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CHAPTER 5
ON LINKAGES BETWEEN URBANISM AND URBAN RESTRUCTURING IN MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE

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> "....It was a past that changed gradually as he advanced on his journey, because the traveler's past changes according to the route he has followed: not the immediate past, that is, to which each day that goes by adds a day, but the more remote past. Arriving at each new city, the traveler finds again a past of his that he did not know he had: the foreignness of what you no longer are or no longer possess lies in wait for you in foreign, unpossessed places".
> Italo Calvino (1974, pp.28-9)

Among the narratives structuring our understanding of cities and urban life, that of the industrial revolution is dominant. Notions of "tradition" and "modernity" have been constructed on its basis, which are recently intercepted by the third pole of postmodernity (Leontidou 1993; 1996). Southern urban development can no longer be explained away as "retarded", as in Anglo-centered convergence theories. These took for granted that industrialisation leads urban restructuring. In the linear urban development models which crushed alternative trajectories of development, such as "urban life cycle" models (Hall and Hay 1980, van den Berg et al. 1982, Cheshire and Hay 1989), it is still claimed that urbanization is "determined" by industrialisation and counter-urbanization is linked with de-industrialisation. Cities presenting no apparent linkages are considered underdeveloped, precapitalist or, more strongly, parasitic or overurbanized.

Such Anglo-American interpretations or, rather, postulates, also affect other world regions besides Third World cities: Mediterranean Europe is among these, where urban restructuring has not been centered on the industrial revolution and economically-motivated urban growth. This paper will argue the theme of culture, and more particularly urbanism as a major force in urban restructuring. The central role of the city in Mediterranean cultural traditions will be portrayed, starting from the very word for the experience of urbanization in Greek: *astyfilia*, which means, literally, "friendliness to the city".

We will abandon the industrialisation narrative, and seek the roots of urban restructuring in the culture of urbanism. It is as if rediscovering a past that these cities did not know they had, as it was obscured by Anglo-American stereotypes. Mediterranean cultures were always based on cities and towns, from ages lost in prehistory, until our days. Instead of dual categories such as

'traditional' vs "modern", there are in-between spaces to be revealed (Leontidou, 1996).

In terms of the "urban life cycle" theory, we are going to observe two of the four stages: in the urbanization/ suburbanization/ disurbanization/ reurbanization quadruplet, we will focus on the urbanisation pole and the reurbanization trajectory. As the "urban" implies diversity, however, the poles presented here are intercepted by thousands of formations around the world and there is always a danger of over-generalizing. European cities are very heterogeneous. This paper basically focuses on Southern Europe, as a pole closer to the rest of the Mediterranean, and contrasts it with the UK and the USA, though there, too, there is a vast diversity of cities. We must exclude Celtic cities such as Dublin, Edinburgh or Cardiff, as well as Afro-American cultures in the USA.

Contrasting Two Traditions of Urbanization

Urbanization in the Mediterranean has not been related with the growth of industry and it has been generally spontaneous. Efforts to interpret it have attributed it to "push" and "pull" factors with a preponderance of the latter, which are related with industry and employment concentrated in cities. Analysis until the early 1980s stressed that migrants have been repelled by rural poverty and attracted by opportunities of informal work in the large agglomerations (Williams ed., 1984). Industry, however, was not as important in the Mediterranean as the "pull" of urban life. Unlike the case in the core of Europe, migrants were not attracted to cities by industrial development. The forces in the massive rural exodus were not just economic. The culture of urbanism, enhanced by the tacit acceptance of peripheral popular settlements, will be discussed here as major forces spurring rapid urbanization.

The permissive attitudes of Mediterranean dominant classes to popular urban land colonization were partly attributed to apprehension of dangerous masses in the city core, after the negative experiences of northern industrial conurbations. However, there was also a quest for safeguarding a highly valued style of central living for affluent social groups. Italian dominant classes from a very early period consistently relocated the poor from the inner city or, occasionally, from "miserable boats near the quays... or under the bridges on the canals" in Genoa and Venice (Braudel 1973, 205). The "Haussmanisation" of Rome during the fascist period (next section) was the most large-scale relocation operation in Italy. Before this, however, there are references to the discouragement of industrialisation in papal Rome, to avoid the restless proletariat (Fried 1973, 21).

