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## UNIT 2 THEORIES OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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A theory in literary definition is a more or less verified or established explanation, accounting for known facts or phenomena. It is generally understood to refer to a proposed explanation of empirical phenomena, made in a way consistent with scientific methods.

Many scholars in several ways have also defined theory i.e.:

- ❖ *Theory is something to do, not simply to read (Calhoun et al.2007 cited in Jean Hiller, 2010)*
- ❖ *Theory is an explanatory supposition, which can be defined broadly or narrowly (McConnell, 1981)*
- ❖ *The key element of theory is that it abstracts a few characteristics of reality in an attempt to isolate and describe its central features (Simon, 1985)*

Theories can be categorized as under depending on their characteristics:

Type of theory	Characteristics
Normative	Concerns how the world ought to be
Prescriptive	Concerned with best means of achieving a desired condition
Empirical	Concerned with explaining reality
Models	Representation or stylized and simplified pictures of reality
Conceptual frameworks or perspectives	Ways of looking at or conceiving an object of study
Theorizing	Thinking about some aspect of a phenomenon

*Source: Theories of Urban Politics, David Judge, Gerry Stoker and Harold Wolman (Eds.) (1995)*

The theories pertaining to planning and development of urban areas has a history of common debates about ideas and practices and is rooted in a critical concern for the 'improvement' of human and environmental well-being, particularly as

pursued through interventions which seek to shape environmental conditions and place qualities.

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the theories of development
- discuss new urbanism
- describe the just city

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## 2.2 THEORIES OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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The theories of urban development have evolved over time, with the classical theories having been followed by the postmodern thoughts.

### 2.2.1 Classical Theories

The classical theories of urban development include Von Thunen Model, Concentric Zone Theory, Wedge or Radial Sector Theory and Multiple-Nuclei Theory.

#### i) The Von Thunen Model

Based on a series of simplifying assumptions, Von Thunen described a model that account for a spatial distribution of sites across a theoretical geographical area that would have varying rent generating capacities dependent upon transportation costs and distance from a central site. Von Thunen's model was highly generalized and was based on a series of simplifying assumptions (Krugman, 1996):

- 1) The space in which the model was framed was assumed to be an infinite or boundless, flat, and featureless plane, over which climatic conditions and natural resources were uniformly distributed.
- 2) The central attracting area was assumed to be a central market.
- 3) Transportation to this central market was assumed to be by horse and cart.
- 4) An allowance for the production and sale of different goods was made, but these goods were regarded as differing in bulk, therefore, having varying costs of transportation from point of production to the central market.
- 5) For each of these products, transport costs were assumed to vary with distance from the point of production to the point of sale at the central market.
- 6) The profits to be gleaned from the cultivation of one hectare of land were assumed to be the same for each product.

Based on these assumptions, and operating over the hypothetical space that Von Thunen proposed, he argued that agricultural land uses would segregate into a spatially hierarchic structure akin to that demonstrated in Figure 2.1.

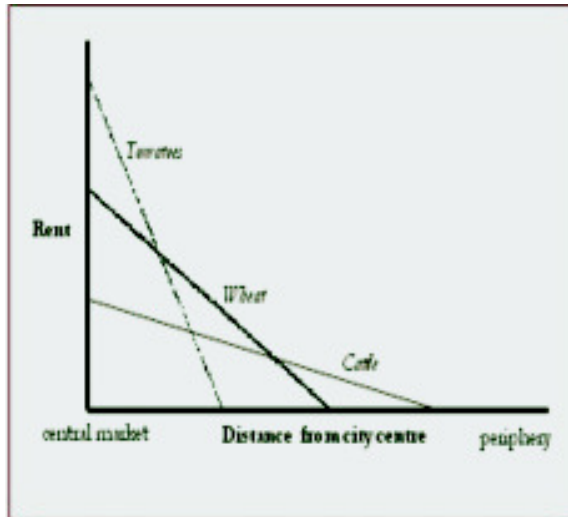


Fig. 2.1. The spatial organization of agricultural land uses proposed by the von Thunen model.

ii) **Concentric Zone Theory**

EW Burgess developed the concentric zone theory of urban land use in the mid-1920s based on an examination of the historical development of Chicago through the 1890s. It contrasts from the Von Thunen’s approach in being *descriptive* rather than *analytical* (Harvey, 1996). The concentric zone theory of urban land use is based on the assumption that a city grows by expanding outwards from a central area, radially, in concentric rings of development.

