation that typically emerge in relatively permanent compact settlements of large numbers of heterogenous individuals (Rao et al 1992).

According to the theory of urbanism Louis Wirth believed that the larger, the denser, and the more heterogenous the population of an area, the more urbanised will be the life style of the people. Thus the principle elements of urbanisation according to him are the population size, population density and population heterogeneity. His view was that the city's heterogeneity, large size, high density; secular cosmopolitan atmosphere tended to be seen as contributing to people's alienation rather than affording an opportunity for richer life (Louis Wirth 1938). Louis Wirth analyses that the city as a permanent settlement of a human population of high density and with a sufficiently high degree of heterogeneity results in the emergence of new culture, characterised by the transition from

primary to secondary relations, role segmentation, anonymity, isolation, instrumental relations, the absence of direct social control, the diversity and transience of social commitments, the loosening of family ties and individualistic competition. It is this socio-cultural context which is the ultimate explanation of the new forms of human behaviour.

His idea is that the social organisation of a large human settlement or urban area makes a life style based on primary relationship (seen in rural areas) very difficult. Typically urbanites meet one another in highly segmented roles. Their encounters tend frequently to be limited to situations, which involves specialised, limited aspects of the person's total spectrum of roles. It is this role fragmentation and limited integration among different roles, which causes a kind of alienation, which in turn is associated with a large number of social pathologies, such as crime, suicide, and mental illness that are brought about by a poorly integrated social structure.

The population density or the crowded physical space of the urban areas also affects both the frequency and quality of human interaction. Thus when he talks about the population density as the principal basis of urbanisation he actually means the social density or density of social interactions. The diverse nature of cities in terms of ethnicity, culture, social structure and general life style gives it the heterogenous nature. This heterogenous nature of urban centers account for the anomie quality of urban life. In addition to the city's diversity, the fragmentation of social relationships is compounded by the seeming unconnectedness of various facets of urban life. In urban areas where one resides, where one works and the kind of job one has, one's income, one's interests and one's allegiances are not well related either spatially or culturally. This heterogeneity, Wirth said, also resulted in people clustering into various ecologically segregated areas ethnic ghettos, poverty areas, and middle class neighbourhoods (Wilson 1978).

Box 13.1 Hurd's Star Theory

The star theory propounded by R.M. Hurd suggests that a city grows from its center along its major transportation arteries, resulting in a star shaped configuration. This form is most common to cities with streetcar, subway, or rail commuter lines, and seems to reflect the large city before the advent of freeways and other highways designed primarily for high speed communication by automobile. The population was concentrated within walking distance of the transportation routes, a pattern which still manifest in cities with well developed mass transit systems. When cars became the predominant mode of travel, the spaces between the points of the star began to fill in, making decreased reliance on public transportation (Wilson Robert 1978).

The Ecological Process – McKenzie

The theory of community change was most explicitly set out by one of Park's colleagues at University of Chicago, R.D. McKenzie. He focused on the dynamic nature of urban area and developed a sociological theory of changing land use. He developed a typology of various ecological processes instead of focusing on configurations and shape of areas. He defined ecology as a study of spatial and temporal relations of human beings as

affected by the selective, distributive and accommodative forces of the environment (McKenzie). To ecologists society is made up of individuals spatially separated, territorially distributed and capable of independent locomotion. McKenzie argues that these spatial relationships of human beings are the products of competition and selection and are continuously in the process of change as new factors enter to disturb the competitive relations or to facilitate the mobility. He identified seven ecological processes, which incorporates notions of population shifts and changes in the dominant land use pattern. These ecological processes are concentration, deconcentration, centralisation, decentralisation, segregation, invasion and succession.

McKenzie distinguishes four types of communities based on their functions. These are:

- Primary service community
- Commercial community
- Industrial town
- Community without specific economic base.

He argued that the size of any human community is limited by what it can produce and by the efficiency of its mode of distribution. Which means a primary service community such as one based on agriculture cannot grow beyond a population of around 5000, whereas an industrial town can grow many times more.