At the same time in Italy, but also throughout Mediterranean Europe, the dominant classes tacitly accepted popular settlement on the urban fringe. The facility of squatting (or, rather, semi-squatting) has combined with urban-

oriented cultures to attract ever increasing numbers of migrants to large cities throughout the postwar period. The control of peripheral urban land was generally loose and popular strata colonized the urban fringe. Even today some Southern countries have no land registration systems (Leontidou 1990). Unauthorized, spontaneous popular settlements springing up around all Mediterranean cities until at least the mid-1970s, were a stark contrast with controlled suburbanization in Anglo-American cities. In Britain and the USA, peripheral urban land was always strictly safeguarded against popular invasions, control of illegal building was effective, and entrepreneurs or the public sector were active in the creation of formal suburban settlements.

Popular land colonization has been surprisingly generalized in Mediterranean cities, despite the great diversity of landownership patterns and property structures. There are several types of landlordism in Southern Europe (private, large and small, State, church), but basically two models can be discerned between Greece and Portugal on the one hand, Spain and Italy on the other (Leontidou, 1990, p.248). In the former, properties have been generally small, urban landownership fragmented, and urban redevelopment piecemeal. In the latter, large real estate entrepreneurs have emerged in the context of a generally fragmented urban space. This, however, has not impeded spontaneous popular settlement. In Rome, the extent of concentration of landownership in Agro Romano already in 1913 was such, that eleven families owned 40% of the land and by 1954 six families owned more land than the city government (Fried 1973, p.115). Despite this, borgate were mushrooming in this urban fringe already in the early 1900s. Apparently, some of this land was subdivided and sold in anticipation of popular pressure for infrastructure expansion. There are even references to illegal dwellings built with subsidies from the State (Fried 1973, p.29, p.120). This was much more generalized in interwar Greece, where the State and the Refugee Settlement Commission actually spurred the informal sector in land, housing, and economic activity (Leontidou 1989).

The other pole of Mediterranean popular suburbanization, is middle-class centrality. It is the more affluent social groups who choose to live near the center, which contrasts with inner city poverty in Anglo-American cities, where the more affluent classes have suburbanized from a very early period. Again with exceptions, of course, it is not spacious living, as in the Burgess and Alonso models, but accessibility to the city centre which is highly valued and preferred in Mediterranean cities. The popularity of the city centre and the inner city more generally lead to an inverse-Burgess model (Leontidou 1990) and to a compact city. Illegal building has not been confined to popular suburbs. Within approved city plans, a standard speculative venture have been illegal additions, giving the middle classes extra space, but also increasing densities. Rooftop additions have created a couple of supplementary dwellings for exploitation, as in Roman apartment buildings (Fried 1973, p.59); the

adjunction of *aticos* and *sobre-aticos* retreating from the facade has gained Barcelona residents some height (Remica 1977, p.178); and balconies have become rooms and glass houses in Athens apartment buildings. Illegality within the city plan has peaked in the case of Naples, where the building boom during the 1950s was driven by people related with the *camorra* and was partly controlled by city bosses, the virtual economic empires of Lauro and Gava (Allum 1973, pp.36-9, pp.296-7). Neapolitan speculators were immortalized by Rossi in his film *I mani sulla citta*, also reminiscent of American corruption as portrayed in Polanski's *Chinatown*, but very different in terms of method and geographical form. Illegality is much more "democratically" spread elsewhere in the South, where a whole population is well trained in contravening regulations and devising informal strategies of living and working.

Values for urban living are combined with a rural second home for days of leisure, usually located at the place of origin of migrants to cities, which a lot of the Mediterranean urban populations are. Second-home access throughout continental Europe has been important in the creation of compact cities: 8-20% of urban residents had access to a rural second home in the early 1980s (White, 1984, 163-4), and the rate has much gone up since then, with the spread of residential tourism lining the Mediterranean shores. The large extent of renting in middle-class areas of many mainland European cities, contrasts with Britain and the USA. Wealthy Europeans may rent a central apartment but will own a rural second home. In the Mediterranean, owner-occupation does not correlate with social class or income (Leontidou 1990).