Burgess classified the city into five broad zones as shown in Figure 2. These five broad zones are:

- 1) **The Central Business District (CBD):** the focus for urban activity and the confluence of the city’s transportation infrastructure.
- 2) **The Zone of Transition:** generally a manufacturing district with some residential dwellings.
- 3) **The Zone of Factories and Working Men’s Homes:** a predominantly working class population living in older houses and areas that were generally lacking in amenities characterized this zone.
- 4) **The Residential Zone:** this band comprised newer and more spacious housing for the middle classes.
- 5) **The Outer Commuter Zone:** this land use ring was dominated by better quality housing for upper class residents and boasted of an environment of higher amenity.

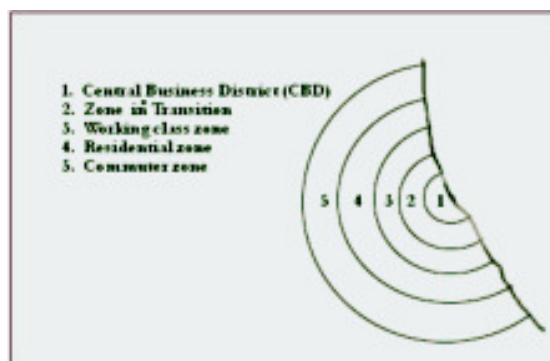


Fig. 2.2: The Burgess model of Chicago (after EW Burgess, 1925; Carter, 1981).

While useful in a descriptive sense for explaining the location of land uses in a mono-centric city, both the work of Burgess and Von Thunen has (by extrapolation to urban cases), has been criticized on the grounds that the models are too rigid to ever accurately represent actual land patterns (the mono-centric city assumption is perhaps the largest flaw). They have also been accused of overlooking the important influence of topography and transport systems on urban spatial structure and have been criticized for failing to accommodate the notion of special accessibility and ignoring the dynamic nature of the urban land use pattern (Harvey, 1996).

### iii) Wedge or Radial Sector Theory

Development of the wedge or radial sector theory of urban land use is generally attributed to the work of Hoyt (1939). Hoyt's model concerns itself primarily with the location of residential uses across urban areas; it refers to business location only in an indirect fashion. The model seeks to explain the tendency for various socio-economic groups to segregate in terms of their residential location decisions. In appearance, Hoyt's model owes a great deal to Burgess's concentric zone model: Hoyt presents wedge-like sectors of dominant urban land use, within which he identifies concentric zones of differential rent. The model suggests that, over time, high quality housing tends to expand outward from an urban centre along the fastest travel routes. In this way, Hoyt transforms Burgess's concentric zones into radial or sectoral wedges of land use (Figure 2.3).

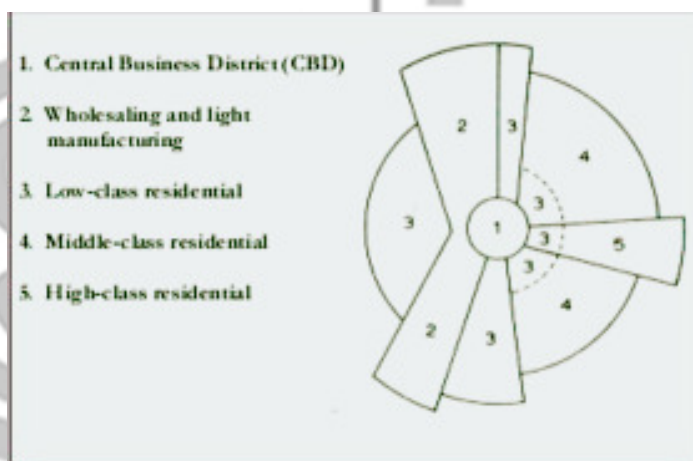


Fig. 2.3: Hoyt's sector model (after H. Hoyt, 1939; Carter, 1981).

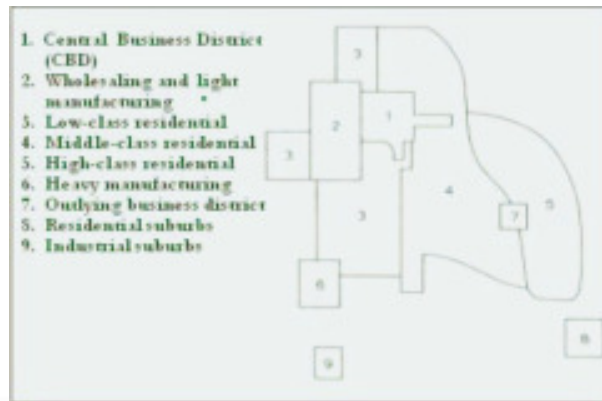
The innovative element in Hoyt's model was in considering direction, as well as distance, as a factor in shaping the spatial distribution of urban activity. Hoyt's model also goes further than its predecessors in recognizing that the Central Business District is not the sole focus of urban activity (Kivell, 1993). One major criticism, however, is that the model overlooks the location of employment, which itself is the major determinant of residential location (Harvey, 1996).