According to him any particular type of community tended to increase in size until it reached its climax point at which the size of the population was not perfectly adjusted to the capacity of the economic bases to support it. The community would remain in this state of equilibrium till some new element, for example a new mode of communication or technological innovation disturb the balance, at which point new cycle of biotic adjustment would begin involving movement of population, and differentiation of functions or both. Competition would again sift and sort the population functionally and spatially until a new climax stage was reached. The concepts McKenzie used to express these movements are invasion and succession, (about which you learnt in Unit 5 of this course), the movement of distinctive populations into residential areas, replacing the previous residential groups, which typically involves the displacement of higher or lower economic categories.

The major developments in urban ecological theory since 1950s can be attributed to the ecological theories of Duncan (1959) and Hawley (1950,1986). Duncan integrates ecological model and structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons in developing his theory of ecological complex. Duncan developed the notion of ecological complex, which is also a theory of regulation and change of the community as a social system in terms of the interaction of the four component elements of the ecological complex: environment, population, technology and social organisation. Hawley argued that space is not the central concern of ecology, but the focus must be on functional differentiation and adaptation of human populations. His ecological theory also was very close to Parsonian functionalism.

Box 13.2 Design Approach

This approach is closely related to the architecture of a city. It deals with the plan of a city and its various components. It traces the aesthetic principles that guided the layout of the street patterns (Bacon 1967). This approach is concerned with the relationship between building and transportation technology, and the size, shape, and functions of buildings and public facilities. It pays attention to natural features such as topography, lithography, hydrological conditions, and drainage patterns of the site and to the physical development of the city (Dickinson 1951). Here an attempt is made to identify the unique features of the city's structures at a given period. The process of urban morphogenesis, i.e. the relations among the societal processes and transformations of the physical fabric of cities also has been explored (Vance 1977). Although this approach lacks a complete conceptual framework, it provides valuable information on architecture and urban forms.

Criticisms

Much of the classical ecological theories were based on the shape and arrangement of land use pattern of urban spaces. And so also much of the criticisms of urban ecology centered on this aspect. There had been varied criticisms on the ecologists' argument of urban space expansion of circular fashions.

Another basis of urban ecological—theory, the factors of urbanisation—size, density and heterogeneity - also became a point of criticism. A close examination of the main works of the Chicago School shows that their central focus is not so much on everything that takes place in the city but on the processes of social disorganisation and individual maladjustment, the persistence of anonymous subcultures, deviant or otherwise, and their resistance to integration (Pickvance, C.G (ed) 1976. *Urban Sociology: Critical Essays*. Tavistock Publications: London). Critics argue that changes in size, density, and heterogeneity of population do not lead to the fragmentation and disorganisation of social life as described by Ecologists. Also it is argued that the ecological theories do not account for the subcultures and lifestyles of various neighbourhoods and subgroups within the urban areas (Greer and Kube 1969).

Critics argue that the earlier ecology models of urban land use assumed that the cities grew around a single industrial or commercial center, but cities have sprawled outward and become less focused after the Second World War.

For ecologists' economic competition was the basis of general growth process of cities that produced functional differentiation and ordering of urban space. This also was widely criticised based on the argument that it is not economic factors always that determine the nature of urban expansion. Firey (1945) argued that urban space may have a symbolic as well as economic value, and the locational activity in urban spaces may therefore reflect sentiment and symbolism as much as economic rationality, which is the only one factor suggested by the human ecologists. Through his studies he showed that certain areas maintained certain characters despite invasions and successions which had long since altered the character of other areas within the same radius of the city's centre. And it is the

spatial symbolism attached to those areas which helped to maintain its characteristics. A major criticism against the ecological model was that all these theorisations were based on the urban centers in America and the cities of those times are not comparable in any way to the cities of the later periods. These cities were not as compatible as the earlier ones.