The contrast between two urban/housing traditions in Europe, the Mediterranean and the Northern one (Rapport 1969, p.349), is interesting though exaggerated as a generalisation and a polarity, because there are so many in-between cases cross-culturally. Still, it seems that Southerners tend to consider the whole city as the context for civil life and the housing units as small private enclaves. Anglo-American cultural stereotypes, by contrast, tend to see houses as the essential setting for everyday life, and the city as a context for movement toward houses and leisure spots. This antithesis can be extended to a contrast between strolling and street life in the South, in contrast to driving and "hurried leisure" (Karapostolis 1983, p.262) especially in America, where the private car supersedes the pedestrian (Jacobs 1961). Leisure patterns are city-oriented in the South and home-oriented in much of the North. Leisurely enjoyment of public spaces and the tendency for strolling and street life has been attributed to the mild Southern climate, but it goes much deeper than this. It reflects outward-oriented life patterns in compact and enclosed cities, where home entertainment is difficult in restricted housing spaces. It also often develops in other continental cities, such as French urban "cafe societies", Paris, Vienna, and tourist squares of major Northern European cities.

From the private sphere to the public one, the above antitheses are reflected in a peculiar zoning in space *and* time in the UK and the USA, which is not to be found in the Mediterranean. This is especially evident in urban land use. In Southern european cities, the CBD is not dominated by economic activity, but also by residence, as well as cultural and leisure spaces. Zoning is not strict: mixed land use throughout the urban fabric creates a combination of residence with economic and leisure activities at walking distance (Leontidou 1990, 1993). There are small squares in various central and peripheral areas rather than large parks in specific spots. There can be no Hyde Park or Central Park in cities of the South, nor can there exist a Green Belt. Leisure spots are dispersed in neighbourhoods at walking distance, and lined with the outdoor tables of cafes and tavernas. Piazzas for seating and eating out, harbours and inner-city archaeological parks are enjoyed for strolling in the evening--a stark contrast with the London Thames waterfront, which is deserted at night. Zoning is actively undermined by spontaneous urban development. Even the social space is mixed, and segregation is milder than in the Anglo-American city, which has been said to experience a peculiar type of apartheid. In the densely-built Southern urban neighbourhoods, vertical differentiation in multi-storey apartment buildings rather than neighbourhood segregation is widespread (Leontidou 1990).

Northern urbanization, zoning and city structures were greatly conditioned by industrial location. Workers clung close to their jobs and the upper classes moved as far from factories as possible. Southern cities present a different logic. We will now try to unveil its cultural dimensions.

Traditions of Urbanism Vs Anti-Urbanism in the *Longue Durée*

Many of the above features and trajectories have lasted through time in these most ancient cities of Europe, so that Braudel's "*longue durée*" is the appropriate framework for understanding Mediterranean cities, where the past is constantly revived. The interplay between past and present is essential in the (re)interpretation of different facets of Mediterranean urban-oriented identities and restructuring. Urban restructuring can not be really understood unless our theoretical model incorporates the past.

The Anglo-American past is vividly coloured by urban squalour during the industrial revolution and its aftermath. Dramatized by Marx and Engels, the doubly centralizing tendency of capitalism, notions of exploitation and alienation, have been extended or modified by Durkheim's urban anomie, Spengler's decline of the West, and several other anti-urban formulations. Northern intellectuals would concede that "city air makes man free", but that was about all: the city was painted in black and, among dominant classes, the countryside was idealized, as reflected in literature (Williams 1973; Wiener 1981). Anti-urbanism often predated the industrial revolution and has been