### iv) Multiple-Nuclei Theory

The work of Harris and Ullmann (1945) in developing a multiple-nuclei theory of urban land use is amongst the most innovative descriptive or analytical urban models. Their model is based on the premise that large cities have a spatial structure that is predominantly cellular. This, they explain, is

a consequence of cities' tendencies to develop as a multitude of nuclei that serve as the focal point for agglomerative tendencies. Harris and Ullmann proposed that around these cellular nuclei, dominant land uses and specialized centres may develop over time.

The novelty in multiple-nuclei theory lies in its acknowledgement of several factors that strongly influence the spatial distribution of urban activity, factors such as topography, historical influences, and spatial accessibility. The theory is also innovative in its recognition of the city as polycentric, as shown in Figure 2.4. In this sense, it moves closer to explaining why urban spatial patterns emerge.



**Fig. 2.4: Diagram illustrating Harris and Ullman's multiple nuclei model (after CD Harris and EL Ullman, 1945; Carter, 1981).**

v) **Central Place Theory**

Central Place Theory is an attempt to explain the spatial arrangement, size, and number of settlements. A Central Place is a settlement, which provides one or more services for the population living around it. A German geographer Walter Christaller who studied the settlement patterns in southern Germany originally published the theory in 1933. In the flat landscape of southern Germany, Christaller noticed that towns of a certain size were roughly equidistant. By examining and defining the functions of the settlement structure and the size of the hinterland he found it possible to model the pattern of settlement locations using geometric shapes.

The theory consists of two basic concepts

- threshold — the minimum population that is required to bring about the provision of certain good or services and
- range of goods or services — the average maximum distance people will travel to purchase goods and services

From this he deduced that settlements would tend to form in a triangular or hexagonal lattice, this being the most efficient pattern to serve areas without any overlap. In the orderly arrangement of an urban hierarchy, Christaller, providing different groups of goods and services, has identified seven different principal orders of settlement. Settlements are regularly spaced - equidistant spacing between same order centers, with larger centers farther apart than smaller centers. Settlements have hexagonal market areas, and are most efficient in number and functions.

**vi) Weber's Theory of Location**

Alfred Weber, published the theory in 1909 which assumes that industrialists choose a least-cost location for the development of new industry. The theory is based on a number of assumptions, among them that: (i) markets are fixed at certain specific points, (ii) transport costs are proportional to the weight of the goods and the distance covered by a raw material or a finished product, and (iii) perfect competition exists. Weber postulated that raw materials and markets would exert a 'pull' on the location of an industry through transport costs. Industries with a high material index would be pulled towards the raw material. Industries with a low material index would be pulled towards the market. Industrial location may be swayed by agglomeration economies.

**2.2.2 Modern Theories****i) Public Choice Theory**

Two theories emerged in the 1980s to explain the motivations and formulae pushing urban development and to comment on the conflicts and pressures facing modern American cities. These theories superseded the debate between the post-war theories of democratic pluralism and regime politics that had dominated the field for two decades. First and most significant of these new ideas was the "public choice theory" advanced by Paul Peterson in his 1981 book, "City Limits". Peterson states that urban politicians and governing regimes are subordinate to the overall economic principles that force cities to compete to capture new investment and capital. He writes that the competitive nature of cities encourages the business elite and politicians to favor new development projects, concluding that successful cities require a local infrastructure that is supportive of the needs of business and economic development.

In 1987 John Logan and Harvey Molotch published "Urban Fortunes" as the first substantial criticism of Peterson's ideas. "Urban Fortunes" describes the combination of entrepreneurs and urban politicians as a "growth machine" — a powerful, pro-development network of business interests and local politicians whom favor increased economic development at the expense of neighborhood residents and other vulnerable stakeholders. Logan and Molotch argue that the close relationship between City Hall and the business world creates the growth machine and fuels its ability to overpower weaker forces attempting to influence the development process. Logan and Molotch also identify the costs and externalities created by the growth machines drive for economic development that were absent from Peterson's theory. The free market and fiscal growth models emphasized in Peterson's theory are the guides for city officials and entrepreneurs intent on spurring economic development within their city. The "public choice theory" of urban development outlined in City Limits suggests that market values and motivations drive city officials to pursue economic revitalization with the goal of attracting more private investment. This economically-based theory is built upon the belief that cities should "seek to upgrade their economic standing" by competing against other cities to attract new businesses and jobs through economic development. Cities are successful when they entice new jobs and development projects inside their boundaries following the logic that what is good for business becomes good for the city. Framing

urban development in strictly economic terms, Peterson claims the decisions of the city are governed by rational principles designed to increase public utility.