After the Chicago School; especially after the Second World War, there was an evident lack of theoretically specific area of study in Urban Sociology other than human ecology, although the major theories of ecology since then were not based on urban arena that attracted the Chicago School. Instead society has become the ecologist's unit of analysis, and physical space itself has become one of the many dimensions of human society (Flanagan 1993). Urban Sociology became the study of everything that happened in urban areas – changing patterns of kinship, political controversies over land use, educational deprivation among the working class, etc – and it therefore became indistinct from the sociological analysis of advanced, industrial capitalist societies (Saunders 1981).

13.4 Political Economy of Urbanism

While the Chicago School made their theorisation's on the basis of their studies of American cities, later works in urban sociology spread to other continents also. Towards the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s a new paradigm for the urban analysis emerged where the emerging body of theory based on the assumption that it is conflict not equilibrium as propounded by the ecologists, is at the center of social order. The new approach focused on the role of capitalism, the international economic order, the accumulation and concentration of wealth and power, the relations of social classes, and the role of state in administering a stable social order ultimately hospitable to economic interests. To put it in other words the urban social structure tends to be analysed in the backdrop of the Marxian theory of historical materialism. For the advocates of this paradigm, cities symbolised the inequalities of wealth and power generated by the profit system and the spatial expression of urban arenas were in terms of capital accumulation and class conflict. This approach became known as the political economy of urbanism (Flanagan 1993).

Reflection and Action 13.1

You have read about the early ecological approach to the study of urban society based on the equilibrium or consensus thesis. Now the later understanding of sociologists and other social scientists, such as, Manuel Castell and others, has tried to give a conflict approach to the study of urban society.

Write an essay of about two pages on the approach that you agree with and why. Discuss your essay with other learners at your Study Center.

Applied to urban studies, political economy guides researchers to ask questions about the ways in which policy has articulated with economic forces to produce particular kinds of urban environments, with particular costs and benefits for different elements of urban population, eliciting particular reactions for the citizens. In general, it is an extension of broader sociological theory to the analysis of urban space (Flanagan 1993: 84). Political economy paradigm developed as an alternative to urban ecology and became an influential approach in 1970s and 1980s.

The urban analysis of Rex and Moore (1967) developed a new sociological approach to the analysis of the city. They studied the housing and the race relations of the inner city area of a British city. In this they developed a theoretical framework, which represented a fusion between Burgess's work on zone transition and Weber's sociological emphasis on the meaningful actions of individuals (Saunders 1981). This approach enabled urban sociology to retain its distinctive concern with the spatial dimension to social relationships drawing theory from mainstream sociology. Rex and Moore in their *Race, Community and Conflict (1962)* suggest that in the initial settlement of the city, three different groups differently placed with regard to the possession of property, become segregated from one another and work out their own community life style. These three groups are the upper middle class, the working class and the lower middle class. Like in the concentric zone they also suggest that city growth involves the migration of population from central to outlying areas. But this is not only due to the expansion of the central business district but also, because of the widespread pursuit of a middle class way of life, which becomes associated with the newly developing suburbs.

According to Rex and Moore moving to suburbs is an aspiration that is general among all groups of residents. Although a desired resource, suburban housing is scarce, access to it is unequally distributed among the population. Therefore the allocation of suburban houses to different sections of population becomes crucial to understand the distribution of life chances in the city. Also the pattern of housing distribution constitutes the basis for the potential conflict between different groups demanding access to the same resources. Thus, the questions of access and conflict with regard to suburban housing provides the analysis of urban processes a new orientation, which raises inherently political fundamental concerns.

The basic social processes within the city therefore relate to the allocation of scarce and desirable housing, both through the market and by bureaucratic means, and to the resulting struggle over housing by different groups located at different points in the housing hierarchy. Rex and Moore suggested that this struggle over housing could be analysed as a class struggle over the distribution of life chances in the city. This means that just like class struggles occurred in the world of work with respect to the distribution of life chances, they occurred in the realm of consumption of housing. For Rex and Moore, the housing market represents an analytical point at which the social organisation and the spatial structure of the city intersect (Haddon cf Saunders 1981).

Phal (1970) also argues that the city is a source of new inequalities over and above those generated in the world of work, although he recognises that wage inequalities are an important factor determining urban inequalities. According to him the task of urban sociology is to study the distributional patterns of urban inequalities as these are affected by both market and bureaucratic processes.