discovered back in Roman times. While Romans, like Greeks before them, believed that participation in a real, natural city constituted the precondition of civilization, the English public life did not need the city: the elements of civilization already existed in everyone's home (Briggs 1968, p.72). This echoes our earlier reference to two urban/housing traditions (Rapport, 1969). That explicit anti-urbanism was not just a reaction to rapid urbanization is claimed by Wiener (1981, p.47-8), who distinguishes two types of Victorian anti-urbanism. The distaste for city growth and the protection of landed interests, which indeed lost their appeal as farming lost its importance in the national economy, forms only part of the story. There was in parallel "the criticism of city life by those whose way of life was essentially urban" (ibid., 48). This was a cultural phenomenon and did not fade away with economic restructuring; on the contrary, "there is almost an inverse proportion in the twentieth century between the importance of the working rural economy and the cultural importance of rural ideas." (Willliams 1973, p.248).

Most urban utopias, starting with Garden Cities, somehow reflected rural nostalgia, played in imagination. The city became a scapegoat for the ills of modern life, while at the same time the countryside was "remade" as a rural idyll (Williams 1973). Ambiguity has been analysed by Schorske (1963), in his triplet of the city as Vice, Virtue and, in-between, as Culture. In fact, the interplay of interests among peasants, rural landed elites and urban groups led to differences among Britain, France and the USA (see Blum 1978; Weber 1976; Wiener 1981, pp.47-59). In continental Europe, Marx's rural "barbarism" and "idiocy" mingled with the above attitudes, and created shades, ambiguities, and in-between spaces.

The strongest antithesis to anti-urbanism as a cultural orientation is to be found in Mediterranean Europe. Since a very early period, the city represented progress and civilized cultural life, while the countryside was considered the domain of ignorant peasants (Leontidou 1990). In Turkish cultural traditions, despite the Ottoman past, "urban life, because of cultural values rooted in history, is considered a higher form of organization" (Karpat 1976, p. 232). In Greece, "one can not conceive of civilization at all outside urbanity" (Kayser et al. 1971, p.195). The process of migration has been always considered as a fact of life, and there was hardly any rural-urban conflict in popular culture since the nineteenth century (Mouzelis 1978, chapter 5). Urbanization disentangled people from traditional authority. Many kept their bonds with their place of birth by keeping their property and returning seasonally to villages. This, along with the strong regional consciousness found in Greek urban popular settlements, did not imply any hostility for the city. It meant a permanent attachment to family and place of birth, which permeated many spheres of life, including urban spatial patterns.

On the other edge of Mediterranean Europe, Iberian countries also developed urban-oriented cultures with a global impact, since these merged

with ancient urban-oriented cultures in the colonies. The Spanish and Portuguese conquistadores established dual land rights between cities and the rural periphery and developed colonial customs in urban planning in Latin America already in the sixteenth century, which have greatly contributed in the creation of affluent inner cities vs popular suburbs (Morse 1976). The remarkable urban civilizations of pre-columbian cultures (Hardoy 1973) were destroyed by the conquistadores, but the urban ideal was resilient.

Italian urbanism is more contradictory and merits closer observation. The "aversion to nature in traditional Italian upper class culture, in contrast to the culture of Northern Europe" (Fried 1973, p.106) is also illustrated in political discourse which culminates in Gramsci:

"How would Italy of today, the Italian nation, have come into existence without the formation and development of cities and without the unifying influence of cities. 'Supercountrymanism' in the past would have meant municipalism, as it meant popular disarray and foreign rule. And would Catholicism itself have developed if the Pope, instead of residing in Rome, had taken up residence in Scaricalasino?" (Gramsci, 1971, p.288, between parentheses).

Gramsci saw the subordination of the country to the city (the essence of Jacobinism) as an organic relationship, where the city organized peasant consent (Hoare and Smith, 1971, 45). He criticized Papini's views that "the city does not create, but consumes" as a collection of "absolute idiocies" (Gramsci, 1971, 288) and generalized for the Italian Risorgimento:

"In this type of city there exists, among all social groups, an urban ideological unity against the countryside, a unity which even the most modern nuclei in terms of civil function do not escape... There is hatred and scorn for the 'peasant', an implicit common front against the demands of the countryside... Reciprocally, there exists an aversion-- which, if 'generic', is not thereby any less tenacious or passionate--of the country for the city, for the whole city and all the groups which make it up." (Gramsci 1971, p.91).