### 2.2.3 Planning Theories

#### i) Traditional Planning Theories

Planning efforts in the field rarely make obvious reference to philosophical synthesis or organizational development theory, nor are much attention given to lessons of historical experience based on case studies of past planning efforts. Planning theory has long been at tension over its normative versus descriptive or predictive nature. Is planning theory philosophically oriented toward laying out the correct way to plan, in an ethical sense? Or is it scientifically oriented toward showing the likely implications of undertaking various planning behaviors? Both traditions have always existed, but movement seems to be away from philosophy and toward science. The notion of a contingency use of planning theories has accompanied this trend. In the 1970s, Hudson (1974) published a widely cited article likening the planning theory universe to an Indian sitar whose strings represent synoptic, incremental, transactive, advocacy, and radical planning. The practitioner plays the strings at appropriate times. (Christensen 1985; Alexander 1996).

The most important of these other traditions include incremental planning, transactive planning, advocacy planning, and radical planning. These by no means exhaust the range of contemporary planning traditions, but they cover enough ground to illustrate the major developments in planning theory and practice since roughly 1960, developments which have grown up in response to recognized deficiencies in the synoptic approach.

#### ii) Synoptic Planning

Predominant concern has generally centered on the tradition of rational comprehensive planning, also known as the synoptic tradition. The synoptic approach has dominated both American planning practice and the planning of development assistance programs overseas. The approach is well suited to the kind of mandate bestowed on government agencies: a set of constrained objectives, a budget, and accountability. There are, however, several other counterpoint schools of thought, most of which differ from the confines of the synoptic approach. Synoptic planning, or the rational comprehensive approach, is the dominant tradition, and the point of departure for most other planning approaches. Synoptic planning typically looks at problems from a systems viewpoint, using conceptual or mathematical models relating ends (objectives) to means (resources and constraints) with heavy reliance on numbers and quantitative analysis. Synoptic planning has roughly four classical elements:

- 1) Goal-setting,
- 2) Identification of policy alternatives,
- 3) Evaluation of means against ends, and
- 4) Implementation of policy.

The process is not always undertaken in this sequence, and each stag permits multiple iterations, feedback loops and elaboration of sub-processes. For

example, evaluation can consist of procedures such as benefit cost analysis, operations research, systems analysis, and forecasting research. Forecasting can be broken down into deterministic models (trend extrapolation, econometric modeling, curve-fitting through multiple regression analysis); or probabilistic models (Monte Carlo methods, Markov chains, simulation programs, Bayesian methods) or judgmental approaches (Delphi technique, scenario writing, cross-impact matrices).

### iii) **Incremental Planning**

Incremental planning came up as a response to the synoptic planning approach that has been criticized for its bias toward central control-in the definition of problems and solutions, in the evaluation of alternatives, and in the implementation of decisions. The case for incremental planning derives from a series of criticisms leveled at synoptic rationality, its insensitivity to existing institutional performances capabilities; its reductionist epistemology; its failure to appreciate the cognitive limits of decision-makers, who cannot “optimize” but only “satisfies” choices by successive approximations.

Charles Lindblom is one of the advocates of the theory of ‘Incrementalism’ in policy and decision-making (also called ‘Gradualism’) in 1959. The approach is to take “baby-steps”, or “Muddling Through”, in decision-making processes. In it, policy change is, under most circumstances, evolutionary rather than revolutionary. He stresses that policy decisions are better understood, and better arrived at, in terms of the push and tug of established institutions that are adept at getting things done through decentralized bargaining processes best suited to a free market and a democratic political economy. Incremental planning adheres more closely to the economic logic of individuals pursuing their own self-interest. Incrementalists also take issue with the synoptic tradition of expressing social values (a priori goal-setting; artificial separation of ends from means; presumption of a general public interest rather than pluralist interests).