Manuel Castells is another major proponent of the political economy paradigm. In his book *The Urban Question (1977)* offers a Marxist analysis as a viable alternative to the then existing urban thought. For Castells urbanism is not a concept, but a myth because it recounts, ideologically, the history of the mankind. He was critical of the urbanism approach in that he feels urbanism is the cultural expression of capitalist industrialisation, the emergence of the market economy and the process of rationalisation of the modern society and this same process has been described as modernisation or westernisation by others. He says urban

sociology founded on urbanism is an ideology of modernity ethno centrally identified with the crystallisation of the social forms of liberal capitalism (Castells 1978). His idea of urban space is that it is the arena within which the reproduction of labour is concentrated, that is, the urban consists, among other things, of a system within which individuals reproduce their labour power through private (self-provided) and collective (state-mediated) consumption. The urban space is a built environment, a subsystem produced by the structural system - the larger, societal order constituted by a matrix of economic, political and ideological conventions. He views urban as a distinctive spatial aggregation of the economic arrangements of wider society and the modern city is the physical expression of capitalism in particular. He also explains the segregation and expansion of urban spaces in terms of capital accumulation and class conflict.

David Harvey analysed the urban process in the political economy paradigm devoting special attention to the problem of concentration and circulation of capital. His argument is that urban environment is the rational product of the process of capital accumulation.

13.5 The New Urban Sociology

Although the term political economy has its origins in structural Marxism, it has come to have a much broader application, especially from the 1980s. Though most of the political economy theorisation's in urban sociology in the 1970s operated within the Marxist paradigm, there was a move away from this in the 1980s as works of most of the urban sociologists formulated mixing both Marxist and non-Marxist elements. All the political economists unified in their approach to the urban studies on the idea that the urban arena is a physical extension of market factors supplemented by the policies of government or the state (Flanagan 1993).

Since the 1980s the urban analysis in political economy have expanded to incorporate an ever greater emphasis on the role of the state and public policy, the various features of local history and other circumstances that require to recognise the uniqueness of each city as a case history and the attention to the operation of elites or even coalitions of common citizens in shaping the future of the locality (Flanagan 1993).

Gottdiener (1985) criticising both ecological and structuralist Marxist approaches to the urban analysis argues for the need to incorporate economic, political and cultural forces in understanding the way urban space is produced. According to the emerging paradigm, the local histories become significant and the people do make a difference; and that the ideas and meanings are not perfectly subject to the dominant economic and political forces, and the material conditions that these forces produce. Lefebvre (1979) attaches prime importance to people and their actions in defining and redefining urban spaces.

Castells (1983) in his *The City and the Grassroots*, shifting from his former Marxist view that class struggle is the prime mover of social change, argues that social class is just one of the bases for the urban coalition, along with many other bases for the formation of interest groups that struggle to impart a particular meaning to a given city or part thereof. He establishes that the meaning or symbolic significance that a particular urban area takes on is in part the outcome of a struggle among different interest groups that compete to control urban space. The autonomous role of the state, the gender relationships, the ethnic and national movements and the movements that define themselves as citizens movements are other alternative forces of urban social change.

13.6 Urban Sociology and Theories on Underdevelopment

The issues of underdevelopment and third world urban study were always a part of urban sociology. The size and rate of growth of developing countries became the focus of attention for the urban social sciences. Moreover, the fact that it is not industrialization that drives urbanisation in these countries but several other factors also became a matter of analysis. The general pattern attached to the Third World urbanisation tend to have an urgent or problematic nature that stems from the limited assets of the governments, the desperate poverty of the elements of the population concerned, and the enormity of the dimensions of urban growth.

The three theoretical approaches to the problem of underdevelopment are the modernisation theory, the dependency theory and the world-system theory. All these three approaches are based on two paradigms that provide the foundations for the arguments over the causes of underdevelopment in general and the particular role played by the cities. These are the modernisation and the political economy paradigms. The modernisation paradigm provides the basic assumptions of the modernisation theory and the political economy approach provides a broad theoretical orientation for dependency and world-system theories. Modernisation theorists see cities as the potential engines of economic growth, while political economists emphasize the parasitic effects that urban concentrations have on the territories that they dominate.