This contradictory peasant attitude was also observed in the Corpi Santi, the nineteenth-century popular outskirts of Milan:

"even before the hardening of class boundaries around 1890, the Corpi Santi had a long tradition of hostility to the city and its governors" (Lyttleton 1979, p. 258).

However, this class hostility did not seem to outlast the rapid postwar migrations, internal and international, of which the Mediterranean is well known. People have been 'voting with their feet' and expressing their viewpoint on urbanism by migrating and struggling for a stake in the city. They built dense and compact settlements.

"The lack of parks and recreation facilities in the city is attributable, on the mass level, to the recent urbanization of many inhabitants and their continued association of green with rural misery and of cement with civilization." (Fried, 1973, p.106).

Ambiguity, however, is reflected in occasional anti-urbanism. This peaked during periods of authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe, but was not linked with the rural idyll, as in the Anglo-American tradition: it reflected an effort to disperse subversive elements, immigrants and the restless proletariat. The Italian fascist regime idealized 'peasant Italy' on the one hand (Calabi 1984), and ancient Rome on the other. Planning, *urbanistica*, received official recognition in order to build several new towns, the proverbial EUR among them, as well as open monumental access routes through the centre of Rome which massively relocated urban residents and migrants. Planning was concerned with monumentality rather than amenity (Fried 1973, p.166). Historical buildings were rehabilitated and medieval institutions were resurrected (Mariani 1976; Ghirardo, 1980). Rome is a typical case of 'Haussmanisation', i.e. monumentalisation of the city centre. Antiquity was loudly recuperated by Mussolini and the recapturing of the 'glory of ancient Rome' led to public works so massive as the flattening of the city's hills. Large-scale planning coexisted with speculation and the exclusion and massive relocation of the poor as well as the artisan and small merchant class from the centre. In 1924-40, 12 *borgate* were built in a punitive spirit to rehouse those evicted (Fried 1973, pp.30-8). Then the Roman periphery filled with spontaneous jerry-built *baracche* (Ghirardo 1980, pp.227-8; Fried 1973).

Mussolini also attempted to control migration through anti-urbanization laws and legislation on forced domicile (Fried 1973, p.80; Allum 1973, p.27; Gabert 1958). The fascist laws of 1931 and 1939 aimed at controlling rural-urban migration with the introduction of work permits in cities which, to be obtained, required a residence permit! These laws were circumvented, of course, as ever in Southern Europe, through a system of illegal recruitment of low-wage illegal migrants, especially in Northern cities (Gabert 1958). Later, during the 1950s and 1960s, the *Consulte Popolari* in Rome, Milan and Naples struggled for the abrogation of these laws and the 'freedom of residence' (Della Seta 1978, p.308).

Other Mediterranean dictatorships were weaker in their anti-urbanism. In Spain, Franco strengthened Madrid (Salcedo 1977) after the civil war, but portrayed cities in general as centres of vice and evil (communism, crime, divorce; Wynn 1984). Occasional threats to control domestic migration to Athens were also voiced by the Greek military government (Carter 1968), in a context of the rhetoric about 'parasitic' Athens, but never realized. In any case, the set of policies against popular housebuilding and the facilitation of de-industrialisation (Leontidou, 1990) underlines the dictators' apprehension about the social threat presented by urban concentrations. Even before this, Greek planners and policy makers have tended to stigmatize migrants as 'immoral'

and blame the congestion of Athens on them (Leontidou 1990). Environmental deterioration has also been blamed on the migrants in Istanbul. An aristocratic family descendant remarked indignantly about *gececondu* residents:

"And it is a disgrace that learned men devote their time to studying these wretches, instead of fighting to preserve what is left of the civilization of our great peers" (quoted by Karpat 1976, p.63).