### iv) **Advocacy Planning**

The most influential of the 1960s challenges to rational planning came from a Hunter College professor who had worked with poor communities in Philadelphia and New York and believed in their lack of representation in the planning process. Paul Davidoff’s (1965) article, “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning,” resonated with the frustration of many planners in their inability to meaningfully address the social and economic issues tearing at the fabric of American cities. Davidoff called for the distribution of planning services into low-income, minority neighborhoods through a cadre of advocate planners who would be physically located in neighborhoods and would represent the interests of neighborhood residents in city-level planning processes. Based on analogy with the legal advocacy system, Davidoff thought that many neighborhoods would arrange their own advocates. If these were not forthcoming, it was the duty of the city government to appoint advocates to represent the neighborhood. Debates among the various advocate planners would take place “in the coin of the public interest”- so that the prevailing positions would be those showing themselves as the most closely aligned with the broader needs of the city. The advocacy planning movement grew up in the sixties rooted in adversary procedures modeled upon the legal



profession, and usually applied to defending the interests of weak against strong-community groups, environmental causes, the poor, and the disenfranchised against the established powers of business and government. (Alinsky 1971; Heskin 1977.) Advocacy planning has proven successful as a means of blocking insensitive plans and challenging traditional views of a unitary public interest. In theory, advocacy calls for development of plural plans rather than a unit plan (Davidoff 1965). The advocacy planning movement liberated planners from positions labeled as comprehensive or public interest defined. It quickly spread well beyond the inner city. The use of publicly supported advocates spread even beyond the realm of planning and they became common in the service of environmental groups, trade associations, and even corporations. In practice, however, advocacy planning has been criticized for posing stumbling blocks without being able to mobilize equally effective support for constructive alternatives (Peattie 1968). One effect of the advocacy movement has been to shift formulation of social policy from backroom negotiations out into the open. Particularly in working through the courts, it has injected a stronger dose of normative principles into planning, and greater sensitivity to unintended side effects of decisions. A residue of this can be seen in the increasing requirements for environmental, social, and financial impact reports to accompany large-scale project proposals, whether originating in the private or public sector. Another result has been the stronger linkage between social scientists and judiciary processes in policy decisions. Advocacy planning has both reflected and contributed to a general trend in planning away from neutral objectivity in definition of social problems, in favor of applying more explicit principles of social justice. Much of the previous assumptions of city planners became the subject of conscious discussion and debate. Reflections from the advocate planners showed their work to be enormously difficult and conflicted. Critics pointed out tendencies of advocate planners to be demographically quite different from the residents they served. Advocacy planning seemed to raise expectations that could not be met in those communities. Ultimately, Davidoff was moved by the argument that you have to be from a community to effectively advocate in its behalf. He relocated to the suburbs where his organization, Suburban Action Institute, became influential in promoting federal fair share housing requirements (Needleman and Needleman 1974; Mazziotti 1974; Davidoff, Davidoff and Gold 1974).

By the early 1970s, it was normal to distinguish procedural planning theory focusing on planning process from substantive planning theory focusing on the growth and development of cities. Andreas Faludi, the Dutch planning theorist labeled these two subjects, theory-of-planning and theory-in-planning (Faludi 1973). The distinction was and remains controversial, with many scholars and practitioners arguing that one cannot study process without an understanding of substance, and vice versa. One aspect of the controversy is the tendency of the procedural emphasis to separate planning theory from design approaches to planning which are so rooted in the physical aspects of cities (Hightower 1969; Fischler 1995). Following the first experiences with advocacy planning, planning theorists began diverging in many directions. The rational planning model gradually lost ground. Indeed, in the late 1970s, it was common to talk about a “crisis in planning theory” resulting from the loss of a center to the field (Goldstein and Rosenberry 1978; Clavel, Forester and Goldsmith 1980).

v) **Radical Planning**

The criticisms of advocacy led to a wave of radical approaches to planning for the underprivileged. Stephen Grabow and Alan Heskin's (1973) wrote in the "Foundations for a Radical Concept of Planning," on the inabilities of the current planning framework to respond to the needs of the poor. They called for a systemic change including decentralization, ecological attentiveness, spontaneity, and experimentation. Yet, it spawned the progressive planning movement seeking out incremental changes that over time would result in structural changes promoting equality, participation, and legitimacy. Progressive planners promoted public ownership of land and job generating industries, worker-managed enterprises, tax reform, community organizations, and leveraging of public resources through partnerships with private organizations that would agree to serve public purposes. Notable examples include Berkeley, California; Hartford, Connecticut; and Burlington, Vermont. Some progressives worked outside the mainstream government doing opposition planning or organizing community self-help initiatives (Krumholz and Clavel 1994; Friedmann 1987).

vi) **Urban Regime Theory**

Urban regime theory came to prominence with the publication of Clarence Stone's study of Atlanta in 1989, although earlier work by Fainstein and Fainstein (1983) and Elkin (1987) has also been influential. The urban regime theory holds that in certain places, community leadership has a certain framework, or regime, for examining issues. Individuals or interest groups that argue from outside that regime will find it very difficult or even impossible to win decisions. This results in an effective disenfranchisement of the outsiders. Implications for planners are both descriptive and normative: power lies in speaking the language of the dominant regime(s). If planners want to influence decisions, they will have to make arguments in a manner that the dominant regime(s) will understand and be responsive to (Lauria 1997).