The implication of the rate and pattern of uncontrolled urban growth had been a matter of heated debate in the study of Third World urbanisation. The two related aspects of this issue are a) the sheer aggregate growth of the proportion of a national population living in the cities and b) the concentration of the population in a particular city. The urban issues that received more attention from those who were concerned with urbanisation and underdevelopment are over urbanisation, urban primacy, urban bias, squatter settlement and informal employment. Their implications have been viewed somewhat differently as the field of development studies has evolved differing theoretical emphases over the past several decades. The large urban centers of underdeveloped nations have been characterised both as engines of positive change (modernisation theory) and parasites that suck the potential for growth out of the economy (dependency and world system theory).

Modernization theorists argue that there is an inherent backwardness and dysfunction of indigenous culture, organisation and technology in the underdeveloped regions and for the advancement of these regions there is a need to adopt the values and political and economic strategies of the industrialised nations (Inkeles 1966, Rostow 1960). A fundamental assumption of this approach is that the relationship between rich and poor countries is essentially a beneficial one, with an emphasis on the benefits that accrue to poor nations as a result of the diffusion of the habits and conventions of the richer nations, which according to modernisation theorists is essential for the development of the poor regions. To the modernisation theorists, modernisation has operationalised to mean differentiation, specialisation and functional interdependency and according to them lack of this precisely is the cause for their underdevelopment. Hence from this perspective it can be concluded that rapid urbanisation is not a problem, but a solution to the problem of underdevelopment. Same is the case with

primacy or over urbanisation too. Here cities are seen as the most efficient instruments of change in an international system of cultural diffusion, and the larger the city, the higher the rate of transfer.

Whereas scholars like Andre Gunder Frank (1967) emphasised the instrumental role of the international system of cities in perpetuating the disadvantage of poor nations. The profits extracted from poorer regions grew in size as commodities moved from city to city, up the urban hierarchy, away from the producer towards the consumer. This was the view of the new perspective, the dependency theory, regarding underdevelopment. According to this perspective the underdeveloped economies in their relationship with the rich nations incur a systematic disadvantage. The disadvantaged position of those who exchange raw materials for the products of the advanced manufacturing technologies is exacerbated by the imbalance that exists in political as well as economic power between poor and rich economies. According to them the neocolonial arrangements of the poor nations are not much different from the colonial past and the poor nations continue to supply labour and materials to the international system at bargain rates and this ensures the continued disadvantage of the poorer nations.

Reflection and Action 13.2

Do you think that the cities in India are growing, in terms of wealth and opportunities, at the cost of the rural hinterland? Think carefully, use reference books, articles, journals etc., for relevant material from the library and write a report of two pages on this issue giving your own opinion based on secondary data collected by you. Compare your report with those of other learners at your Study Center.

The tradition that dependency theorists drew for explaining underdevelopment was Marxism, which had a pronounced influence in the study of urbanisation and underdevelopment. Dependency theory largely derived in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean and suggests that the development of the Third World nations has been dictated by its integration into the capitalist mode of production and that the more such nations get incorporated into the capitalist system the more underdeveloped they become (Frank 1967). This approach has clear implications for urban development in the form of what is called dependent urbanization (Castells 1977). Friedmann and Wulff (1976) stated that the developed countries established their urban outposts in the developing countries for three closely related reasons: i) to extract a surplus by way of primary products ii) to expand the market for goods developed under advanced monopoly capitalism and iii) to ensure the continued stability of the indigenous political system that will most willingly support the capitalist system.