Recent middle-class suburbanization waves did not occur within a rural-oriented rhetoric, but in the midst of complaints about urban congestion and environmental pollution. A recent poll (1997) found that about one-third of Athenians wish to leave Athens. However, they linger around the dense urban core. In general, Mediterranean middle-class 'suburbs' are so close to the city centres and so compact, that they do not deserve the name in its Anglo-American sense. Despite current stabilization of urban population and trickles of urban decline in Madrid or Rome, or more strongly in the Italian Northern 'triangle', Southern Europe will not see a dispersal of the compact city or any counterurbanization trend to the extent that this was experienced in the North. What it is currently experiencing, is a dramatic drop of fertility rates, which, along with the slowing down of migration, result in the stabilization of the population of the major agglomerations. And yet, the South is still the most dynamic crescent of the European urban network.

Post-Modernity and 'Mediterreanisation' of European Cities

The 1970s were named years of de-industrialization, counter-urbanization, and the development of post-Fordism. This emphasis on economic forces of urban restructuring, along with the related convergence theories for cities outside the European core, is unsatisfactory as a history of cities on the East and South, Mediterranean and Atlantic. Urban restructuring in the 1970s and 1980s was all too often politically and culturally motivated. Eastern Europe showed recently what political and cultural (rather than economic) restructuring means. But the same has happened repeatedly in Southern Europe. We have expanded on the culture of urbanism. In addition to this, political forces were at the core of the two major postwar transitions which have shaken Southern Europe within one generation: that of the 1970s and the present one.

The South European transition of the mid-1970s was overwhelmingly socio-political. It was dramatized by simultaneous political consolidation, as well as major events affecting South-North migration, urbanization and local development trajectories. Population movements stopped and were reversed. In this, the recession played the important role that analysts have given to it. Mainstream research, however, neglected the role of democratization and the repatriation of the self-exiled (Leontidou 1990; 1994).

Post-authoritarian enthusiasm in the early 1970s was followed, a few years later, by European integration. However, before the newcomers (Greece since 1981, Spain and Portugal since 1986) could crystallize their institutions and policies around the new reality, before having the chance to gather momentum after their first postwar transition, Europe faced a new overwhelming challenge. The fall of Southern dictatorships paled before the demolition of the Berlin wall in November 1989 and then the erection of the 'European fortress'. Developments in Eastern Europe snowballed towards all directions. For the South, this second transition is still in progress (Leontidou 1994). A lot has been written on spatial change in our times, often neglecting Mediterranean Europe. There is the frequent odd reference to the South in literature on migration. What does this new transition involve and highlight, for Southern Europe and its immediate neighbours?

Current research on population movements in Europe indicates two main trajectories: a littoralisation trend, with dense coastal development; and a revival of urban living. Urban restructuring is universally studied with reference to gentrification, which swings 'urban life cycles' towards a re-urbanization trend (Hall and Hay 1980; van den Berg et al. 1982; Cheshire and Hay 1989), currently enhanced by urban competition (Bailly et al. 1996). In Mediterranean Europe, however, most cities have had affluent cores all along, which make nonsense of the term 'gentrification'. By contrast, they are affected fundamentally by urban competition. European cities compete as city-states once did, though with new methods and peaceful means: from the period of antiquity, when wars determined urban dominance and decline, through integration in global development and dominance over commerce routes in the middle ages until today's place marketing and the effort to belong to the 'blue banana'. As in ancient Greece wars stopped for the Olympic Games, so today the 'reconciliation of cooperation and competition' is reflected in economic and cultural networking.

The European Mediterranean periphery is not homogeneous any more: a trend for re-polarization is under way, between the East and the West (Leontidou 1995). However, all of its cities seek their cultural heritage in ages long past, *before* Fordism came to marginalize them and shatter their pride and glory. The positive construction of urban identities *preceded the industrial revolution* and the latter is not a relevant event in their own particular cultural development and urbanization trajectories, except as a global constraint and the force which in fact marginalized them. Mediterranean cities swing from pre- to post-modernism, without full-scale modernization in-between. Besides city boosters, local developers and alliances on the level of politics, a lot of original thinking has to be produced for the re-invention of tradition, for the development of strategies to *empower* cities. The analysis, exploration and valorization of local initiatives, as well as the investigation of cultural heritage and local uniqueness, necessitates a new type of intellectuals in place of

traditional planners, *organic intellectuals*, who will create the situated, often hybrid theories appropriate for postmodenity. As squalour, health hazards and crime motivated urban analysis in Chicago of the 1920s, as transport planning and the electronic revolution gave their impetus to quantitative geography, so