vii) **Transactive Planning**

During the development of the radical critique, other planning theorists were reconsidering the overtly political directions of planning theory. A series of new directions emerged; focusing on planners' facilitative roles in shaping decisions emerged. Often referred to as social learning theories, these contributions emphasized planners' roles in bringing stakeholders together, gathering and sharing information, and helping social structures to learn from their experiences. John Friedmann's transactive planning emphasized that citizens and civic leaders, not planners, had to be at the core of planning if plans were to be implemented. Others defined a social experimentation process using elements of incrementalism. Chris Argyris and Donald Schon began to articulate a theory of action in which the planner, acting as catalyst strives to create a self-correcting decision structure capable of learning from its own errors (Argyris and Schon 1974; Friedmann 1987).

The transactive planning approach focuses on the intact experience of people's lives revealing policy issues to be addressed. Planning is not carried out with respect to an anonymous target community of beneficiaries, but in face-to-face contact with the people affected by decisions. Planning consists less of field

surveys and data analyses, and more of interpersonal dialogue marked by a process of mutual learning transactive planning also refers to the evolution of decentralized planning institutions that help people take increasing control over the social processes that govern their welfare. Planning is not seen as an operation separated from other forms of social action, but rather as a process embedded in continual evolution of ideas validated through action (Friedmann 1973). In contrast to incremental planning, more emphasis is given to processes of personal and organizational development, and not just the achievement of specific functional objectives. Plans are evaluated not merely in terms of what they do for people through delivery of goods and services, but in terms of the plans' effect on people, on their dignity and sense of effectiveness, their values and behavior, their capacity for growth through cooperation, their spirit of generosity.

### **2.2.4 The Post-Modern Challenge and Response**

The postmodern philosophy emerged in the 1980s and early 1990s in the United States. It evolved in an environment of increasing pressures on poor communities, heightened awareness of ethnic, racial and gender differences in the society, with multiculturalism becoming a leading political force and illegal immigration, welfare programs, and affirmative action taking center stage. Ethnic wars in Africa, Asia, and Europe only reinforced the sense that differences among sub-groups within a country matter much more than collective interest. In this environment, planners were receptive to the introduction of post-modern philosophy. This stance highlighted diversity in points of view about social and political issues, rejected notions of human progress and saw domination of one group by another at every turn. Despite the French post-modern philosophers' high pessimism about the prospects for positive social change, planning theorists who have drawn upon them actively look for the solutions to this pessimism. They call for acknowledging and respecting diversity and difference, recognizing the varying forms of evidence persuasive among different populations, as well as meaningfully involving communities early in planning processes and sharing both power and theorizing activities with those they plan for. Still, the postmodern challenge is considerable and planning theorists are not at all clear about meeting them (Harper and Stein 1995; Mandelbaum 1996; Sandercock 1998).

Theories of social capital are a recent development to capture the imaginations of planning theorists as a response to the multicultural challenge. They have not yet been applied to planning settings in a full way. They emphasize the complexity and effectiveness of social networks and community leadership in moving a community toward an operable response to new challenges (Briggs 1997; Putnam 1995). Feminist planning theory, comfortable operating within the post-modern critique, calls planners to task for valuing economic production while undervaluing or ignoring familial and community re-production, as well as ignoring the different ways men and women use space. The feminist theorists argue that economic efficiency measures universally used in planning analyses attach zero value to home child care, or to volunteer work in community organizations, among others. They also cite transportation models as oriented around the journey-to-work. Women, in particular, tend to make more trips other than the conventional journeys from home to workplace (Moore Milroy 1991; Ritzdorf 1995).

While mainstream-planning theory has increasingly focused on the procedural side of planning, external developments on the substantive side are increasingly pushing the profession in new directions and demanding responses. The self-proclaimed new urbanism of Peter Calthorpe (1993) and Andres Duany (Duany and Plater-Zyberk 1992) has captured the imagination of public officials and homebuyers. They are essentially physical design oriented proposals justified largely by claims about enhancing civic life and social capital, entering the procedural realm. The sustainability movement, which has grown to enormous international proportions since the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report (Krizek and Power 1996) appears to focus on resource renewability and preservation, with as much concern for the relationship of rich to poor. The movement proposes new decision criteria and models based on global cooperation and advancement of equity. Finally, recent explorations into environmental justice issues have potential to lead to a new understanding of the nature of social divisions in both rich and poor countries (Petrikin 1995). Procedural planning theory must respond to these ideas but has not yet done so.

Till now you have read about the theories of urban development Now, answer the following questions given in *Check Your Progress 1*.