In 1974 Immanuel Wallerstein introduced the **world-system model**. This theory too was linked to Marxist tradition. Whereas the dependency theory posited a two-tiered international stratification, the world system theory offered a three-tier system. In addition to the core (economically developed) and the poor or underdeveloped (periphery) here there is semi-periphery. In the world system theory the analysis is including the entire system at all levels of core, periphery and semi-periphery, rather than dependent nation alone as in the dependency theory. This approach is advantageous to urban studies in that it moves closer to a global, structural context in the analysis of urban processes, which may be a necessary step in advancing understanding how cities grow and change. The world system model

preserves the idea that the world economy is integrated to each other through a series of hierarchical exchanges, inequalities in the power to establish favourable terms of trade among the interacting states. It provides the basis for exploitation. Dominant states take advantage of the next lower tier or tiers.

The world system theory introduced a new approach to the international trends in urbanisation. It perceives a link in the urban processes in the core, periphery and semi-periphery. According to the world system theory change in the world occurs primarily in response to the progressive rationalisation of the globe in market terms. So also it tries to seek connection between changes taking place in cities throughout the world. It conveys the image of an international system of cities. Some urbanologists (King 1990) visualise the world as a large interdependent city transcendent of national boundaries. Chase Dunn examines the pattern of commodity exchanges that take place between different urban centers of the globe. The exchanges between the largest cities of the core are dense within and across national boundaries, while peripheral cities exchange mostly with the core cities and very little with one another. Regarding the types of the commodities exchanged, capital intensive goods would circulate among the core cities and flow to the periphery, while labour intensive raw materials would flow from the periphery to the core.

The world system model is a powerful conceptual tool for urban sociology because it facilitates a comprehensive analysis of structural forces effecting change in cities everywhere. However, like every theory that is global in scope, the world system theory has been faulted for being insensitive to local, region-by-region and city-by city variations (Flanagan 1993).

13.7 Post Modern Urbanism

The postmodernist idea of the city emerged as a reaction against modernism. According to Michael Dear (2000) post-modern cities are composed of multiple, differently interconnected sites, arranged in a decentered, non-hierarchical fashion. The contemporary urban dynamics no longer functions as a continuing accretion starting from a central core, but according to a process in which "the periphery organises the center", in a context of globalisation in which "the local material and informational flows enter into interaction with global flows to constitute an urban economy that is globally integrated, and dominated by the imperatives of flexibility." (Ibid) In "The Condition of Post-modernity" David Harvey (2000) defines the postmodern city with the rise of a) historical eclecticism, (as inventing tradition by imitating the older forms) b) multiculturalism, (reference with the locality and ethnicity) and c) spectacle (a theater scene, commercialisation of built environment). He explains the turn from "modernism" to "postmodernism" refers to the change of economic system and cultural codes. Stuart Hall (1996) thought of the post-modern city as discontinuous and fragmented space, self-contained 'alternative' cities, and rediscovery of the local. Collectively there is a wide variety of overlapping themes in the postmodernists' vocabulary. These themes, according to Ellin, include contextualism, historicism, the search for urbanity, regionalism, anti-universalism, pluralism etc. (Nan Ellin 2000) The rising values and fields of postmodern urbanism are community participation (based on pluralism and regionalism), mixed use (associated with ecological approaches), pedestrian friendly design (addresses the vitality and livability) and urban design (maintained mainly by historic preservation and environmentalism).

Box 13.1 Foundations of Post-Modern Urbanism

It was Dear and Flusty's who propounded the concept of postmodern urbanism by synthesising recent studies on the contemporary form of Southern California urbanism. Their key argument is that most 20th-century urban analyses have been predicated on the Chicago School's model of concentric rings. They aimed to develop a new concept under the banner of the Los Angeles School of centerless "keno" capitalism.

The great wave of globalisation in the second half of the twentieth century has been heralded by the public as well as by social scientists as a new stage of global capitalism with allegedly unique qualities based on new technologies of communication and information processing. According to the theorists of global capitalism it was during the 1960's that the organisation of economic activity entered a new period expressed by the altered structure of the world economy: the dismantling of industrial centers in the United States, Europe and Japan; accelerated industrialisation of several Third World nations; and increased internationalisation of the financial industry into a global network of transactions.