"urban boosterism motivates (geography) in neoliberal Europe, where particularities of urban identity are, for better or worse, *marketed*. Grand theorists and traditional intellectuals are rather useless now... Though the high-tech metanarrative seems to be on the rise, 'selling places'... necessitates the emergence of urban *theories*, not theory; of concepts, not a story" (Leontidou 1996, p.192).

If this is achieved, it may emerge that Southern cities have some comparative advantages in postmodern Europe, which they lacked in the period of Fordism. Neoliberal strategies by localities for visibility, developing in place of the welfare State, reform and redistributive planning (Kearns and Philo eds. 1993; Leontidou 1995), are based on urbanism: on strong cultural identities and the capitalization of heritage. The past is valorized in urban design and authenticity sought in it. There is plenty of this potential in Southern urbanism. The pride of Mediterranean cities for their ancient and medieval heritage enhances their resilience in postmodern urban competition and corporate mobilisation. In fact, we find postmodern urban imagery replicating Southern cities. The rediscovery of J. Jacobs's (1961) non-American cityscapes, of Raban's (1974) 'soft cities', or the 'Mediterraneanisation' of central Liverpool are but three of several examples of ways in which, in postmodern times, Southern urban-oriented cultures have explicitly penetrated the North. Northern cities start following the culture of urbanism, which they had often rejected in their history.

Conclusion

This paper has been motivated by a refusal to apply any grand narrative of progress to Mediterranean cities as was done in the past, where their eventual convergence with Northern ones was assumed. It is impossible to understand their several facets and changes with reference to our ephemeral rapidly-changing present. It is also wrong to refer to objective forces and economic restructuring alone. Urban/local restructuring dynamics in our period of 'selling places' (Kearns and Philo eds. 1993) are increasingly played around cultural issues rather than political economy. In this milieu, a new culture of urbanism is emerging. Global cities and smaller towns competing in neoliberal Europe see consumption rapidly outstage production in strategies to attract entrepreneurial interest and development agents. In postmodern Europe, it is not industry which leads urban restructuring any more, but place-marketing for visibility, the attraction of global tourism, the strive for centrality, urban boosterism. Among scholars, the postmodern ethic celebrating diversity, fragmentation, eclecticism is rising and incorporated in an emergent ontology,

where culture and politics, not economics, demand center stage. And so does place, the settlement, and the city. Culture and politics move centre stage. In terms of social theory, we have reconsidered the familiar Weberian triplet of economy-politics-culture and questioned the primacy of the economy in contemporary urban restructuring. The research tradition on politics is currently reviving, but culture has been inadequately stressed. Political consolidation in Southern Europe in the 1970s and political restructuring in Eastern Europe today are crucial and uncontested events, but are only part of the story.

Another small part of the story has been narrated in this paper. In the peaceful European Union, postmodern in many ways and neoliberal in many corners, the meaning of 'local development' is changing from the economic towards the cultural dimension. Politicians, planners and administrators in new Europe are (re)discovering a new past for their cities: a past where economic restructuring used to occupy less of a centre stage, when culture was a potent force of change. This inserts our present as an instance into a different past, previously invisible because of our anchorage on the productivist ontology. In the Mediterranean, neoliberal developments are swinging cities from pre- to post-modernism, without full-scale modernization in-between (Leontidou 1993). The building up of positive urban identities *preceded the industrial revolution* and the latter is not a relevant event in their own particular cultural development and urbanization trajectories, except as a global constraint.

Mediterranean cities are (re)discovering a past they did not know they had. Reading 'western' authors and their productivist narratives, we were often alienated from our own experience of urbanization and restructuring: it is as if they were talking of different cities. Now (probably always) urban restructuring is mediated through cultures and inter-subjective realities, as Calvino's several facets of Venice so well demonstrate.

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