### Check Your Progress 1

**Note:** a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) What are the classical theories of development? Explain any one

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2) What do you understand by Planning Theories? Explain briefly

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## 2.3 THE NEW URBANISM

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“The New Urbanism” refers to a design-oriented approach to planned urban development. Developed primarily by architects and journalists, it is perhaps more ideology than theory, and is supported by academics and also planning practitioners. New urbanites have received considerable attention in the United

States and, to a lesser extent, in Great Britain. Their orientation resembles that of the early planning theorists—Ebenezer Howard, Frederic Law Olmsted and Patrick Geddes—in their aim of using spatial relations to create a close-knit social community that allows diverse elements to interact. The approach is characterized by an easy elision of physical form with social conditions; an urban design that includes a variety of building types, mixed uses, intermingling of housing for different income groups, and a strong privileging of the “public realm”. The basic unit of planning is the neighborhood, which is limited in physical size, has a well-defined edge, and a focused center: “The daily needs of life are accessible within the five minute-walk” (Kunstler 1996). The new urbanism stresses the substance of plans rather than the method of achieving them. In practice, it has stimulated the creation of a number of new towns and neighborhoods, of which Seaside, in Florida, is the best known. The New Urbanism is vulnerable to the accusation that its proponents oversell their product, promoting an unrealistic environmental determinism that has threaded its way throughout the history of physical planning. David Harvey (1997) praises certain aspects of the New Urbanism, its emphasis on public space, its consideration of the relationship between work and living, and its stance toward environmental quality.

For planning theory, the most interesting aspect of the new urbanism is that its assurance of a better quality of life has inspired a social movement. Its utopianism contrasts with communicative planning, which offers only a better process. The movement, however, does not recognize that the fundamental difficulty with modernism was its persistent habit of privileging spatial forms over social processes (Harvey 1997). The movement is less convincing in its approach to social injustice. Harvey fears that the new urbanism can commit the same errors as modernism--of assuming that changing people’s physical environment will somehow take care of the social inequalities that warped their lives. To be sure, with its emphasis on community, it is unlikely to commit the principal sin of modernist redevelopment programs, destroying communities in order to put people in the orderly environments that were thought to enhance living conditions. The real problem replicates the one that defeated Ebenezer Howard’s radical principles in the construction of garden cities. In order to achieve investor backing for his schemes, Howard was forced to trade away his aims of a socialist commonwealth and a city that accommodated all levels of society (Fishman, 1977). The new urbanists must also rely on private developers to build and finance their visions; consequently they are producing only slightly less exclusive suburbs than the ones they dislike. Although, their creations will contain greater physical diversity than their predecessors, their social composition will not differ markedly.

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## 2.4 THE JUST CITY

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Engels (1935) laid out a role for intellectual understanding in bringing about a desirable transformation, as well as a picture of the future that only avoided the label of utopianism through an assertion of historic inevitability, the claim that once the working class seized power, it inevitably would create a just society. Depicting a picture of a just city puts the planning theorist in the role of advocate, not necessarily the advocate for a particular group, as in Davidoff’s concept of advocacy planning but as the advocate of a program. Just City theorists fall into two categories: radical democrats and political economists. The former differ

from communicative planning theorists in that they have a more radical concept of participation that goes beyond the involvement of stakeholders to governance by civil society, and they accept a conflictual view of society. They believe that progressive social change results only from the exercise of power by those who previously had been excluded from power. Participation is the vehicle through which that power asserts itself. Whereas the communicative planning theorists primarily speak to planners employed by government, calling upon them to mediate among diverse interests, Just City theorists do not assume the neutrality or benevolence of government (Marcuse 1986). For them the purpose of their vision is to mobilize a public rather than to prescribe a methodology to those in office. A theory of the just city values both participation in decision-making by relatively powerless groups and equity of outcomes (Sandercock, 1998). The key questions asked of any policy by political economists have been who dominates and who benefits? The “who” has typically been defined by economic interest, but economic reductionism is not necessary to this mode of analysis; evaluation of outcomes can also be performed with regard to groups defined by gender, race, and sexual orientation. Nor does the stress on material equality need to boil down to an expectation that redistribution should proceed to a point where there is no reward to achievement.

A persuasive vision of the Just City needs to incorporate an entrepreneurial state that not only provides welfare but also generates increased wealth; moreover, it needs to project a future embodying a middle-class society rather than only empowering the poor and disfranchised. Recent work on industrial districts, social markets, local economic development, and national growth rates has pointed in a direction more sympathetic to middle-class aspirations (Storper 1997, Sayer and Walker 1991, Fainstein and Markusen, 1993, Bluestone and Harrison, 1997). Still, a great deal more attention needs to be paid to identifying a formula for growth with equity (Sanyal, 1998). And such an approach has to take into account the perseverance of a capitalist world economy and the evident success, at least for the moment, of a liberalized US economy.