Observing the large-scale changes taking place in the globalisation era, based on activities in the urban centers and its interactions and interrelations with the rest of the world (such as global-local connection, an ubiquitous social polarisation, and a reterritorialisation of the urban process) urban researchers proposed a set of theses such as world city hypotheses (John Friedmann), global city hypotheses (Saskia Sassen), dual city theory (Manual Castells) and edge city (Joel Garreau). Dear and Flusty founded on these perceptions proposes post-modern urbanism. This urban perception based on global capitalism argues that society is transformed from the modern epoch to the post modern epoch and the post modern urban processes are juxtaposed to the urban process of modern industrial urban expansion where urbanisation was centered around a central focal activity such as an industrial unit.

The post modern urbanism thesis is very closely associated with the Los Angeles School. The fundamental features of the Los Angeles model include a global-local connection, an ubiquitous social polarization, and a reterritorialisation of the urban process in which the hinterland organizes the center. The post modern urbanism thesis is premised on the assumption that our society has been transformed and has moved from a modern epoch to a postmodern epoch – an argument that has been hotly contested among social scientists. The advocates of the Los Angeles School of post modern urbanism argue that the Los Angeles School has emerged and replaced the Chicago School of urban studies. They are also of the view that there had been no meaningful or significant urban studies conducted during the period between the Chicago School and the Los Angeles School. The three pillars of postmodern urbanism are the world-city hypothesis, the dual-city theory, and the edge-city model.

13.8 Sustainable Urban Development

During the 1990s there had been a fundamental argument nationally and internationally which states that a healthy and safe environment is essential for the continued survival of a given population. Since the Brundtland Commission published its report *Our Common Future* in 1987, the sustainability debate has revealed major differences in thinking about

development, economic growth, social change and environmental conservation (WCED 1987). The commission defined sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generations. Sustainable development was initially associated with sustainable environmental development in response to the degradation and destruction of the ecosystems and species that have occurred as a side effect of the growth of the human economy and population over the past few centuries (White, Rodney R. 2001). Later on there had been demands to add economic and social opportunity of human needs.

There was also a strong argument that a healthy and secure environment is a prerequisite for successful urban development. There had been a growing amount of work that examined the relationship between the environment and urbanisation in the past two decades. The objective of sustainable urban development is to achieve sustainability in planning and development of urban settlements. Like in sustainable development, in sustainable urban development too the environment and resource utilisation are not the only guiding principles. For a sustainable urban settlement planning, it shall be politically and socio-culturally acceptable as well as environmentally, economically, technologically, physically, fiscally and infrastructure-wise feasible (Kulshrestha, 2001). Access to and command of resources for low-income groups is seen as a major objective of sustainable urban development (Potter and Evans 1998). Sustainable urban space shall provide healthy, safe environment that meets sustainable goals. These include a healthy living environment, safe water supply, the provision of sanitation, drainage and garbage treatment, paved roads, an adequate economic base, and good governance (Hardoy et al 1992). Besides these, there are also other important social and cultural goals that improve city living.

13.9 Conclusion

This unit traces the development of urban sociology as a distinct branch of the sociology discipline. City and urban space and life had been a matter of concern for social thinkers even before urban sociology was accorded the status of a distinct discipline in early 20th century with the studies conducted and theoretical formulations made by the Chicago School. The ecological paradigm of Robert E. Park and colleagues and cultural perspective of Louis Wirth gained widespread attention of social scientists. The initial sections of this unit examine these approaches at length. Though these approaches predominated the urban studies in the beginning, later on there had been attempts to explain urban phenomena from different perspectives. The late 1960s and 1970s saw increased interests on the part of scholars in applying the mainstream theory of historical materialism for examining urban conditions. The unit also discusses the modernization and political economy paradigms explaining urban phenomena. Towards the end of the unit we have discussed the latest trends in the urban studies, that is, sustainable urban development.

13.10 Further Reading

Flanagan, William G. 1993. *Contemporary Urban Sociology*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Sunders, Peter 1981. *Social Theory and the Urban Question*. Hutchinson and Co. Ltd.: London.

Ellin, Nan 2000. *Post modern Urbanism*. Princeton Press: U.K.