Participation in public decision-making is part of the ideal of the Just City, both because it is a worthy goal in itself and because benevolent authoritarianism is unlikely. At the same time, democracy presents a set of thorny problems that have never been theoretically resolved and can only be addressed within specific situations. The almost exclusive preoccupation with participation that has come to characterize much of left thought since the demise of socialism in the Soviet bloc evades the problems that have vexed democratic theory throughout its history. Within a formulation of the Just City, democracy is not simply a procedural norm but rather has a substantive content (see Pitkin 1967). Given the existing system of social domination, it cannot be assumed that participation by stakeholders would be transformative in a way that would improve most people’s situation. Consequently, deliberations within civil society are not ipso facto morally superior to decisions taken by the state. Rather, “it is the double-edged nature of the state, its ability to effect both regressive and progressive social change that must be stressed” (Yiftachel, 1998).

Till now you have read about new urbanism and the just city. Now, answer the following questions given in *Check Your Progress 2*.

### Check Your Progress 2

**Note:** a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) What do you mean by New Urbanism?

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2) Explain the concept of Just City.

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### 2.5 LET US SUM UP

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The principal question of planning theory is the analysis of the possibility for attaining a better quality of human life within the context of a global capitalist political economy. One way to approach this question is to frame a model of the good city and then to inquire how it is achievable. The model can be an abstract utopia—the cohesive city of the new urbanists’ dreams or be derived from the identification of places, which seem to provide an exceptionally good quality of life (thus conforming to Hoch’s description of pragmatic inquiry described above).

The types of theory pertaining to planning and development described above embrace a social reformist outlook and various perspectives for the growth and development of the city. They represent a move from the purely critical perspective that characterized much theory in the seventies and eighties to one that once again offers a promise of a better life. Whereas reaction to technocracy and positivism shaped planning theory of that period, more recent planning thought has responded to the challenge of post-modernism. Communicative planning theory has evaded the issue of universalism by developing a general procedural ethic without substantive content. The new urbanists claim that their design prescriptions incorporate diversity and provide people what they really want rather than what archaic zoning laws and greedy developers impose on them. Just City Theorists work from “the basic premise that any distributional conception of social justice will inevitably be linked to the broader way of life in which people engage” (Smith 1997, p. 21). The argument is that while there may be no universal standards of good and bad, there are criteria for judging better and worse (Smith 1997; Fainstein 1997). For Just City theorists, it concerns the development of an urban vision that also involves material well-being but which

relies on a more pluralistic, cooperative, and decentralized form of welfare provision than the state-centered model of the bureaucratic welfare state. Like their nineteenth century predecessors, they are seeking to interpose the planning process between urban development and the market so as to produce a more democratic and just society. The communicative theorists have reasserted the moral concerns that underlay nineteenth century radicalism' the new urbanists have promoted a return to concern with physical form, and just city theorists have resurrected the spirit of utopia that inspired Ebenezer Howard and his fellow radicals.

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## 2.6 REFERENCES AND SELECTED READINGS

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## 2.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What are the classical theories of development? Explain any one

The classical theories of urban development include Von Thunen Model, Concentric Zone Theory, Wedge or Radial Sector Theory, Central Place Theory and Multiple-Nuclei Theory.

Central Place Theory is an attempt to explain the spatial arrangement, size, and number of settlements. A Central Place is a settlement, which provides one or more services for the population living around it.

- 2) What are Planning Theories? Explain briefly

Planning Theories include incremental planning, transactive planning, advocacy planning, synoptic planning and radical planning. Synoptic planning typically looks at problems from a systems viewpoint, using conceptual or mathematical models relating ends (objectives) to means (resources and constraints) with heavy reliance on numbers and quantitative analysis.



## Check Your Progress 2

1) What do you mean by New Urbanism?

“The new urbanism” refers to a design-oriented approach to planned urban development. The approach is characterized by an easy elision of physical form with social conditions; an urban design that includes a variety of building types, mixed uses, intermingling of housing for different income groups, and a strong privileging of the “public realm.” The basic unit of planning is the neighborhood, which is limited in physical size, has a well-defined edge, and a focused center. The daily needs of life are accessible within the five minute-walk.

2) Explain the concept of Just City.

Radical democrats have a concept of participation that goes beyond the involvement of stakeholders to governance by civil society, and they accept a conflictual view of society. They believe that progressive social change results only from the exercise of power by those who previously had been excluded from power. Participation is the vehicle through which that power asserts itself.

